

Downstreet Committee Meeting

July 13, 2017

Attendance: Betsy Hopkins, Kris Davidson, David Wylie, Elin Elisofon, Holly Sault, Andy Dorr - Town Manager, John Bubier – Ass't Town Planner

Committee Goals: Preservation, Economic Development/Infrastructure Improvements

Overview: To finalize priorities for consideration by DART (Design and Resiliency Team) for their July 24th visit. The initial areas for the priorities were established at the June 7th meeting.

Priorities – The Vinalhaven Downstreet Revitalization Committee Priority Page (See Attached) that was part of the committee's work since 2015 will be used as the working document to establish the DART priorities.

Priorities:

1. Physical Improvements/Infrastructure

- Sidewalks
 - Safety – ADA and **Age friendly (concern that our older community will be able to navigate safely. We are a community that wants to consider the "Age in Place" initiative in our planning**
 - Appealing
 - Lighting
 - **Night Sky lighting consideration**
 - Green space near water, seating, tables
 - Parking Lot
 - Pond
 - Near Greets Eats
- Landscape high visibility areas
 - Parking lot by bait plant
 - Signage

The physical improvements would be part of the Complete Streets program that is recognized and required by the Maine DOT as a criteria for financial assistance from the State. **Complete Streets is a transportation policy and design approach that requires streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation. While we support the concept of Complete Streets, the DST wants to make sure that the age demographic of the island is heavily considered to allow for change and growth that will support the "Age in Place" initiative.** The VH Chamber and the DST are supporting the implementation of the complete streets program for future planning on VH.

2. Economic Development – working with the Chamber of Commerce

- Sponsor workshops for businesses **(Moving to Chamber Priorities)**
- Provide support/incentives for new businesses **(Moving to Chamber Priorities)**
 - Target desirable new businesses
- Encourage/target new businesses Campaign **(Moving to Chamber Priorities)**
 - Art friendly opportunities
 - Agriculture
 - Aquaculture
- Encourage Buy Island (education, marketing, events) **(Moving to Chamber Priorities)**
- Housing – possible scenario could be the support of and facilitation of a remodel housing model to offer winter housing for elderly who cannot remain in owned houses in winter which would then be used as seasonal housing to support businesses on island
- Work Force – Work to increase work force base through increased communication of needs, work with agencies (state and private) on main land and participation in job fairs **(Moving to Chamber Priorities)**
- Flood Insurance – as the preservation of main street brick and mortar buildings is evaluated, the high cost of flood insurance for building owners is pivotal to the ability to operate
- Tax Incentives – explore incentives that might be available to increase likelihood of new businesses and the sustainability of existing businesses

3. Preservation and Collaborative Space

- Historic preservation of significant buildings (net factory, Robert Indiana, Downstreet market)
- Repurpose significant buildings (net factory)
- Support cooperative ventures
 - Community space for arts, culinary, printmaking, glass, pottery, woodworking
 - Studio space, shared equipment (possible use of net factory which would also promote economic development)
- Provide community Center space for community events (Net Factory)
- **Usage of current buildings – consideration of current usage to include back sides of buildings to pond side. This area is aesthetically beautiful and offers the opportunity for more businesses or housing possibilities**
- **Mandatory pro-active maintenance of historic buildings to ensure the character and structural/architectural integrity while promoting much needed structural safety to surrounding structures.**

Current discussion of boundaries for the Downtown area have the beginning at the Ferry Terminal to the old net factory parking lot. The DST would recommend that the Downtown boundary continue up the hill past the net factory to the War Memorial/Library (Webster Park).