

**HYDE PARK
TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
February 10, 2020**

All minutes are draft until approved by the Planning Commission, please check future minutes for approval of these minutes. Meetings may be videotaped; recordings are held by Green Mountain Access Television. GMATV info: PO Box 581, Hyde Park, 05655; info@greenmountainaccess.tv or 802-851-1592

Members Present: Eric Williams, Bob Malbon, Brian Jones
Members Absent: Vicki Emerson, Zac Cota
Staff: Ron Rodjenski, Town Administrator
Guests: Seth Jensen, LCPC Principal Planner; Meghan Rodier, LCPC Regional Planner; Eben Merrill; Mary Walz; Valerie Valcour; Roger Audet; Andy Race; Laura Race; Brian Shackett; Al Spitzer; Lindsay Reese; H. Dale Porter; Liz Courtney; GMAVT did not videotape this meeting.

Bob opened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

1. MPG20 – Consortium Grant with Waterville and Eden – Organizational meeting

Ron provided a brief overview of the meeting goals and planning work under the Municipal Planning Grant, which begins now and will continue through May 2021.

Gihon Valley Hall Committee Update - Al Spitzer provided an overview of the past and planned improvements to the former grange hall, now managed by the Gihon Valley Hall Committee. Al noted that the roof was replaced in 2019 with town taxpayer funding approval of \$50,000 from Town Meeting 2019. This coming year the committee would like to begin work on stopping water from entering the basement, replacing windows, and inspecting/repairing the heat system. Al noted that the Committee understands constraints to the reuse of the building which are parking, Wi-Fi, and neighborhood access to the building due to the traffic on VT100. Liz noted that the reuse of the building for music events and other public activities as a vibrant community center is the goal.

Seth and Meghan – Review of MPG20 – Approximately \$22,800 for two towns (Waterville and Hyde Park) with Eden participating in the Hyde Park work since some Eden residents have ties to North Hyde Park, including the grange building. Seth explained that the Waterville town hall has similar state highway constraints for use as the Gihon Valley Hall. The regional planners will need input from residents to develop options and priorities for future grant applications for new parking areas, and pedestrian safety improvements. A final planning report can include immediate smaller projects and longer-term projects, each to provide safe access to the GVH as an anchor for NHP redevelopment.

Kick Off Meeting – Meghan explained that in April or May a formal kickoff meeting will be held to start to work on the grant tasks and invite other stakeholders, like Eden and Waterville as well as other regional planners. Meghan noted that some work has been done in the area of VT100 pedestrian improvements so that planning work should be reviewed (Dubois-King 2016 report https://hydeparkvt.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/NHP_final.pdf). One way residents can help is to continue data collection for pedestrians and bicycles, which Rob Moore from LCPC has provided assistance with in the past. Meghan noted that as the project moves along, state grant officials will be asked to provide guidance including Richard Amore from ACCD and the VT Agency of Transportation regarding use of the state highway ROW.

2016 Dubois-King Report – Seth noted that the D-K report included conceptual plans for stormwater improvements, sidewalks, paths, and some parking options along VT100 and Ferry Street. These are long-term plans that would require coordination and support from VTrans for signs, street trees etc. Seth stated that VTrans has been more open to discussing pedestrian improvements due to statewide policy changes, especially in Designated Village Centers. Seth advised that the MPG20 report could include landscape architect renderings of preferred priorities to increase ranking of future grant applications. The report could have a section on the Gihon Valley Hall improvements and a general plan for NHP Village, both of which would help in future grant applications and as a guide for the work of the committee. Seth offered to print out the D-K report for anyone wanting a hard copy.

Constraints – The group agreed that parking was a major constraint and Al noted the on-going work to evaluate the Old Hotel parcel on the north side of the grange as a possible leased parking area. A brownfield assessment should be completed this year to determine the feasibility of some parking for GVH events. Other nearby property owners have expressed support for additional parking, although nothing formal is in the works. Al noted that 2,700 sf exists on each of two floors at GVH with 100-200 people possibly attending larger events. Seth noted that the Village Center Tax Credit program could be reviewed to fund electrical and other building repairs. Meghan stated that Caitlin Corkins is the contact at the State for Village Center tax credits (<https://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/funding/tax-credits>). Liz noted that VT100 has a negative impact on Village life, including air contamination and noise, and the group agreed that truck traffic is a major concern with speed of vehicles. Eric suggested trails could most cost-effectively connect homes and business as compared to sidewalks. Accessing the nearby gas station/store on 100C is not desirable due to traffic volume and speed on VT100 with no sidewalks. The group discussed other towns that have gone through a similar study and Danville village on Route 2 was mentioned as a successful project. Designation of VT100 as a Class 1 town highway would allow more streetscape control by the Town, which is now controlled by the State, but it would come with new town maintenance requirements for VT100. Seth noted that adding “visual cues” along VT100 would help alert drivers they are entering a Village Center – currently very little alerts drivers except the 35-mph speed limit.

Next steps – Bob Malbon, Lindsay Reese, and Liz Courtney agreed to be the local point of contacts for MPG20 to assist Meghan and Seth in the scheduling of future meetings and keeping residents informed. Ron noted that the planning commission is also just starting to focus on North Hyde Park revitalization, including decentralized sewer and the MPG20 planning study will assist in those efforts. Seth asked for clarification as to the extent of a parking study – would the focus be on the GVH or NHP, of both? The Committee and town planning commission will need to discuss this. The next planned meeting will be the Kick-Off meeting in April-May and after that site visits in June-August with state officials and the community.

2. **Minutes** – Deferred. All enjoyed snacks and Liz’s birthday cake that she baked!
3. **Adjourn** – Having no more discussion, the Commission adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Ron Rodjenski