



Office of
THE PLANNING BOARD
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 Townsend, Massachusetts 01469
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RECEIVED
 JAN 27 2021
 TOWN OF TOWNSEND
 TOWN CLERK

Lance J. McNally, Chairman

Carol Hoffses, Associate Member

Charles Sexton-Diranian, Clerk

Laura Shifrin, Vice Chair

Jerrilyn T. Bozicas, Member

Planning Board Meeting Minutes
Joint meeting
Board of Selectmen
Conservation Commission
Capital Planning Committee
Finance Committee
Cemeteries and Parks Commission
Historic District Commission
Recreation Commission
Board of Water Commissioners
Council on Aging
NMRSD School Committee
Energy Committee
Zoning Board of Appeals
Board of Health
Townsend Housing Authority
Townsend Affordable Housing Trust
Master Plan Committee
Amended Agenda
 January 7, 2021, at 7:00 PM
 VIRTUAL MEETING

VIA: ZOOM PER GOVERNOR'S ORDER SUSPENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS
 OF THE OPEN MEETNIG LAW, G.L. c. 30A, § 20†

PUBLIC ACCESS ZOOM MEETING LINK: [Join Zoom Meeting](#)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88211307986?pwd=cFRvSEhEQmlMdjIxYlJwTW5CbFppQT09>

Meeting ID: 882 1130 7986 Passcode: 402451

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 (New York)

PRELIMINARIES: votes may be taken.

- 1.1** Call the meeting to order and roll call. Chairman Lance McNally called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Members present: Lance McNally, Chair, Laura Shifrin, Vice Chair, Charles Sexton-Diranian, Clerk. Others present: Veronica Kell, Board of Selectmen, Beth Faxon, Planning Board Administrator, Hartley Pleshaw, TCAM, Chris Nocella, Dave Henkels, Jennifer Eaton, Courtney Borelli, Joan Savoy, Natalie Call, Emy Hoff, Don Hayes, Roger Raposa, Bill Cadogan, Bill Rideout, Jodie Deschenes, Karen Clement, John Barrett, Brad Harris, Adria Boynton, Hillary King, Ken

† Per the Governor's Order, and during the State of Emergency now-in-effect or until sooner rescinded, public bodies are relieved from the requirement that they conduct their meetings in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public; provided, however, that all public bodies shall ensure public access to deliberations through adequate, alternative means, which include (but are not limited to) telephone, internet or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing or other technology that enables the public to clearly follow the proceedings of the public body while they are occurring. The Order also allows remote participation by all members of a public body; and waives the requirements that a quorum and the chair be physically present at the meeting location.

Diranian, Casandra Whitmore, Joan Wotkowicz, Kym Craven, Michael Brown, Karen Hill, E. Austin-Bruns.

1.2 Chairman's additions or deletions. None noted.

- 2** **WORKSESSION: votes may be taken.** Veronica Kell shared a PowerPoint presentation on the meeting screen and thanked the Planning Board for hosting the All Boards and community grant meeting. She explained that while these grant programs were announced during a Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee meeting the representatives, Beth Faxon and Veronica Kell, thought that input from all Boards and Committees and the community is important to formulate ideas, and planning strategies for each the grant programs presented for discussion.

2.1 Montachusett Transportation Improvement program (TIP) - The first slide of the presentation was shared on screen. The Tip Improvement plan is a prioritized listing for federally funded projects covering 5 fiscal years. The projects include roadways, bridges, transit systems, pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Brad Harris, MRPC presented background on the TIP program which is administered by the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission for Townsend and other Towns in the Planning Commission region. He explained the process the Town follows to identify a community need and the development process for a project to be included inclusion in the TIP program. He noted that the community is responsible for the design and then the construction phase will be funded by state and federal funds. He advised that it is a long process for the community and can be complex and involved. Projects are approved by MASSDOT and the projects are usually multiyear spans. He noted a program called MAPIT used in project initiation phase. Mr. Harris encouraged the Town to work with MRPC in the project identification process for assistance in project launching. There are currently no projects for Townsend in the TIP. Comment was made about the potential for this grant program used to address the traffic problems at the high school. Question was asked if EV charging stations are eligible and Mr. Harris noted that that could be auxiliary or ancillary parts of a larger project under the TIP program. He mentioned that there is a announcement about a funding program for Massachusetts EV stations. Townsend's draft MVP-HMP plan also has EV stations in the implementation phase.

2.2 MADOT Winter Shared Streets and Spaces program – The Town applied for the earlier round of Shared Streets and spaces program and it was not funded. One of the reasons we were not funded was that our application had too much “place-making” in the application rather than creatively re designing current common areas. Another reason it was denied is that the proposal would have taken too much time to install. It is a state grant, using COVID-19 Cares Act funds, and targeted on quick build projects to get the community outside. February 26 is the final grant deadline, the funds come in advance, and they must be expended, and the project must be completed in two months. Accessing public parks and open spaces and the goal is to get people outdoors during the pandemic. Mr. Harris noted that Gardner received one of these grants and used the funds to create outdoor meeting areas for restaurants. He mentioned the Barr Foundation will provide technical assistance to the municipality during the application process. Project development and costs can be discussed with the Barr Foundation. Mr. Harris mentioned that Sheri Bean, MRPC can help the Town with the Safe Routes to School program. Mr. Barrett mentioned the grant has been funded and is underway for the sidewalks on the Town Common. He mentioned that this MA shared streets and spaces grant seems like it may be difficult to get plans in place in the time frame allotted. Ms. Kell noted that this is COVID-19 related so it is not a typical and as such requires special planning and attention to quick planning and construction speed. Mr. Harris mentioned considering smaller projects that perhaps the DPW can help with for this grant application. He mentioned there may be tie in projects with the Complete Streets Plan because Townsend is a Tier 3 community. The plan is found on the State website www.masscompletestreets.com. E. Hoff will forward a copy of the Plan to the Planning Board. Mr. Harris will look at Townsend's Complete Streets Plan and look at potential projects that may be eligible under this program. Hillary King, EEA Regional coordinator for the MVP Program, provided information on layouts and schematics for designing outdoor spaces which may help the grant writing. Mr. Harris provided informational links in the chatlog.

2.3 MASS Trails Grant program – It is a state grant for design project development engineering permitting construction and maintenance of recreational trails shared-use pathways, and the amenities that support trails. The grant is a reimbursement grant with 20% match in cash, donated services,

volunteer labor. Bill Rideout noted that the MASS trails grant program is the primary grant being used for the Squannacook Rail Trail. Ms. Kell mentioned that this may be a grant we can look to for future projects. Mr. Rideout mentioned that the Program is well funded. Ms. Kell asked if an updated Open Space and Recreation Plan is a requirement for filing a MASS Trails grant application. Mr. Rideout replied that it helps to have an updated plan but is not a requirement. The Towns Open Space and Recreation plan is a high quality document but has expired and needs to be updated.

- 2.4** Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers Wild & Scenic Stewardship Council Community Grants Program. Open to communities along the Wild & Scenic designated rivers. Nashua Squannacook and they are for biological diversity, historical & cultural or recreational & scenic resources. Awards are up to \$5000.00 5 will be awarded this year, apply 2/1/2021 through 4/1/21. Joan Wotkowicz drew attention to the RFP to review a list of project ideas and a link is provided to the RFR and the Stewardship plan.

The final slide was the IDEAS slide and each grant was discussed separately,

- for the TIP one idea was sidewalks along 119 at the Harbor to support the Rail Trail connection across South St. and to the Harbor Church. Another was the area by the High School, at the crosswalk. Mr. Harris commented that MADOT doesn't approve sidewalk projects exclusively, he recommended combining this with Rt 119 resurfacing or rehabilitation and this project would likely incorporate the goals in the Complete Streets plan. Mr. Nocella noted the State was not in favor of installing a light at the High school. Mr. Harris noted that there likely was not enough cross traffic to warrant a traffic light but there are methods of traffic calming that can be employed to help slow traffic in that section. The Town can apply for a study of this area and then apply for the recommended infrastructure improvements. Mr. Harris noted that if only sidewalks were going to be requested, that the Complete Streets program would probably be the optimal program. Ms. Kell brought up the problematic intersection of Rt 119, Proctor Road, and Groton Road where there are numerous vehicle accidents. She asked if this could be tied into the area near the High school as it is near in proximity. This intersection Rt 119/Proctor Rd/Groton Rd is in a three different Towns, one which is in a different Planning Commission and will require a regional collaborative approach. Mr. Harris informed that MRPC has done a study there as recently as 5 years ago. They are waiting for municipalities to advance the action items and implement their recommendations. Mr. Cadogan mentioned he is in favor of construction of an (walkway) overpass over Rt 119 by the High School. Mr. Harris mentioned that would be ideal if there were a trail it could connect to and make the area more walkable and bikeable for students and community. He gave an example of the Leominster rail trail where a bridge is being constructed over Rt. 2. Mr. Rideout noted that the Rail Trail will be tying into the Harbor Mall which supports the overall idea. Sheri Bean will be a MRPC resource person to help with the connectivity of trails. Mr. Cadogan also suggested that the Harbor Pond needs de-eutrophication restoration work which may be an idea for the wild and scenic grants program. Joan Wotkowicz concurred with this idea and noted that the restoration of Harbor Pond would be an eligible project under that grant program. Emy Hoff asked about reconfiguring the Proctor Road/Groton Road/Rt. 119 intersection. She asked for considerations of redesign of the intersection and thinking about options and creative solutions to rectifying this dangerous section.
- Winter Shared streets and spaces – signage at the Town Common for wayfinding to Howard Park, Old meeting house Rail trail, common parking on Depot Street, Jefts St parking to Rail Trail, possible pedestrian crossing light at Apple Meadow.
- MASS Trails – maintenance and restoration of existing trails at Old Meetinghouse Park, Howard Park, kiosks and trail maps at trail heads, purchase and or lease of trail-related construction and maintenance equipment.
- Wild & Scenic – protection of turtle habitat & turtle habitat education, improve boating passage on the river, Harbor Pond signage. Mr. Raposa commented on the idea of restoration work on the Adams Dam which has a deteriorating retaining wall and flashboards has had erosion issues of the

river bank. There are other grants that may be applicable for Adams Dam including EEA Dam repair and removal program as well as other funding opportunities identified in the MVP-HMP Plan.

The timeline of the grants were presented and considered. There is a compressed window for 3 of the 4 grants. Ms. Kell asked meeting participants interested in being involved to email either Beth, Ms. Kell or Jim Kreidler to sign up for any or all of the separate follow up meetings for the grants discussed in this meeting. She asked people to send in their ideas for these grants and noted assistance with the grant preparation is welcome and appreciated. The Master Plan survey report and the MVP survey results are available as well as the stakeholder list utilized for the MVP planning process.

Charles Sexton-Diranian made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 PM. Laura Shifrin seconded. All in Favor, the motion carried.

3 SCHEDULE AND ADJOURN: votes may be taken.

3.1 Next Planning Board meeting scheduled on January 11, 2021.

Charles Sexton-Diranian made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 PM. Laura Shifrin seconded. All in Favor, the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Faxon, Planning Board Administrator

Approved on: January 25, 2021

Items on file:

1. All Boards Grants meeting PowerPoint presentation slides.
2. Chatlog for 01-07-2020 Joint Zoom meeting.

Materials are available digitally upon request by emailing bfaxon@townsendma.gov

Jerry Racette is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Townsend Planning Board

Time: Jan 7, 2021 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

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