

WASHINGTON PLANNING BOARD
Town Center Vision Subcommittee – Working meeting Minutes

April 5, 2019

Members present: Jim Crandall, Roxy Otterson, Kevin Provencher, Andrew Hatch, Ron Jager, Jean Kluk and Nan Schwartz.

Visitors: Exec. Councilor Andru Volinsky, Sen. Ruth Ward, Rep. Steve Smith, Ed Thayer, Don Revane, Patrice Roulx, Tara Van Meter, Jed Schwartz, Elaine Crandall, Paul Dulac

1.0 **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Jim Crandall at 9:00 AM in the Town Hall. He had everyone present introduce himself or herself.

2.0 Crandall opened the meeting and spoke with the assembled group about the subcommittee and its beginnings. He said that Kevin Provencher and a few others brought up road issues with the PB in 2017 so the PB formed the group to look at the issues in the town center. We started meeting and we feel we have accomplished a lot already but we need support on the road issues. Rte. 31 is a state road that goes through the center of town. Provencher then spoke about the center of town, the renovation of TH and Schoolhouse and general sprucing up of the center. He said the road is a big piece; traffic moves through town quickly and he feels we are lucky that no accidents have happened. He feels the road needs drainage work and the state puts Band-Aids on the problem areas but no real improvement is done. He said the town is doing the centerpiece but we need assistance with the road. He said there are many pieces we are looking at and we need help with funding and assistance. He said for safety reasons we need to calm traffic and make it less dangerous. We need crosswalks and a walkway from the TH to the Library and Library parking lot to store. Crandall said walkability is a big issue; there is no crosswalk and a bad corner coming into town from the north. Provencher said the General Store is great but with a line of cars parking there is no where to walk, he mentioned signage which he thinks is crazy and could be streamlined to end confusion. Volinsky asked for the traffic count for Rte. 31. Kluk found the number, which was 1800 cars/day on average (not sure what year this was done). Kluk mentioned that the Police are going to borrow a speed check machine from Sunapee and do a count and speed check for us this summer. Smith said we should work with Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) to figure out our needs and wants. Schwartz said that Paul Dulac is our new commissioner to the RPC and will be our conduit for help from them. Smith spoke about a project that Sunapee did; they started by identifying safety concerns, coming up with an accident count and it resulted in a redesign of an intersection that DOT did. He said we should do the same and add on any improvements we think of to present to DOT (you can always cut back later). Crandall mentioned “walkable shoulders” as a needed improvement. Smith mentioned Bill Lambert who is the DOT designer/engineer he has worked with. Crandall mentioned the blind corner at the intersections of Faxon Hill Road and Rte. 31 and the need to look at the road configuration there. Ward said that Rte. 31 is on the list for resurfacing from Rte. 9 to Goshen in 2020. Otterson said they need to do structural work not just put a layer of asphalt on it. She feels that is a waste of state money. Volinsky said that in his discussions with DOT about the 10-year plan it includes a paving budget and more structural work. He said it is a conformed plan and they put the most feasible projects in the budget. The projects are graded by safety issues and job creation before they are okayed. He said the fact that we received an LCHIP grant hurts and helps so you should let DOT know about that. He mentioned the CMAC program, which is for air quality and congestion mitigation but didn’t feel this was appropriate for us. He said we need to get on DOTs radar. Schwartz asked if we should work with our RPC to interface with DOT. He said the RPC has been downgraded in the process but they are still important. Smith said he knows of a project that took 14 years to get done because not everyone was on the same page. He suggested we get our vision unified for our project first. Volinsky said the shovel-ready projects get a higher rating with funding in place for the town’s portion. He suggested we contact Sarah Stewart at the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) about grant money for planning and help. Provencher asked about whether Rte. 31 is a scenic by-way. Smith answered no. Provencher asked about how to achieve

getting a crosswalk in place. Smith said to make your case with safety. Otterson asked how to get the speed limit changed on Rte. 31. Smith said that 25mph is a state statute and it is the lowest they can go. He said that Bill Lambert (DOT) could explain it to us. Crandall asked if advisory signs could be used. Hatch suggested creating a defined “Welcome to Washington” and set a sense of place and use signage to slow people down. Smith said we could have DOT look at the sharp corner. Van Meter asked about a yellow caution light at the corner of Rte.31 and Lempster Mountain Road. Volinsky asked if we have thought of holding a charrette. Schwartz said we had applied for one with PlanNH in past years but didn’t get it. He mentioned Bruce Mallory of the UNH program “NH Listens”, they facilitate engaged community conversations on local and statewide issues. Hatch said we need a real concrete plan to go for funding and it being a state road different rules apply. Volinsky said he has a contact with DOT that he works with often and he will put that person in contact with us. Hatch agreed to be the contact person for DOT. Smith asked if there were a picture of how the project would look when complete. Provencher said that we have to do community outreach first and get our goals set before we can imagine how it will look finished. Smith suggested we come up with a “perfect world” and get all the features in there that we want then get more realistic. J. Schwartz said timing is important; we should use the year to gather ideas and go for funding at next year’s Town Meeting, we need time to put a project together. Provencher said we reached out to Harvard for a grad student to help work on this and there are real possibilities there for help. Crandall said we need to get our act together. Volinsky said that the committee needs to come up with a well-supported plan with the community, selectmen and everyone on board to be successful.

3.0 **Next meeting** – None set

Meeting adjourned at 10:05am.

Respectfully submitted:

Nan Schwartz, Planning Board Secretary