

## Downtown Committee Meeting Notes

March 7, 2018

Town Office

Attendance: Kris Davidson, Andrew Dorr, Elin Elisofon, Betsy Hopkins, Holly Sault, Kathy Warren

Via Conference Call: Hooper Brooks, John Wasielewski, David Wylie

### Call to Order

**Review of goals for meeting** – To continue reviewing and discussing sections of the master plan as we move toward finalizing each area of the plan. We are currently working on the Introduction and History sections of the Master Plan. We will work toward utilizing the VH Comprehensive Plan will it is applicable for consistency. Sections for discussion include: History of VH, VH in regional context, Public Spaces, Zoning, and Preserving Buildings.

### Action Sheet

**History of VH** – With an account of VH's history already written into the Comprehensive Plan that was written in 2013, Hooper volunteered to review the VH history data and make suggested and necessary changes that would bring the plan into a current format. Andy will provide the working copy of the original comp plan for backup information. The committee will receive updates from Hooper for review.

**VH in regional context** – The committee's discussion was centered on "why" this section was pertinent to the plan and how much information should be included. After discussion and understanding this part is in the introduction and not a stand-alone section, the group brought the focus of the verbiage to: VH is a place to live, work and do business year round. The downtown of VH is more than retail shops - it serves as an important gathering place to the community. VH is proud of its independent nature. Maintaining our economic vitality while sustaining the year round community is both our primary concern and goal.

**Public Spaces** – This section is not only about identifying the location of desired public spaces but also what those spaces would look like and how to implement the usage of those spaces.

Possible locations include:

Grimes Park	War Memorial (Sands Rd)
Clam Shell Alley	Behind old firehouse
Bandstand	Net Factory
Town Parking Lot	Pond and space behind businesses
Main Street	

Accessories and Equipment –

Park Benches	Picnic Tables
Granite	Trash Receptacles

The implementation of these spaces would be at different intervals depending on time of year, maintenance needs, and depth of project. Park benches along Main St. would be more feasible with more in-depth projects requiring more planning and time to implement.

One concern for the island is to have an age friendly Main St. Sidewalks that are designed to meet a variety of characteristics that have a direct impact on usability, such as grade, cross slope, width, surface type, etc. would be of prime importance.

The Net Factory has long been on this committee's radar screen as a viable and necessary space for the community to use as a multi-purpose venue. A community center with green space for families, youth, aged, meeting space, open market, and seasonal use would be a catalyst for new growth and the sustaining of Main St.

Carver's Pond behind the existing downtown businesses is another untapped and extremely viable option for growth. Many businesses have a lot of unused space in the back of their buildings that could be an opportunity for more growth through stores, studios, and services while offering a new beautiful outside venue including dock, food carts, tables, and common space for the community. The use of this space would also give more opportunities for tourists to take in the natural beauty of the island in the downtown area but lessen the congestion on Main St. street side.

Resources for the public space usage and ideas from other successful communities in Maine can be found in the Maine St. Program. Within that is a 4 point approach and network to see what other towns have tried and successfully implemented.

Due to time constraints, more discussion about the pond project, zoning, and preserving buildings will be held at the next meeting.

Next meeting – Wednesday, March 28<sup>th</sup> – 4:00 p.m.