

## TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT

**Selectboard**, Water & Sewer Commissioners, Liquor Commissioners, Cemetery Commissioners

**SPECIAL MEETING -- Tuesday, May 21, 2024 -- 6:30 PM**

**Zoom Meeting Link:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85646551688>

**Phone: 1 929 205 6099 | Meeting ID: 8564 655 1688**

### UNAPPROVED MINUTES

**Members Present:** Glen Traverse, Bob Richards, Rich Greenough

**Members Absent:** Chadd Viger, Mike Doran

**Others Present:** Town Manager Joe Gunter, Recording Secretary Claire Stanley, Brian Breslend, Dubois & King, Inc, Steffanie Bourque, Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC), approximately twelve community members.

**Call to Order:** Chairman Richards called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**Downtown Sidewalk Project -- Review of Feedback:** Chairman Richards said the intent of the meeting is to review the feedback from community members at the two previous public hearings. Mr. Scott commented that there was confusion about the date and location of this meeting; could not find this meeting posted anywhere. Thought it was to be held on Thursday. Perhaps the small number of people in attendance is due to that confusion. Manager Gunter noted it is posted on Facebook, the Town Website, Community Bank, Post Office and the Municipal Building outside bulletin board.

Ms. Bourque said two listening meetings were held, May 9 and 11 about this project, not to be confused with the South Park Place Park and Ride project to hear public concerns. The intent of this meeting is for the Select Board to review the concerns from the two previous meetings and provide RRPC and Dubois and King direction for the next design step. A summary of that feedback was provided to Board members at their last meeting, have had no chance to discuss it to make decisions. Manager Gunter made copies of the summary tonight.

Mr. Traverse read the summary point by point starting with Existing Conditions. At a question from the crowd, Mr. Breslend said he will provide area crash data. Ms. Hunt noted, way back, the original concern was that it is hard to cross the downtown "sea of cement". Mr. Greenough noted the intent of the project is to shorten crosswalks, slow traffic and make downtown safer. Ms. Bourque noted we cannot spend hours and hours tonight answering each bullet point -- it is for the Board to review the concerns and provide direction for final design.

Manager Gunter explained Project Funding noting that the project started at \$560,000 and has ballooned to \$1.3 million. The Town has the matching funds; the project is contingent upon

receipt of the grant. It was noted that the South Park Place Park and Ride and Lights in the Park project is fully funded. Ms. Billewicz said that the sidewalk reserve funds used for this project match are not available for side streets sidewalks. Chairman Richards stated that all sidewalks are Fair Haven sidewalks including downtown. The cost to cancel the project is \$85,000. Mr. Traverse said, the cost to (only) repair the downtown sidewalk is \$800,000 and he does not support that. Ms. Billewicz asked how much Dubois & King have been paid so far. Dubois & King act only at the direction of the Board.

Mr. Traverse read Sidewalks, Crosswalks, and Parking bullet points. There was lengthy discussion of concerns including: Ms. Hunt expressed concern about deliveries; backing out of parking spaces at the green space seems problematic; that slowed traffic would be of help. At the question of concrete vs asphalt sidewalks, chairman Richards noted that the Town ordinance says new/replaced sidewalks are to be concrete. It was noted that three parking spaces will be lost when paving is done to meet regulations, even if no project is done; that handicapped parking spaces are not lost parking spaces. To someone's question, Mr. Breslend said the project construction would most likely take two to three months. Folks said if the project is under construction for 2 to 3 months, businesses would not survive. Chairman Richards said he understands those concerns, and everything possible would be done to mitigate business access throughout the construction phase. Inevitably, there will be disruption. Ms. Bourque noted that in the beginning, this project was to go along with a downtown paving project. When the Town provides a construction date, every effort will be made to harmonize with other work. Ms. Hunt said that one business owner told her that she had survived COVID, is now surviving Park and Ride, but this project will do her in. One gentleman stated that when he moved into Fair Haven 3 years ago, many storefronts were shuttered. Now all storefronts are in business; would hate to see shuttered storefronts again. If that happens, folks will not stop in Town, but drive right through. He is sympathetic to concerns and the need for revitalization and would like to see serious thought to this project. Parking at the Community Bank and Martial Arts center was discussed and will be investigated.

Chairman Richards reported that a Fair Haven citizen had told him that this has been in the works since the 80's and to please not drop the ball again now. He said, now there is a plan in the works and some people are not supportive. Someone asked, is there anything that businesses can apply for to help out during the duration of the project.

Discussion returned to the corner green space noting to leave the curblin with an elongated median. No trees. That they would block storefront view and signage. Ms. Pritchard noted she supports change; that this looks good on paper, but will not work; she fears it will create a bottleneck. Mr. Breslend noted that bulb outs allow 30' curb to curb; that engineering takes snowbanks into consideration; can re-work the design to accommodate truck deliveries. It was noted to keep the dedication slates in the general area they are now, around ornamental lighting.

Ms. Hunt commented that a lot of people thought the Town Meeting non-binding vote meant the project was cancelled. Ms. Bourke said she is not sure if V-Trans would support major

changes (no trees) to the plan. Ms. Pritchard asked if V-Trans would consider it a deal breaker to have a delivery median. Mr. Traverse said he sees no reason why the project cannot be done in sections to accommodate storefront access and not negatively impact businesses.

Chairman Richards said, it is disappointing that so few people attend these meetings/public hearings all along the planning process. The Board is not ready for a meeting on Thursday. Will do a better job of communicating to the public. In summary, Ms. Bourke said: Dubois & King will: provide crash data to the Town; shift the southern most crosswalk a bit south to straighten it; check out parking at Community Bank; design dedication slates to remain in their present general area; re-work the "corner" curblineline to accommodate deliveries; convert parking spaces to straight instead of slant. Ms. Bourke will find out if the grant will support having no trees in the "corner green space". She will share that information ASAP for a reporting meeting date to be announced.

Mr. Traverse made a motion to **adjourn** at 9:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Claire Stanley

---

Glen Traverse, Board Clerk