

1 Town of Middlebury  
2 Downtown Improvement District Commission  
3 Minutes of Meeting  
4 April 30, 2021  
5

6 Commission members present: Amey Ryan, Gary Baker, Adam Franco, Stacey Rainey, Lorraine  
7 Tobias and Dan Brown.  
8

9 Staff Present: Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay and Community Liaison Jim Gish  
10

11 Others Present: Better Middlebury Partnership (BMP) Director Karen Duguay  
12

13 Amey Ryan called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.  
14

15 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair  
16

17 Franco moved to elect Amey Ryan Chair and Lorraine Tobias Vice-Chair. Rainey seconded the  
18 motion. The motion carried with 7 in favor. **MOTION PASSED.**  
19

20 Approval of Agenda  
21

22 Baker moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Franco. The motion carried with 7 in favor.  
23 **MOTION PASSED.**  
24

25 FY22 Budget Public Hearing  
26

27 Ryan opened the public hearing at 12:04 p.m.  
28

29 Ramsay went over the FY21 budget with the Commission, and said they could anticipate the same  
30 amount of revenue this year of approximately \$34,000. She said the DIDC has a couple of annual  
31 commitment allocations: maintenance of downtown improvements for \$3,400; 15% (just over  
32 \$5,000) to the BMP; and the commitment of \$10,000 annually to support the BMP marketing  
33 position. She said last year a new allocation of \$6,000 was approved for Bundle, which was a new  
34 course for the DIDC that had not previously supported other business operating costs. She said  
35 there is a fund balance of about \$40,000 going forward that could also be recommended for  
36 allocation.  
37

38 Ramsay reminded the DIDC that they recommend the budget to the Selectboard and they can  
39 accept or amend the budget. She said several people have submitted ideas for funds this year: Jim  
40 Gish suggested benches for the new parks in the downtown and Director of Planning, and Zoning  
41 Jen Murray had recommended tree guards and/or tree grates for the trees on Merchants Row.  
42 Ryan asked if any of these had been funded by the rail project, and Ramsay said, no this would be  
43 over and above those funds.  
44

45 Ryan asked if the FY21 budget items had been expended, and Ramsay said they would be, but she  
46 was unsure of the \$6,000 for Bundle. Duguay said Bundle would not be requesting those funds due  
47 to a reduction in programming during the pandemic.  
48

49 Ryan asked if there were any comments or suggestions for use of the funds.

50

51 Cunningham asked if the outdoor ashtrays in the FY21 budget were purchased or would that be  
52 carried over. Ramsay said those were to be freestanding ashtrays, but when she talked to  
53 department heads about actually implementing them, they had some maintenance concerns and  
54 thought they might be more of an attractive nuisance than a benefit. She said it has been suggested  
55 that as we replace the downtown trash receptacles that we have cigarette disposal as an add-on to  
56 those so they can be cleaned and maintained at the same time. Cunningham said he agrees with  
57 the department heads and you have to stay on top of them or they become a nuisance quickly.

58

59 Franco asked if there would be any bike racks in the new Triangle Park or Town Green when the  
60 project wraps up. Gish said there wouldn't be any in Triangle Park, but the Town Green had new  
61 ones installed last year as an investment by VTrans who replaced aging bike racks around town.

62

63 Brown moved to close the public hearing, and Baker seconded the motion. The motion carried with  
64 7 in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

65

66 The public hearing was closed at 12:11 p.m.

67

68 Approval of Minutes of January 7, 2020

69

70 Franco moved to accept the minutes as presented. Baker seconded the motion. The minutes were  
71 approved with 7 in favor. **MOTION PASSED.**

72

73 Citizen Comments – There were no citizen comments.

74

75 Discussion on FY22 Budget Recommendation to the Selectboard

76

77 Ramsay said if the DIDC is prepared to, they could propose an FY22 budget of the 10% maintenance  
78 allocation, the 15% BMP allocation and continue the \$10,000 marketing position for BMP. She also  
79 suggested \$10,000 for the downtown benches suggested by Gish, and \$10,000 for the tree  
80 guards/grates, understanding it may be less.

81

82 Gish said there will be multiple granite ashlar blocks within the two new parks that could serve as  
83 seating, but they wouldn't be that comfortable. He said resident John Freidin has suggested seating  
84 that would be more amenable to people spending time in the parks, so he did some research on  
85 benches. The benches he's recommending are manufactured by a company outside of Boston and  
86 are used widely in historic locations in Boston and they're made of cast iron and wood, and the  
87 turnaround time is 8 weeks from order to delivery. He said he will talk to DPW about the installation  
88 of the benches, and he's thinking about 4 benches. Ryan asked if he was thinking 6' or 8' benches,  
89 and Gish said the manufacturer said if we went with the 8' they suggested a divider in the middle so  
90 people wouldn't sleep on them overnight. He said it could be four 6' or four 8' benches, or a mix of  
91 6' and 8' benches.

92

93 Gish said the cost is around \$5,500 for four 6' benches, but this doesn't include shipping so that  
94 would need to be factored in. He said with a \$10,000 budget it's possible we could purchase more  
95 than four benches. Ryan thought the benches were in keeping with the intent of the DIDC, would be

96 a public benefit, and beautifies the space, so she was in favor of the addition of \$10,000 to the  
97 budget.  
98  
99 Rainey said she liked the idea of the benches, but would the permanent placement of them in  
100 Triangle Park limit potential uses in any way. Gish said the space is designed for public events, but  
101 he felt that if the benches were placed on the lawn bordering the sidewalk, they wouldn't be in the  
102 way of any event. Cunningham asked about installation in the grass area, and Ramsay said they  
103 might need some concrete footers to attach the benches to.  
104  
105 Franco said another possible location for the benches was the new, wider Merchants Row sidewalk,  
106 or by the Folklife Center. Ryan said the difficulty with placing them on the sidewalk would be snow  
107 removal by the sidewalk plow in the winter.  
108  
109 Franco wondered if it was worth increasing the budget some to purchase up to 6 benches if we  
110 identify other locations. Brown suggested identifying locations for the benches and see if they'll fit  
111 and then determine how many we need from that. Ryan said more benches can always be ordered  
112 later. Gish suggested someone from DIDC and DPW work with him on identifying locations for the  
113 benches.  
114  
115 Ryan said the next suggestion was for tree grates/guards for the 3 new trees along Merchants Row.  
116 Ryan said she liked the looks of the grates and guards over the fence. Ramsay said the fence might  
117 be a tripping hazard. Franco said the grates would accommodate outdoor dining better than a  
118 guard or fence might. The consensus was the grates were more aesthetically pleasing.  
119  
120 Franco moved to budget \$5,000 for three at-grade tree grates for the trees on Merchants Row.  
121 Rainey seconded the motion. The motion carried with 7 in favor. **MOTION PASSED.**  
122  
123 Ramsay said that would make the FY22 DIDC budget proposal as follows:  
124 10% maintenance  
125 15% for BMP  
126 \$10,000 for BMP marketing position  
127 \$10,000 for benches  
128 \$5,000 for tree grates  
129  
130 Rainey asked if the unallocated funds need to be discussed or are they typically left in the fund.  
131 Ramsay said other recommendations may come up through the year and the DIDC can recommend  
132 those uses to the Selectboard for approval. Ryan said the DIDC isn't necessarily the brainstorming  
133 group to come up with the ideas for the funds, but more the keeper of the funds.  
134  
135 Cunningham moved to approve the budget as outlined by Kathleen Ramsay. Rainey seconded the  
136 motion.  
137  
138 Baker asked if there had been any more discussion about public restrooms. Ramsay said there is a  
139 temporary portable toilet in the parking lot behind the Town Offices, and Director of Public Works  
140 Operations Bill Kernan is working with the Rotary on other options.  
141  
142 The vote was called and the budget was approved as moved with 7 in favor. **MOTION PASSED.**  
143

144 Commission Concerns

145

146 Franco volunteered to work with Jim Gish and DPW on the placement of the benches.

147

148 The meeting adjourned at 12:39 p.m. upon motion by Brown, seconded by Franco.

149

150 Respectfully submitted,

151 Beth Dow