

1 TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY
2 Downtown Improvement District Commission
3 Town Office Large Conference Room
4 Tuesday, September 18, 2018
5 Draft Meeting Minutes
6

7 Commission Members Present: Amey Ryan, Gary Baker, Adam Franco, Lindsey Fuentes-George and
8 Steve Dupoise arrived late. Becky Dayton was absent.
9

10 Town Staff: Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay and Community Liaison Jim Gish
11 Also Present: Karen Duguay of Better Middlebury Partnership.
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13 The meeting was called to order by Chair Amey Ryan at 12:01 p.m.
14

15 Approval of Agenda
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17 The agenda was approved as presented upon motion by Baker, seconded by Franco. The vote was 4 in
18 favor, 2 absent.
19

20 Approval of Minutes
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22 Because only 3 of the 4 members present had been at the last meeting, the approval of the June 5, 2018
23 minutes was deferred until the next meeting.
24

25 Citizen Comments – There were no comments.
26

27 Bridge Project Update
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29 Jim Gish reported the construction is past mid-point for this year and the tunnel borings to connect the
30 drainage systems are almost done. He said everything is on schedule and the good chemistry of the
31 team is building confidence on how the next two construction seasons will go.
32

33 (Steve Dupoise entered the meeting.)
34

35 Gish reported that the meeting on September 11th with the Governor and Secretary of Transportation
36 was a success, and the message to them was that in order for this project to be successful there has to
37 be a good partnership between the Town and the State. Gish said he'd be working with Nancy Malcolm
38 and Karen Duguay on a submission this fall to the State for additional grant funds for next years'
39 construction season. He said we are also ready to go into Round 2 of public meetings for the final
40 landscaping of Triangle Park and Printer's Alley. He said the landscape plan has been designed by
41 Landworks and input from these public meetings will be taken into the final design phase of this project.
42 He said the design incorporates how this will work into St. Stephen's Memorial Garden and sanctuary

43 area and merges with the rest of the Town Green. Gish said the State is committed to doing more than
44 just what is required.

45
46 Ryan commented on how friendly the construction workers in Triangle Park and the pit area in Printer's
47 Alley have been and how they actually will have a conversation with you and is a testament to the
48 people hired and how they're trying to make this as unobtrusive as possible.

49
50 Gish said there had been 18 blasts this season to get through the bedrock with no personal injuries or
51 damage to buildings, so this is a confidence builder in the quality of work. Franco asked if the State
52 budget would be able to cover all the improvements, or will the DIDC need to fund things such as
53 benches and bike racks after the project is complete. Gish said he understands that these amenities are
54 going to be up to the Town to provide. He said as part of a Federal project, their goal is to "restore" the
55 area, which is easier to imagine for Triangle Park than it is for Printer's Alley. Ramsay said we'll be
56 eligible for Downtown Transportation Grant funds for these amenities, but we will need to come up with
57 matching funds. Gish said their conversation with the Governor was about setting an example of how a
58 community can come through a project of this size, and that we would need the help of the
59 Administration, as well as the Transportation Agency to accomplish this. Duguay said it would be helpful
60 to have someone from the DIDC present at the public meeting to hear all the public comments and ideas
61 on the restoration of these two areas to get ideas on how we can make improvements to our downtown
62 in the future.

63
64 Strategic Planning

65
66 Ramsay handed out an updated Downtown Improvement District Map that includes the Marble Works
67 area. She said the Commission needs to look at the service area and see if they're happy with it as it is
68 now, and if so, how can we add value to the property owners outside the traditional downtown who
69 may feel somewhat neglected. Ryan asked what would need to happen to change the boundary, and
70 Ramsay said it would need a new petition of all the property owners in the district.

71
72 Ryan said as she looked at the DIDC Mission, it appears to overlap with several other volunteer
73 organizations, such as the Better Middlebury Partnership (BMP), Neighbors Together and even the
74 Addison County Economic Development Corporation (ACEDC). She said her thinking is instead of the
75 DIDC coming up with ideas, the DIDC could fund the ideas that these groups have, provided the ideas
76 work within the Mission of the DIDC. She said one big project being discussed and explored by
77 Neighbors Together that the DIDC might help with is WiFi in the downtown, and the other project would
78 be the reimagining of the park and green space in the downtown.

79
80 Ryan said she thinks in the beginning of the DIDC, the business owners came to them for support when
81 they needed help with something they wanted added to the downtown, but she said with the last
82 renewal of the District there seemed to be businesses wondering what they were getting for these
83 additional dollars. She said it looked like an inversion happened and in order to stay relevant, we need
84 to let these businesses know where the value is.

85

86 Dupoise said we need to be looking for a long-range goal, and also help with some of the short-range
87 problems associated with the construction and other needs, but sometimes you get caught up in the
88 short-range items because there are so many of them. Ryan said there are other groups that can help
89 with the short-term items. She said in regards to parking problems, there is a group looking at other
90 parking options to help relieve the problem downtown. Duguay said the downtown merchants also
91 need to be educated on the proper parking areas for their employees, because she feels some are
92 directing them to parking areas that are actually prime parking spots.

93

94 Duguay said at one time Becky Dayton had questioned how impactful the DIDC could be with the
95 amount of money available each year, so people would feel like something real had been done. She
96 asked do you bank it up until something impactful could be done, or is it just about communicating to
97 members what has been accomplished each year?

98

99 Dupoise asked if there was any one person coordinating or working with all these various groups.

100 Duguay said she has a hand in one way or the other in all these organizations, and it's really BMP and
101 Neighbors Together focusing on the downtown area. Ryan said the only reason she mentioned ACEDC is
102 because if you read the Mission statement, there is an economic development-type element to it.

103

104 Lindsey Fuentes-George said she agreed with Ryan and thought the DIDC should have one thing that
105 was concrete and clear so people know what it was offering, because there is already so much overlap
106 with groups.

107

108 Ryan asked Ramsay if it was possible to "bank" the money from year to year so they could be more
109 impactful, and Ramsay said this was possible. Franco asked if there were any restrictions on how the
110 DIDC could use those funds to work with other groups, and Ramsay said there wasn't, but the use of
111 funds does require Selectboard approval. Ramsay said the one caveat would be that historically the
112 DIDC partnered with other groups in something that would leverage more funds, like a grant
113 opportunity, and would kick in the last financial help to get a project done. Duguay thought
114 communication was important to these groups and also some extra planning by these organizations on
115 projects that might benefit from DIDC funding.

116

117 Ramsay said there is a good opportunity this year to notify property owners within the Downtown
118 Improvement District of the recent partnering of the DIDC with Neighbors Together and BMP with
119 funding to create the new Middlebury website, which will launch September 28th. Ryan thought that
120 was a great example to show how the money had been spent, and to support Neighbors Together and
121 BMP. Ramsay and Duguay will work together to get something out to the property owners and Gish
122 suggested a social media launch of the new website.

123

124 Ryan said she had read through the document prepared by Ramsay and thought it was a good summary
125 of the District and Commission and the things they've done and hope to do. She wondered if it made
126 sense for the Commission to adopt this document. Ramsay said she could go back and add Ryan's

127 suggestion of the DIDC being a funding partner with other groups as the main focus of the DIDC, and
128 then bring it back at the next meeting. Franco said these groups don't have to be limited to just a few,
129 but can be open to others as well, such as the Walk-Bike Council, which is surveying bike parking in
130 Town and the need for additional bike parking installations, as well as other groups that may come
131 forward.

132
133 It was discussed how to get the word out to these other groups that aren't as connected to the DIDC as
134 BMP and Neighbors Together are. Ryan thought it was a good idea to send out communication to the
135 DID members at least a couple times a year. Duguay suggested having an e-mail mailing list for the DID
136 members.

137
138 The DIDC scheduled their budget meeting for Tuesday, November 13, 2018 at noon. Ramsay will do the
139 hearing notice to members. Fuentes-George asked if the money from last year had been spent, and
140 Ramsay said it hadn't been other than for commitments to the BMP.

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142 The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m. upon motion by Baker, seconded by Fuentes-George.

143
144 Respectfully submitted,
145 Beth Dow