

**RYE TOWN CENTER COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, September 01, 2021**  
**5:30 p.m.**  
**Rye Town Hall**

*Present: Karen Stewart Chair, John Loftus, Kaitlyn Coffey, Lydia Tilsley, Funi Burdick and Selectmen's Rep Tom King*

**I. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Stewart called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. Announcements**

Chair Stewart announced that the TAP Grant application was approved. There were no further details at this time.

The Rye Town Center Committee is now scheduled on the town calendar for the first Wednesday of every month at 5:30 p.m.

There will be a joint meeting between the Select Board, Rye Historic District Commission, Heritage Commission, Conservation and the Rye Town Center Committee on Wednesday, September 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. at the Town Hall to discuss the work at the Town Hall Annex.

- Member Coffey explain that it is an HDC meeting. They will be reviewing the application for the work being done on the building. The idea is to have everyone at the meeting, so that everyone is up to date on the project. The architect will be there presenting the project. There are drafts (both hard copies & electronically) of the plans available. The application is also available for review.

**III. Master Plan Survey**

The Committee received a request from the Long Range Planning Committee to fill out a municipal survey, which will be used to formulate topics to be discussed at a visioning session for outlining the update to the Rye Master Plan. All committees, commissions, boards and department heads were asked to complete the municipal survey as one entity. The Town Center Committee worked on filling out the online survey and answered questions (as shown below).

- 1. Please indicate your affiliation with the town.**
  - Rye Town Center Committee
- 2. Evaluate how Rye's Master Plan is useful to your work.**
  - a. Accessible either online or at Town Hall**
  - b. User friendly – easy to find information in document**

- c. Not easy to find information – If not why.
- d. Contains relevant content.
- e. Is the Master Plan vision clearly defined?

- Does the Master Plan provide a clear plan to implement its recommendations?
- Does the Master Plan convey recommended actions that are useful in your work?
  - a. If yes; how
  - b. If no; Why not.

Response by the Committee: The Town's Master Plan is essential to form the work of the Rye Town Center Committee

3. What, if any, additional tools, forms and types of data or other specific information would be useful in your work and service to the community?
  - a. Statistical data
  - b. Narrative informational summaries
  - c. Research or technical studies
  - d. Demographics
  - e. Maps
  - f. Data resources
  - g. Historical information
  - h. Current and projected climate change data

Conclusion by the Committee: All of the above is useful to their work, except h. Current and projected climate change data.

4. What methods of communication do you employ with the public to distribute vital information? For example: residents, businesses, property owners, renters, and visitors.
  - a. The town website
  - b. Town e-mail list
  - c. Community based groups, publications, and e-mail lists

Response by the Committee: The Committee has employed the town website and newsletter. They also use personal e-mail lists, the Civic League and Rye Magazine.

5. If these existing communication methods are not sufficient to perform your work, service or accomplish your mission, what changes would you recommend to improve communications to residents, businesses, property owners, renters, and visitors?

Response by the Committee: The Committee feels that as the TAP Grant is fulfilled, sharing RTCC information, progress and timely updates by social media sites (Facebook and Twitter,) will be important as well as the town's website. There should be a single communications coordinator that works with all the town's commissions, committees, boards and departments.

- 6. When engaging with the public, for example; residents, businesses, property owners, renters, visitors and community stakeholder groups, what are the top three to five issues that come up repeatedly?**

Response by the Committee:

- 1) Concern that there is no comprehensive town plan
- 2) Traffic Safety
- 3) Functional connectivity of services and offices and organizations within the town center
  - a. Development of more gathering spaces
  - b. Connection to the rail trail
- 4) Preservation of the historical nature of the town
- 5) Preservation of open spaces

Upon further discussion, the Committee agreed that the news regarding the award of the TAP Grant needs to be announced to the town, tying it back to the 2019 Plan New Hampshire Charette. The committee would like to set up their own dedicated page on the town's website as a newsfeed, in order to keep the public updated on their work in process.

- 7. What is the greatest challenge to providing services to the town?**
- a. Public Interaction
  - b. Social Media communication methods
  - c. Staffing compacity
  - d. Municipal Facilities
  - e. Operational Space
  - f. Technology, Equipment, Communication
  - g. Infrastructure
  - h. Funding
  - i. Audience

Conclusion by the Committee: The Rye Town Center Committee's service to the town is to provide advisement and planning for public municipal functions, in the town center. One of the biggest challenges the Committee has encountered is related to information sharing. An example would be the changes in status of buildings the Committee has been tasked with over the past year. This lack of information sharing has contributed to the lack of a comprehensive town plan.

- 8. Would increase community engagement and communication improve your level of service or response? If yes, explain how in the comment box below.**

Response by the Committee: Yes, increased awareness and input from the community is crucial to a successful outcome of the work of this committee.

- 9. Has climate change impacted your department, board, commission or committee or informed your work and town services? If yes; select all that apply.**
- a. Drought
  - b. Water supply and demand
  - c. Water quality
  - d. Extreme temperature

- e. Air quality
- f. Natural resources and ecosystems
- g. Surface waters and their buffers
- h. Invasive Species
- i. Coastal flooding
- j. Storm water management and drainage
- k. Road closures and damage
- l. Fire risks
- m. Utilities supply and demand
- n. Coastal properties
- o. Municipal services
- p. Infrastructure
- q. Coastal storm and sea level rise and flooding
- r. Water and sewer service
- s. Work force and labor
- t. Budget and expenditures
- u. Greenhouse gas emissions

**10. What is your greatest challenge with respect to being better prepared to implement climate change adoption adaptation acts, and be more resilient to climate change impacts?**

The Committee agreed that climate change has not yet informed or impacted their current work. Their greatest challenge is their level of understanding and education of the Committee and all residents on how to address climate change. The Committee's work centers on preserving and celebrating the character of the town. Therefore, increasing their understanding of adaptation to climate change is crucial to their work.

**11. What area, topic or service would benefit most from increased funding?**

Response by the Committee:

- 1) Provide more funding for the acquisition and maintenance of open spaces and important/significant structures in town
- 2) Communication resources to broader audiences

**IV. Committee Summary**

*Tabled until Member Azzi is in attendance.*

**V. Walking Tour and 9/15 Meeting at TD Bank Building**

Chair Stewart reported that scheduling a walking tour of all the buildings has not been easy to obtain. She has reached out to the new Recreation Director, Meghan Spaulding, and she would love to meet with the Committee. Chair Stewart suggested that the Committee schedule a meeting before one of their monthly meetings to meet with Ms. Spaulding. It was also suggested to meet before the October 6<sup>th</sup> meeting to tour the church building. Chair Stewart stated that she will set that up.

**VI. Approval of Minutes - 8/04/2021**  
*Tabled until next meeting*

**VII. Other Business**

- **Next Meeting:** Wednesday, October 6, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.
- There was discussion about next steps for the TAP Grant award. Chair Stewart will reach out to Scott Bogle to find out if there will be a kick-off meeting and what the Committee needs to do.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Lydia Tilsley to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m. Seconded by Tom King. All in favor.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dyana F. Ledger