

1 Town of Middlebury
2 Economic Health Committee
3 Draft Minutes of Meeting
4 October 25, 2018
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6 Present: Mary Cullinane, Steve Boyce, Ben Calvi, Becky Dayton, John Freidin, Scott Gemignani and Karen
7 Duguay. Absent: Fred Kenney, Farhad Khan and Mike Capra
8 Also Present: Ex Officio Member Jennifer Murray and Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay and Beth Dow,
9 Town Staff/note taker

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11 Call to Order: In Fred Kenney's absence, Mary Cullinane called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. in the
12 Town Offices Large Conference Room.

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14 Minutes: Minutes of the September 27, 2018 and October 11, 2018 meetings were approved upon
15 motion by Dayton, seconded by Boyce.

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17 Public Comments: None
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19 Presentation by Kathleen Ramsay and Jennifer Murray on the Structure of Town Government
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21 Cullinane stated that since the Committee didn't want to duplicate efforts of others, it was important to
22 know what projects were taking place. She said Kathleen Ramsay and Jennifer Murray would explain
23 the roles and functions of Town boards and committees, so there is a better understanding as this
24 Committee continues to investigate opportunities for economic health.

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26 Ramsay said her presentation on the Town boards and committees would focus only on the projects
27 that pertain directly to this Committee's work on economic health.

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29 Ramsay said the Selectboard is the governing body of the Town, and to help run the Town they appoint
30 committees. She said some of the committees appointed by the Board have statutory authority, such as
31 the Planning Commission, Development Review Board and Conservation Commission, whereas the
32 Downtown Improvement District Commission charge is set by local ordinance. She said the other
33 committees appointed by the Board are the Infrastructure Committee, Energy Committee, Parks and
34 Recreation Committee and Economic Health Committee, and these committee charges are solely
35 determined by the Selectboard. Ramsay went over her responsibilities and duties as Town Manager,
36 which is to run the day-to-day operation of the Town and the administration of all departments with the
37 help of the department heads.

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39 Ramsay said the Selectboard's primary focus is the Downtown Bridge Project and all things associated
40 with it. She said there are some things that aren't part of the project that are the Town's responsibility,
41 such as landscaping in the parks, sidewalks, and anything not the tunnel itself. She said their second
42 priority will be to bring a water bond vote to the voters at Town Meeting. She said there is a study going

43 on that will help prioritize water projects needed in the system, and will also show where the troubled
44 Exchange Street water line fits into the list of priorities. She said the Infrastructure Committee will
45 receive the report in early November and determine which projects to include in the water bond. These
46 projects would include such things as water line replacement or perhaps a water tank if needed.

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48 Ramsay said the Board's third priority is the East Middlebury Flood Resiliency Project. She said with
49 Hurricane Irene and other storm events there has been some flooding in East Middlebury, and we are
50 looking at a capital project to make flooding less likely to occur in the future. She said this is a \$2 million
51 dollar project, with \$500,000 coming from town funds and the remaining from FEMA. This will also be a
52 bond vote in March.

53

54 Ramsay said the Infrastructure Committee works on Capital budgeting and planning, equipment
55 purchases and other matters as requested by the Selectboard. She said their top priorities for this year
56 mirror the Selectboard's. She said they are also working on ways to use the Cross Street Bridge Fund
57 surplus for Capital projects or Equipment Fund replacements. She said the balance in the Cross Street
58 Bridge Funds surplus stands at \$2 million dollars, and earns approximately \$400,000 annually. Ramsay
59 said other items being worked on by the Infrastructure Committee were the decommissioning of the old
60 Wastewater Treatment Facility and construction of new Public Works and Police storage facilities; an
61 assessment of Creek Road and whether to reopen it to traffic or maintain it as a bike/pedestrian path;
62 assessment of Town facilities for maintenance and capital projects; and establishing an equipment and
63 vehicle replacement plan.

64

65 Cullinane asked how the work the Infrastructure Committee does fits in with Master Planning, and is the
66 Exchange Street water project bond a component of the Master Plan. Ramsay said that Murray and the
67 Planning Commission have a big role in the Capital Planning process, so they need to coordinate efforts.
68 Murray said there is a Town Comprehensive Plan that is long-range planning, and then there are other
69 long-term planning projects under that, such as the Downtown Master Plan, and they all contain
70 recommendations for projects, but then the Infrastructure Committee takes these priority projects and
71 incorporates them into the Capital Planning. Ramsay said the Town Plan identifies the heavy density
72 areas of the town, and the Infrastructure Committee likes to focus their projects in these areas.

73

74 Ramsay said the Downtown Improvement District imposes a 7 cent tax on commercial property in this
75 District and is administered the Downtown Improvement District Commission pursuant to criteria
76 spelled out in the Downtown Improvement District Ordinance. She said they collect around \$34,000
77 annually and have financed various downtown improvement projects, such as new sidewalks and
78 historic streetlights. Ramsay said while the Selectboard is responsible for how the Cross Street Bridge
79 surplus funds are spent, the Downtown Improvement District Commission creates a budget each year
80 for expenditures using the Downtown tax funds. She said they could recommend using some of the
81 Cross Street Bridge Fund surplus, but they would need to bring their suggestion to the Selectboard and it
82 would need to be approved by voters.

83

84 Ramsay said the Development Review Board reviews and approves development site plans in
85 accordance with the Town's Zoning Bylaws, the Town Plan and state statutes and regulations, and the
86 Planning Commission's projects for 2018 are master planning the Route 7 corridor, Exchange St and
87 Hannaford Plaza areas, the Amtrak rail platform location project, neighborhood area design and
88 Downtown Master Plan planning. Freidin asked if the Route 7 corridor plan had been completed and
89 Murray said only initial planning has been done at this point. She said they would need to apply for
90 grant funding in the next round to hire a consultant to complete the study.

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92 Cullinane asked Ramsay what she'd like to see come out of the Economic Health Committee. Ramsay
93 said the Selectboard asked her to create a Charge for the Committee, so her input is included in the
94 Charge that she drafted with Fred Kenney.

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96 Dayton asked what one of the groups Ramsay described most closely matched the work this Committee
97 is doing, and Ramsay said none were comparable to their Charge.

98

99 Tentative Meeting Schedule

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101 Freidin said he hoped the Committee would begin a SWOT process, because he didn't really feel they
102 had a goal yet. Cullinane said she believed that in the beginning everyone agreed it was important to
103 get a foundation of information before taking any path of action, and she thought Kenney had done this
104 by the scheduling the different speakers to attend the meetings. She said they had also committed to
105 get public input as well, and he's done that with two upcoming meetings.

106

107 There was discussion on whether or not to have prepared questions to ask at the public input meetings
108 and when there would be time on the schedule to work on what to ask. Cullinane suggested carving out
109 a time at the meeting on November 8th to come up with some questions to ask those attending on the
110 29th.

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112 Duguay asked how these public meetings were going to be advertised. Dow said the agendas are posted
113 on the Town's website and a meeting notice goes out in the Friday notice of upcoming meetings and
114 events, but that is seen by a limited number of people. Murray said they shouldn't take public input
115 lightly and you need to know what you want from their input. Dow also said that sometimes when the
116 public is asked for their input, there are expectations that what is discussed is going to happen, so it
117 needs to be communicated why they are asking for the input. Cullinane said at the next meeting they
118 need to get clarity on how the public meeting will be characterized in the invitation and to set
119 appropriate expectations. Duguay suggested a working meeting in between the next meeting and the
120 first public meeting to formulate the questions and really processing what has been heard in previous
121 meetings and not rush the process.

122

123 There was discussion on inviting certain stakeholders in the business community to the meeting on
124 November 29th, and the December 13th meeting would be a more general population. Freidin said it's
125 been his experience that you get a much larger crowd if you give them an idea of what you want to hear

126 from them. Murray said she was surprised they were taking public input before they have a clear idea
127 of that they want to hear. Cullinane thought that it would be helpful to hear what the priorities of the
128 public are. She said they had to take a step back and figure out how to articulate the mission of the
129 meeting, the intention of the meeting and to have a strategy to insure the proper participants are in
130 attendance.

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132 The meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

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134 The next meeting of the Economic Health Committee will be at 12 noon on Thursday, November 8, 2018
135 in the Large Conference Room of the Town Offices.

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137 Respectfully submitted,
138 Beth Dow

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