

## **RYE TOWN CENTER COMMITTEE**

**Monday, January 04, 2021**

**5:30 p.m. – Via Zoom**

***Present: Chair Karen Stewart; Kaitlyn Coffey; John Mitchell; Victor Azz; Funi Burdick; Lydia Tilsley and Selectmen's Rep. Mae Bradshaw***

Chair Stewart called the meeting to order 5:31 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Statement by Karen Stewart:

As Chair of the Rye Town Center Committee, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video and other electronic means. We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone number: 646-558-8656 and Password: 695475 or by clicking on the following website address: [www.zoom.com](https://www.zoom.com) ID #818-3747-2473.

Public notice has been provided to the public for the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the website of the board at: [town.rye.nh.us](http://town.rye.nh.us) go to the Board of Selectmen page and click on the agenda for this meeting.

If anyone has a problem accessing the meeting please email the Town Administrator at: [BBergeron@town.rye.nh.us](mailto:BBergeron@town.rye.nh.us)

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled. Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Roll call attendance:

- Kaitlyn Coffey
- Lydia Tilsley
- John Mitchell
- Victor Azzi
- Funi Burdick
- Mae Bradshaw
- Karen Stewart

*Note: The Members stated where they were located and confirmed that they were the only ones in the room for the meeting.*

**I. New Members**

Chair Stewart welcomed new members Lydia Tilsley and Funi Burdick.

**II. New Charter Review**

Chair Stewart read as follows:

***Rye Town Center Committee Charge***

***The Committee is charged with proposing a comprehensive plan for the Town Center (as defined from the Old Trolley Barn to Grange Park), to be submitted to the Select Board for consideration. The committee shall evaluate the findings and options presented during the 2019 Plan NH Charrette, town owned assets, infrastructure in the Town, prior committee work and studies, and work with various other Town Committees to achieve this plan. Included in this plan may be the goal to provide ADA compliant work spaces for town employees, and adequate meeting and community activity spaces.***

***The committee shall consider the economic impact upon the Rye Tax Payer as it develops its recommendations to the Select Board. The committee should work collaboratively with the Select Board in the development of this plan for the Rye Town Center. Further the Select Board requests that the Rye Town Center Committee focus on completing the application for the Transportation Alternative Program grant and any warrant articles thereto.***

***The committee will consist of not more than 8 members, including a Selectman's representative, and shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen for a second term ending March 31, 2023. Over the term the committee will participate in discussions with and make a final presentation to the Select Board. Staff members may be appointed as non-voting members of the committee. It is the Selectmen's intent to sunset this committee after completion of its charge, unless the Selectmen vote to continue the committee.***

Member Burdick asked for clarification on the language "Town Infrastructure".

Member Azzi explained that it includes Washington Road, the electrical services along that road, waterlines and anything in the area that services the public usage and benefits.

Member Azzi pointed out that the language regarding “*provide ADA compliant work spaces for town employees*” should go without saying. ADA is a law that dates back 31 years. The must be done rather it is written in the charge or not.

Selectwoman Bradshaw responded that it’s the Select Boards intention that is of the highest priority. She agreed with Member Azzi’s statement, but emphasized that with all the things that the Select Board wants this committee to focus on for the Town Center, it has to be intergraded with those needs, that exists in Town Hall and some of the other buildings. She agreed that Member Azzi’s point is well taken.

### **III. Elect Officers**

Chair Stewart stated that she would be happy to continue as Chiar of the committee if that is the wishes of the members. Member Coffey stated that she would be happy to stay on as Secretary.

**Motion by Victor Azzi to nominate John Mitchell as Vice Chair of the Rye Town Center Committee. Seconded by Mae Bradshaw.**

**Roll Call Vote: Mae Bradshaw – Aye; Lydia Tilsley – Aye; Kaitlyn Coffey – Aye; John Mitchell – Aye; Funi Burdick – Aye; Victor Azzi – Aye; Karen Stewart – Aye.**  
**Motion passed.**

**Motion by Karen Stewart to nominate Kaitlyn Coffey as Secretary of the Rye Town Center Committee. Seconded by Mae Bradshaw.**

**Roll Call Vote: Mae Bradshaw – Aye; Lydia Tilsley – Aye; Kaitlyn Coffey – Aye; John Mitchell – Aye; Funi Burdick – Aye; Victor Azzi – Aye; Karen Stewart – Aye.**  
**Motion passed.**

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to nominate Karen Stewart as Chair of the Rye Town Center Committee. Seconded by Victor Azzi**

**Roll Call Vote: Mae Bradshaw – Aye; Lydia Tilsley – Aye; Kaitlyn Coffey – Aye; John Mitchell – Aye; Funi Burdick – Aye; Victor Azzi – Aye; Karen Stewart – Aye.**  
**Motion passed.**

### **IV. Warrant Article Discussion**

Chair Stewart explained that the Budget Committee meets on Wednesday and they need to have all warrants that have budget implications.

Selectwoman Bradshaw explained that the committee should send the article to the Town Administrator and she will make show that the budget committee and the Select Board reviews it.

Chair Stewart concern that the article is asking for funding that has already be approved. She felt that it is important that somehow that is clear to the voters. That they are not asking for additional money. She asked Selectwoman Bradshaw to explain why the approval of the last warrant article would have expired.

Town Administrator Bergeron explained that there are individual warrant articles and special warrant articles. An individual warrant article lapses at the end of the year. A special warrant article where the

terms are stated, can survive multiple years. A multi-year warrant article will require a super-majority approval. She added that as soon as she gets the draft of the article, she will send it to the DRA for approval.

All agreed that the pre-amble that Chair Stewart wrote on the article stating that it was to extend the prior approval, was good. There was further discussion regarding having the money and being under contract and being able to encumber the funds for unfinished projects.

Chair Stewart read the article as written:

***To see if the Town will vote to extend prior approval provided by majority vote in March 2020 to raise and appropriate previous funding that has now expired, due to New Hampshire's Transportation Alternative Program Grants cycle being delayed because of the Covid 19 pandemic. A yes vote will reaffirm the Town's local match should Rye be awarded a grant to improve safety in the Historic Town Center. This article is the same as that which passed in 2020: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Eight Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$800,000) for construction of transportation safety improvements, including a sidewalk and a bike lane in the Town Center, from the intersection of Washington Road and Wallis Road to the intersection of Central Road and Washington Road. With Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000) to come from NH Department of Transportation Alternative Program grant and the balance of Three Hundred Thousand (\$300,000) to come from general taxation for the local match required for the grant. This project is contingent upon receipt of the TAP Grant. Majority Vote Required.***

Chair Stewart stated that she will send the article to Town Administrator Bergeron at the end of this meeting.

There was a question regarding the \$300,000 local match.

Chair Stewart explained that the TAP program is a 20%/80% split, obviously this is more. This was a strategic decision based on a couple of factors. The primary factor is that the state allocates the funds based on a check list. They like to award the grants to very deserving projects and very deserving communities, that often have a hard time funding projects on their own. Rye is recognized as being an affluent community. So, the committee felt that it would increase the odds of them getting grant if they had more "skin in the game".

There was a question regarding the sidewalks; Where the charge is from the Trolley Barn to Grange Park; why doesn't the sidewalks go down Central Road?

Selectwoman Bradshaw responded that it was due to the budget. There had gone out original with the sidewalk going to the Town Hall. It put the project over the \$800,000.

Chair Stewart added that the other reason the committee schedule down the project to get to \$800,000; was due to the funding history for this grant. The \$800,000 is basically the top dollars amount that they award. The thought was that they would phase in additional work in the future. So, it will be a phased approach to tie in the whole Town Center not just Washington Road.

Chair Stewart reported that she emailed Kathy Hodgdon and she has agreed to help the committee write with the letter of interest for the TAP application.

There was discussion concerning the budget. Selectwoman referred to the draft application; page 8, breaks down the budget, however, the estimates from CMA are not broken down the same way. She recommended going back to Phil Corbett at CMA and having him restructure the budget as in the application. She reminded the committee that this is not the actual final application form; the Town has not received it yet, so she recommended that they wait until they have the final form before connecting CMA.

It was agreed that all the members need to look at the draft application, in order to polish it up before it is submitted.

Selectwoman Bradshaw reminded the committee there were several letters that Member Loftus and Selectman Winslow had gotten together from the Fire and Police Department, Public Works, and the Historic District Commission and Senator Tom Sherman to go with the application (all of which are now dated). These were in support of the project. She recommended going back to get updated letters of support. Member Coffey will take the lead on this.

Selectwoman Bradshaw talked about exhibits that were presented by Scott Bogle (Senior Transportation Planner from Rockingham Planning Commission) to the Select Board at the August 10<sup>th</sup> 2020 Select Board meeting. The presentation was the draft Shoulder Widening Study. Another report that has merit is the Safe Routes to School Report. She suggested both those reports should be sent with the application. She added that the meeting minutes alone would be beneficial and they are on the Town's website.

Selectwoman Bradshaw recommended that the new members read the Plan New Hampshire charette report, in order to get up to speed.

Chair Stewart stated that she would share some of the work that the committee did to synthesize the information that came out of the charette. She also shared with the committee the drawings of the building schematics of the proposed building for the Parsonage lot.

Selectwoman Bradshaw stated that after seeing the plans, she felt that it will have an impact on sidewalks, setbacks, open space and lighting, she stressed that it will be important for this committee to stay abreast of what is happening with that project, as it develops.

There was talk about defining the boundaries of the Town Center and the Historic District. Dominique Hawkins, of Design Preservation Partnership spoke to the Historic District Commission in October, stating that there is no logical perimeter to the Historic District. Selectwoman Bradshaw recommended using the lights to define the Town Center and the Historic District. However, she reminded the committee that last year they voted to go from seventeen street lights down to ten, due to the budget. She recommended that they go for other grants; such as LCHIP, for the historic lighting.

Member Azzi pointed out that the light fixtures need to be a down light for function, but they also must be architecturally appropriate for the Town Center.

After a lengthy discussion regarding the light fixtures that would be most appropriate for the Town Center. Member Funi suggested that they should decide on what the lighting should be and then back into the money needed. She pointed out that there could be fund raisers and other ways to raise private funding.

Member Coffey reminded the committee that even though they cut back from the seventeen lights to ten, they were still planning to run the underground utilities, so that when they could afford the other fixtures, they would be half way there. This was originally Member Loftus idea.

Selectwoman Bradshaw also pointed out that the committee had done a lot of work regarding the two intersections, and what would work best for traffic calming. One of the ideas was to do a roundabout at the top of the hill at Central and Washington. However, both the Police and the Fire Chief felt that would be problematic in the winter, because of the grade. The committee hasn't explored that any further because there wasn't enough money with the Tap grant and they ran out of time. Intersections will be in the next phase of this project and is something that they will need to get back to.

Chair Stewart pointed out that part of the proposed project in this phase of the plan; is narrowing Washington Road in the Town Center.

Member Tilsley pointed out that the wide shoulder at the top of Central Road is confusing to drivers and an opportunity for cars to pull up on the right on the car in front of them, however, she understands that that area is not part of this TAP application.

Member Azzi recommended that that be part of the committee's planning for the comprehensive plan. IF not for this phase, but for the next phase. He pointed out that each phase will have to connect to the next phase in the very near future.

Member Coffey suggested that the committee talk about traffic calming again at the next meeting. She pointed out that being home more over this last year due to COVID she has become more aware of the issues right in the Town Center. The Town did put out some pedestrian signs in the crosswalks, this past summer. She stated that she walks the area and it is very scary, especially at the crosswalk from the library to the church. People are flying up the hill in front of the Town Hall and don't see the crosswalk until they are right on it.

There was further discussion about having money in the Public Works Budget in future years, to remove the snow from the sidewalk in the winter, in order to provide a safe place for the students to walk from the school to the library.

Member Azzi pointed out that this could be one of the committee's recommendations to the Select Board. That the Town provides the service needed to keep the sidewalk cleared, that will be created between the Junior High School and the Rye Public Library. He suggested that it doesn't have to be a fulltime position. Also, the sidewalk is still potentially eighteen months in the future, so there is plenty of time to plan the personnel and the equipment needs.

Member Burdick pointed out that if they are planning more sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes and paths; there must definitely be a long-term maintenance plan in place. She suggested that that should be part of their recommendation. That is part of the town infrastructure piece.

## **V. Approval of Minutes – December 16, 2020**

Member Tilsley stated that on page two of the minutes she said that she moved to Rye in September 2018 from Connecticut. She corrected that statement and said that she moved to Rye in 2019.

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to approve the meeting minutes of December 16, 2020 as amended.**

**Seconded by Lydia Tilsley.**

**Roll Call Vote: Mae Bradshaw – Aye; Kaitlyn Coffey – Aye; John Mitchell – Aye; Victor Azzi – Aye; Karen Stewart – Aye; Funi Burdick – Abstain; Lydia Tilsley – Abstain.**

**Motion passed.**

## **VI. Other Business**

It was agreed that the committee will meet monthly for the short-term, but to be flexible if it is necessary to go into an accelerated schedule later. It was decided to hold the first and third Wednesdays, open for meetings. The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30. The main agenda traffic in the Town Center. Included in that discussion will be bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicle traffic.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to Adjourn at 6:31 p.m. Seconded by Funi Burdick.**

**Roll Call Vote: Mae Bradshaw – Aye; Lydia Tilsley – Aye; Kaitlyn Coffey – Aye; John Mitchell – Aye; Funi Burdick – Aye; Victor Azzi – Aye; Karen Stewart – Aye.**

**Motion passed.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dyana F, Ledger