

11-29-18

Downtown Committee Meeting Minutes

Downtown Committee Meeting 7: Historic District Development

5-6pm

Town Office, Upstairs Meeting Room

Attending: Betsy Hopkins, Elin Elisofin, Kris Davidson, Holly Sault, John Wasielewski (virtually), David Wylie (virtually), Gabe McPhail, Andy Dorr, George Kendrick, Shelby Smith *Absent:* Hooper Brooks, Kathy Warren, Margaret Qualey

5pm Start

DISCUSSION:

Historic District Development

A conversation round the pros and cons of historic district development.

Concepts - <i>What's motivating us?</i>	Considerations- <i>What do we want to plan for / consider?</i>	Questions- <i>What do we need to know or decide?</i>
Preserve historic VH Maximize historical value	Building Codes & Ordinances Tax Incentives & Grants SLR	Why would we pursue Historic District designation? What would be our objective(s) in recommending this? Is historic district designation key in preserving our island heritage (a VH value)? Is there anything prohibitive about historic place or district designation? What would need to be changed/added in terms of ordinances to comply with the required standards of historic district or place development? Would we want to consider a demolition delay? A blight ordinance? WHY? WHY NOT? Should we encourage more properties along Main Street to pursue National Historic Register listing? What are we willing to recommend for ordinance changes in order to receive access to tax incentives and grants? Would we be willing to give up anything or accept restrictions on design/renovation standards? Or are we thinking all carrot and no stick / reward rather than restriction? Would we want to consider becoming a certified local government? Is significant investment in rehabilitating downtown structures worth it considering SLR?
Highest and Best use of town buildings Access to Affordable Housing	Building Repurposing / Downtown Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Year-round housing• Elder housing	Regarding town structures and historic sites, if need be, are we willing to consider giving up flexibility on how we use places and structures? Would we want to see historic structures used in part for YR housing? Do we want to establish an owner-occupied requirement for short-term rental housing in

		a historic district? Should historic district tax incentives be used to encourage the repurposing of spaces into YR affordable housing? Do we want to see YR housing on Main Street?
Generate value across multiple economies Reduce strain on resources	Low-impact Tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage Tourism Partner with Chamber and Historical Society - wayfinding and "packages" 	How would a town historic district proclamation benefit the economy? Do we want to recommend partnerships with the Chamber and the Historical Society that would encourage forms of low-impact tourism such as "heritage tours" through which the town/businesses might see economic return? What about a simple signage program reflecting individual building histories/ages? How does historic district designation overall align with our goals and values?

Gabe and George presented the following as an overview for the conversation:

- Historic District development could align with VH values, could support low impact "heritage" tourism, could build partnerships with Chamber of Commerce and Historical Society, could provide economic/funding opportunities – grants, incentives, credits, could help fund sea level rise adaptations on structures.
- This committee's role is to make suggestions and recommendations and identify what is important, and what needs to be changed and improved. So what are the benefits and drawbacks of historic district development? What might be the broader community's perspective?
- Historic District development could have federal, state, and/or local designation
- Currently five structures downtown are on the National Historic Register: Star of Hope, Union Church, Galamander, Payne House, and the Library.

The information generated during this conversation is represented below in relation to our ongoing considerations.

	Zoning, Code, Ordinances
	<i>What should be retained, what should be altered? Added?</i>
General Comments	Are there benefits of having a historic district? Would the community value historic properties in downtown? Would need to view this as an honor not a restriction; would need to be presented delicately. Committee is here to support and encourage property owners rather than dictate what they should do with their properties.
WWF	Should DT be looking at the working waterfront and talking to those owners about being part of a historic district? Nervous about talking to people involved in fishing/working waterfront. Working waterfront tax program- help preserve those access points for working waterfront purposes. Shoreland and Land Use Ordinances help with preservation of working waterfront properties.

Star of Hope	<p>Star of Hope building: Does it need any sort of permit for being converted into a museum? If so, it will be instructive for the committee to see the process and figure how they could have some “influence” in that process.</p> <p>Gabe + George will be meeting with James Brannan to educate him on what DT is doing and talking about and get his input – goal is to seek opportunities for cooperation and collaboration.</p>
Changes	<p>Survey from 2012 shows 72% of responders voting that there should be a historic building ordinance. Don’t want to start getting into any restrictive measures of creating historic district, but do we want to look into implementing:</p> <p>Type of roof ordinance to set a roof design standard – for renovations and new construction?</p> <p>Demolition delay ordinance? (gives others the opportunity to take over a building rather than it just disappearing)</p> <p>Neglect ordinance / safety hazard ordinance?</p> <p>Penalize/tax property owners who are neglecting properties? Probably not a good idea to punish people financially when likely they are neglecting their buildings because they don’t have the funds to begin with</p> <p>Building codes will be smart in the future to protect owners’ investments</p>

	Historical
	<i>What historical aspects are relevant/essential?</i>
Preservation	One goal of Historic District Development is preservation
Funding	<p>Propose that it would benefit people through tax credits and grants for the buildings they own to be registered as historic</p> <p>Historic District Development could be used as a tool to encourage and support investment in downtown buildings + support vibrancy downtown in other ways.</p>

	Community, Cultural, Functional
	<i>Current and future</i>
General Comments	<p>Interpretive signage/wayfinders from the ferry terminal to Main st. to inform and be part of the overall experience of visiting the island as well as honoring island heritage for all</p>

This information will be referenced in upcoming discussions and will lay the foundation for recommendations and further research.

Next Steps: Committee will need to do more research to determine what is applicable when making a recommendation for the Master Plan.

6pm Meeting Adjourned

View the PDF powerpoint for this meeting by [clicking HERE.](#)