

**RYE TOWN CENTER COMMITTEE
MEETING
Wednesday, February 1, 2023 – 5:30 p.m.
Rye Town Hall**

Present: *Kaitlyn Coffey, John Loftus, Victor Azzi, and Selectmen's Rep Tom King*

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Member Coffey called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. Members of the Town Center Committee introduced themselves. Members who are continuing on the Committee include Kaitlyn Coffey, John Loftus, Victor Azzi, and John Mitchell, along with Selectmen's Rep Tom King. Potential new members introduced themselves to the Committee.

II. Review of New Charge

The Committee reviewed the Town Center Committee Charge.

Rye Town Center Committee Charge

The committee is charged with proposing a comprehensive vision for the Town Center (as defined from the South Cemetery Entrance to Grange Park) to be submitted to the Select Board for consideration. The Committee shall evaluate the findings and options presented during the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant, the 2019 Plan NH Charrette, town owned assets, infrastructure in the Town, prior committee work and studies, and work with other various Town Committees to achieve this vision. The Committee shall consider the economic impact upon the Rye taxpayer as it develops its recommendations to the Select Board. The Committee shall work collaboratively with the Select Board in the development of this vision for the Rye Town Center. Also, to analyze TAP project specifications in relation to shifting landscape of structures and used within the project's geographic area to ensure harmonization. Further, to recommend potential improvements/changes over the life of the project.

The Committee will consist of not more than 8 members including a Select Board Representative and shall be appointed by the Select Board for a term ending March 31, 2024. 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 intent of the Select Board that the Committee sunset after completion of its charge, unless the members of the Board vote to continue the committee.

Rye Town Center Committee shall follow the Rules of Procedure for Committees established by the Select Board.

Town of Rye Select Board

III. Plan of Action

Member Coffey noted that the Center of Town is in the Historic District. There's a look and feel of town center that the Committee should keep in mind and be respectful towards. Plans have been done as a mockup over the years, which included lighting and landscaping. She also noted that when the Committee first started, they identified the town owned buildings in the Town Center. There was a lot of moving parts with the Parsonage expanding and the Town acquiring the Town Annex. Now that some of the "dust" has settled with some permanency of the buildings, the Committee can really make some plans.

The Committee agreed that the information gathered from the Town Center Charrette would be beneficial to have in moving forward.

There was discussion about the TAP Grant that was awarded for the construction of sidewalks and bike lanes in the Town Center. There was also discussion about the TAP Grant Implementation Committee which was set up to specifically oversee the construction covered under the grant for the sidewalks. The Committee continued discussion regarding some of the past work of the Town Center Committee and the process they follow as an advisory committee to the Select Board.

Selectman King spoke about the need for more funds in order to accomplish all the things that was envisioned by the Committee for the Town Center; such as the lighting. He noted that the sooner the Committee can identify and price the various items, the projects can be put into the Capital Improvement Plan and presented to the voters at town meeting through warrant articles.

Member Azzi suggested having a meeting to review a preliminary plan as a basis for the TAP Grant with a list of what the Committee expects to accomplish.

Member Coffey suggested blowing up a plan of the Town Center, so the Committee can highlight the location of the sidewalks and identify the town buildings to show the connectivity. She agreed to follow up with the Committee's past chair to find out what might be available.

Referring to the TAP Grant, Selectman King explained that it's unknown when the project is actually going to start. This isn't just a grant. It got rolled into the State's ten year transportation plan, as a subset. Ten years' worth of projects were put into that plan and approved. The Town only asked that the project not take place in 2023 because of the Rye 400th effort. It's unsure what year construction is going to start; however, the contractor vetting process could start, along with surveying and engineering.

Member Coffey noted that other groups with interests in the Town Center who have projects going as well; such as, the gazebo and where that is going to be located in the Town Center. There could potentially be funding from other groups to do things.

Selectman King commented that he foresees another warrant article for funds for the Town Center. He spoke about the update to the Master Plan project that is being done through the

Planning Board and how the visioning will be part of what happens in the Town Center. The update to the Master Plan is starting later this year and is continuing through next year.

Member Coffey noted that CMA Engineering evaluated some of the existing crosswalks in the Town Center. They proposed moving some of the crosswalks. Some of the crosswalks are in the middle of the road and not at any sort of stop; such as the one from the church to the library. Traffic is expected to come to a complete stop and the pedestrians in that area are a surprise. The Committee should reevaluate the crosswalks and discuss whether they are in the best locations. She pointed out that Police Chief Walsh and DOT came in to talk to the Committee. There was also discussion in the past about the speed tables and speed bumps. The Committee also did some personal site visits to Banfield Road to look at the speed bumps that were installed. She thinks it would be worth bringing Chief Walsh back in to talk about these ideas again.

IV. Other Business

The Committee agreed to meet the first Wednesday of every month at 5:30 p.m.

- **Next meeting March 1st, 5:30 p.m., Rye Town Hall**

Adjournment

Motion by Tom King to adjourn at 6:50 p.m. Seconded by Kaitlyn Coffey. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger