

RYE TOWN CENTER COMMITTEE

Wednesday, November 3, 2021

5:30 p.m.

Rye Town Hall

***Members Present:* Kaitlyn Coffey, John Mitchell, Victor Azzi, John Loftus, Funi Burdick, Lydia Tilsley and Select Board Rep Tom King**

I. Call to Order

Acting Chair Coffey called the meeting to order at 5:36 PM.

II. Follow Up of Town Hall Annex Plans

Member Loftus shared drawings of the proposed renovations at the last meeting. Acting Chair Coffey reported that since then, there has been a revision to the pitch of the back roof, which lowers the elevation so that it is not as visible from the road. It will still show somewhat, but not as much as in the prior drawings. Nothing else was changed. The HDC has given its approval of all the materials being used. The revised plans will be going before the Select Board on Monday night for their approval.

Member Loftus expressed concern regarding the color of the windows. He recommended that they be white instead of black. White would reflect the windows at the Public Safety building and the Old Town Hall.

Acting Chair Coffey suggested that they ask Chair Stewart to send a letter from the Town Center Committee to the Select Board with their concerns and recommendations.

III. TAP Statue Update

Selectman King reported that the Select Board was given the ten-year plan for the TAP program. It is his understanding that Rye's project is not scheduled to be funded until 2027. The plan is to keep advocating to move it up sooner. The way the project would get moved up would be if a town that was selected does not fund their portion and has to drop out. Rye was number one for Rockingham Planning. Selectman Winslow went to an executive council meeting this week in Hampton, as Rye's representative. All the towns that were selected went to this meeting to talk about their projects. Selectman King has not had a chance to talk to Selectman Winslow about the meeting.

There was discussion regarding the Town's share of the project. The concern is that in order to do the project the Town will have to keep reappropriating their share every year, in order to have

the funds ready for when the project is scheduled for funding by the state. At any time, the warrant article could be voted down. Rye has been selected but not awarded the grant at this stage, so there is no guarantee. There is also a possibility that the project may never happen. The goal is to maintain the town's share in order to be ready when the State is ready.

Acting Chair Coffey pointed out that there is still a lot of preliminary work that should be done in order to make sure the project can be done, like the survey work. She suggested that the committee focus on the survey work this year.

Selectman King agreed stating that there is also the engineering to think about. He pointed out that it would take a year to get these things in place. He looked up the actual document outlining the TAP schedule. The schedule reads as follows:

2023	Preliminary engineering
2024 - 2025	Right-of-way
2027 - 2029	Construction

The actual awards will be done in May 2022 when the Governor signs off on the program.

Acting Chair Coffey asked for the committee's ideas regarding what direction they should take, where they could put their time and talents to use in a more immediate sense/focus during their monthly meetings, as the project will be ongoing. She suggested that they look into smaller grants that could be used for immediate projects in the Town Center.

Selectman King agreed and pointed out that they will have to pay for the lighting. He suggested that they look at applying for grants and/or do some fund raising.

The members talked about small projects that would make Town Center more welcoming. It was agreed that Town Center needs better definition, as the road is wide and there are no sidewalks.

It was decided that the members would think about ideas and bring them back to the next meeting for discussion.

Note: Chair Stewart arrived at the meeting at this time.

Selectman King stated that there will be a town wide visioning session next week at the Rye Junior High. There will be a second visioning session on January 12th at the church. He asked if the committee had any plans to participate and present at the sessions.

Chair Stewart asked if the Library Trustees were presenting. If so, she asked if the Town Center Committee could co-present with them addressing the visioning of the center of town.

Member Tilsley stated that it was her understanding that the visioning session was for the Town's residents to come and voice their thoughts regarding their vision of the Town. It would be like the charrette. She doesn't think there would be any groups doing presentations.

Member Tilsley stated that she will go to the visioning session and will report back to the committee at the December meeting.

There was discussion regarding what is needed (if anything) in the form of a warrant article this year that will protect the funding for the TAP Grant. Chair Stewart said that she would look into it and let the members know what she finds out.

Member Burdick suggested that they develop a “cheat sheet” of talking points for when and if they are called on to express the visions of the committee. She stressed the need to be accurate in these presentations.

Chair Stewart said that she could put something together from the TAP application. It will include the culture of the Town Center, the community feel, and the connectivity. However, she feels that it is important to talk about how the Rye Town Center Committee came to be formed; from another visioning session and then the vision they have come up with.

Member Burdick pointed out that this would be a great time to explain to people that this is a ten-year project.

The committee discussed how the funding would be distributed from the TAP Grant. Selectman King promised to discuss the matter with Town Administrator Bergeron and report back to the committee.

IV. Approval of Minutes – Tabled until next meeting

1. 08/04/2021
2. 09/01/2021
3. 10/06/2021

Next Town Center Committee meeting to be held on December 1st, Rye Town Hall

Adjournment

Motion by Karen Stewart to adjourn at 7:07 p.m. Seconded by John Loftus. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger