

TOWN OF CASTLETON
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Tuesday, January 22, 2019 at 7:00pm
Castleton Town Offices
263 VT – 30
Castleton, VT 05732

PRESENT: Janet Currie, Planning Commission Chair; Joseph Bruno, Planning Commission Vice Chair; Robert Franzoni, Planning Commission Member; Jonas Rosenthal, Zoning Administrator; Eliza LeBrun, Recording Secretary; Nancy Mark; Richard Combs; Bruce Longtin; Julius Riemersma; Sid Waite; Mary Waite; Philip Lamy; Patricia Schroeder; Patrick Keller; Christine Smith.

ABSENT: Joseph Bruno, Planning Commission Vice Chair; John Pintello, Planning Commission Member

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Due to the lack of a quorum, the Planning Commission meeting could not be officially opened. Instead it was decided that an informational meeting would be held between the present members of the Planning Commission and the present residents.

The informational meeting began at 7:03pm.

AGENDA FOR APPROVAL

Not applicable due to the lack of a quorum.

MINUTES APPROVAL FOR OCTOBER 23, 2018, NOVEMBER 13, 2018 & JANUARY 15, 2019

Not applicable due to the lack of a quorum.

DISCUSSION REGARDING APPLYING FOR A BETTER CONNECTIONS GRANT FOR THE ROUTE 4A CORRIDOR

The Better Connections Grant provides funds for economic development and *elements of transportation* planning. The grant is more likely to be awarded to Towns that have put some thought into projects that benefit the Community and connect paths that could be considered shared use paths. The Better Connection Grant **could assist in funding future** funding for wayfinding signage for businesses and trails throughout Castleton. Other projects that could be **considered by the community**: providing bus shelters in more locations, investigation ornamental lights on Main Street, **leveling current dirt paths into concrete sidewalks**. With regard to the sidewalk project recently awarded, Richard "Dick" Combs explained that there were two (2) Phases involved. Phase 1 was to run a sidewalk from the Medical Center to Drake Road. Phase 2 was then to run a sidewalk from Drake Road to Hydeville. Dick explained that Phase 2 has been awarded and should be finished this year. If Phase 1 can be put out to bid by February, there is a possibility that could also be finished this year. When the funding ran out for Phase 1, Phase 2 sidewalk stops in Hydeville because that was as far as the funding would allow.

Janet Currie, Planning Commission Chair; asked how problems with the sewer would affect the sidewalk. Jonas stated that he believed a coping study would be done prior to **beginning any** project to review those issues. Jonas noted that the Town of Castleton conducted stormwater studies in 2016. The State would award up to \$35,000 for **planning** construction improvements for stormwater treatment before the sidewalks are laid. No match from the Town would be required **for the storm water piece**. The estimate

for the Town to hire a transportation planner *estimated to be* in the amount of **\$ 75,000** and the Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation **District** to identify issues related to the stormwater was \$26,000.

Jonas noted that in 2018 the Town of Castleton adopted a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the highway department. The Town adopted a Capital Budget and Program Policy in November of 2015. The Town also conducted a Commercial and Industrial Market Analysis in 2014. The grant would help pay for the recommendations that have not been acted on yet. Jonas noted that *there might be* 11 applications presented to the two (2) state agencies overseeing the Better Connections Grant, however only three (3) Towns will be awarded. We are in direct competition with Rutland City and they have a lot of storm water issues as well.

Jonas provided copies of a summary document of what the project proposes to do. This document identified six (6) goals and objectives for this project.

1. Provide recommendations for land use that would best encourage non-motorized transportation and public transit within and along the corridor; (Examples given were public transportation stopping at the College and train station, possibly the park and ride as well.)
2. Develop alternatives and implementation plans for new pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit infrastructure along the corridor;
3. Provide wayfinding sign recommendations to key sites along the corridor;
4. Develop conceptual construction plans, estimates, and implementation strategies that will guide funding efforts in the near future;
5. Develop an implementation plan focused on a Complete Street master plan for the corridor focusing on greater safety and increased options for residents and visitors to walk and bike thus increasing business activity and economic vitality for Castleton; and
6. Write a strategic plan to recruit business acceptable to the residents of Castleton.

Robert Franzoni asked Jonas how much the grant was that we are applying for. The grant being applied for is \$67,000 of which the Town is required to match 10% (\$6,700). The award would take place March 15, 2019. **The Project** could begin in June if the Town of Castleton was awarded. There are year-end Planning funds thru 2019 and Planning and Zoning funds for FY2020. The Town of Castleton has a little over \$300,000 appropriated for sidewalks in the Capital Budget. Some of those funds will be *spent this year for the Towns matching share for sidewalk projects*.

Resident, Nancy Mark asked if the grant is considered Phase 3? Yes, it could be considered Phase 3.

Jonas stated that because of the width of the road, there may not be construction required for a bike lane, but line/marker delineation and signage would be needed. If awarded the grant, engineers would be hired for feasibility studies.

As part of our need assessment we are looking at existing sidewalks and asphalt within this Route 4 corridor. We have determined that there are roughly 8,005 linear feet of concrete sidewalk, 106 linear feet of asphalt and the rest is dirt. The new sidewalks will be constructed of concrete.

Resident, Pat Schroeder asked where the community gathering place and parks come into the grant? Jonas clarified that anything connected **to** Route 4A is within the corridor *should be* considered **for** the Better Connections Grant. If the Town is awarded the grant, there will be public meetings held to **gather** citizen input on identifying these types of ideas.

Julius Riemersma, on behalf of the Castleton Bridge Initiative shared that the Bridge Initiative is about connecting the University Community and the Town. They would like to see a loop connected to the RMH Trail behind the campus. Walking brings us together, teaches us to see, and to meet new people. That started at Glenbrook to Cemetery Road to Brown Farm Road and a little piece of North Street and part along the river back to Mill Street and the RMH Trail. Mary Waite said she believes it is a mile and a half loop. Philip Lamy, also a member of the Bridge Committee mentioned that there is a seven (7) acre plot of land now owned by the University that is a beautiful spot and it would be nice to see a trail system connect there. Unfortunately, the property was once accessible from Main Street, but at some point, this entrance was blocked off. There are newer dorms at Castleton University that overlook the acreage. There is access from the Advent Church. Mary Waite will research the deed and any easements and report back to the Planning Commission. Per Mr. Lamy, the University has stated that it does not maintain the property and have said the land is off limits to the students.

Resident, Pat Schroeder mentioned that the dog park area in West Rutland seems to be well utilized. There seem to be people there all the time. Something like that in conjunction with the river project might be a good idea.

Janet asked for letters of support from area groups and individuals. There are sample letters available for assistance in writing these support letters. The drop-dead date for the letter is January 28, 2019. These letters can be addressed to Jackie Cassino, of the Agency of Transportation. Letters can be delivered to the Administrative Assistant to the Town Manager, Karen Stewart or emailed to Janet (jkcurre1@gmail.com) as soon as possible.

Janet reiterated that the goal is to connect the community in a safe manner and encouraged the public to come to the public meetings that would be held if the grant is awarded to the Town. Public meetings will not be held until after the grant is awarded on March 15, 2019.

Jonas and Janet met with the Dean of Students at Castleton University; Dennis Proulx. It appears that the University will be a part of this. Janet reiterated how important this project is to bring in more businesses and families.

Resident, Pat Keller mentioned that if the size of the project can help the Town get the Better Connections Grant, perhaps they should consider a sidewalk from the Park and Ride in Castleton to West Rutland. Everyone agreed that this would be a good idea for the future.

ADJOURN

The open discussion ended at 8:00pm.

Respectfully submitted; Eliza LeBrun, Recording Secretary