

Sunderland Selectboard
Monday, July 26, 2021

Attending: T. Fydenkevez, D. Pierce, C. Drake-Tremblay, G. Kravitz
Village Center Committee Present: L. Starr, S. Schneider, R. Warner, J. Skibiski
Others present: R. el Samahy, B. Pierson, F. Bouliari, D. Murphy, C. Larabee, S. Snyder, B. Wozniakewicz, O. Rosewarne, Lucy A.
Meeting via Zoom recorded by FCAT.
Meeting called to order at 6:30PM.

MINUTES

Mr. Pierce motion to approve the minutes of July 12, 2021, Ms. Drake-Tremblay second, vote 2-0.

BUSINESS

RAPID RECOVERY PLAN PRESENTATION: Ms. Starr introduced the consultants from OverUnder and provided background on the Rapid Recovery Planning Grant that Sunderland received to assist communities with planning for economic recovery from the pandemic. The study area centers around the intersection of routes 116 and 47 and the businesses in that area. Mr. el Samahy provided background on the type of work OverUnder has done, reviewed the grant timeline and previous work, including surveys, data gathering, and interviews with businesses and property owners. The consultants presented key findings, assets, and challenges facing businesses in the area. They also offered potential projects in six main categories: Provide Immediate Support to Businesses in Need; Use Branding to Solidify Village Center Identity; Increase Pedestrian & Bike Connectivity; Target Desired Businesses; Utilize Zoning to Create the Desired Development; and Capitalize on Events to Draw Residents & Visitors. During the question and answer portion of the presentation, Ms. Snyder stated that creating a formal economic development plan would be key to future development. She also noted that the village center is only three blocks from Mt. Toby and the Community Pathways Committee is working on a trail plan. Ms. Snyder expressed a fear of sign pollution and highlighted previous attempts to extend the riverwalk and the town may face similar challenges to create a loop for pedestrians and bicyclists. Mr. Pierce stated the importance of branding and wayfinding. There is no town common and the majority of properties in the study area are residences. There is not a lot of unprotected developable land and a tension between those who are resistant to change and those who want to see more businesses in town. Mr. Pierce also noted the importance of the intersection. Mr. Fydenkevez stated that the town has to work hard to keep people in town and stressed the importance of attracting apartment dwellers to participate and engage with the town. He noted that while PVTa provides public transportation south, FRTA connections north are lacking. There is a need to better define the village center. Ms. Starr liked the idea of small, temporary interventions to enliven the town center and see what works. Mr. Fydenkevez remarked that the library holds lots of community events and the town needs to look at regional events to build community. Ms. Starr elaborated on that idea, suggesting creating a place for others to put on events, but that town entities didn't necessarily need to be involved in programming the space.

GASOLINE & DIESEL FUEL BID ACCEPTANCE: The FY22 Fuel Bids were reviewed. Mr. Pierce motion to accept fuel and gas diesel contract with the low bidder, Ms. Drake-Tremblay second, vote 3-0

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES

The North Main contractors began working on the sidewalk. The roadway pavement is complete except for the top layer. Rep. Blais, State Auditor Bump, Rep. Whipps, and Sen. Hinds discussed the current state-owned-land PILOT program. The Town Administrator joined and spoke about the local impact of the program being underfunded. The town received its initial disbursement of American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA). The Council On Aging is seeking members and interested residents should contact the COA or Town Administrator.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Drake-Tremblay motion to adjourn at 8:07 PM, Mr. Pierce second, vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Geoff Kravitz, Town Administrator