

Richmond Transportation Committee

Meeting Minutes – February 8, 2022

All participants attended the meeting remotely.

Committee members present: Cathleen Gent (chair), Chris Cole (vice-chair), Mark Damico, Jon Kart, Allen Knowles

Others present: Ravi Venkataraman (Town Planner), Daniel Mullen

A quorum was reached and the chair convened the meeting at 5:33 PM.

1. Revisions to Agenda: Gent added two items to the end of the agenda: Better Places grant program and Future of the Town Center and Library Buildings meeting

2. Meeting Minutes: *January 25, 2022 minutes were moved by Cole, seconded by Damico. The minutes were approved unanimously.*

3. Committee Planning Session

Gent introduced the topic, stating that having a planning session was discussed last meeting as a way to review and prioritize our numerous projects either now or soon-to-be underway, along with bigger concepts such as village identify or streetscape designs for the village area. Kart said it would be nice if the committee had a short sentence of our work that people could understand. Gent referenced the Transportation Implementation Plan and committee report for the 2021 Town Report to show the variety of what we do or aspire to do. Committee members brainstormed ideas for such a purpose statement. Kart, Cole, and Damico offered specific suggestions. Kart and Cole will prepare a draft purpose statement in advance of the next committee meeting. Gent will send out the suggested language shared during the meeting in the chat notes. Cole noted that it would be very helpful to have a spreadsheet with each project at various stages (planning, scoping/feasibility, construction). Damico said that former committee member James Floyd created such a spreadsheet. Venkataraman will send a link to the google drive, where the document is stored. Gent will review/revise that spreadsheet in advance of the next committee meeting.

4. UPWP FY22 Project Updates

a. Sidewalks Scoping – Venkataraman said he talked last week with the project team. Stantec will provide preliminary designs ahead of the next committee meeting for the three project locations. Venkataraman will shortly begin advertising the local concerns meeting which is scheduled for March 17th at 6 PM.

b. Phase 2: Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan – South End – Venkataraman thanked members for posting in Front Porch Forum for the local concerns meeting scheduled for tomorrow night. The consultant team is prepared for that meeting.

5. Route 2 Repaving Project Update - Kart and Knowles provided an update about the Selectboard meeting last night, which they attended. The selectboard plans to meet with VTrans to review every part of the road without a five-foot shoulder. The Transportation Committee discussed possible options to proceed. *Kart offered the following motion, seconded by Knowles: The Transportation Committee supports the Selectboard's desire to learn more about the Route 2 paving project, in particular the constraints on the road shoulders that will negatively affect vulnerable users. The best approach is to hold a public meeting separate from a Selectboard meeting, with VTrans project managers and the public. We encourage the Selectboard to invite our elected representatives at the legislature so they have an awareness of the town's concerns. The motion was passed unanimously.*

Transportation Committee member Chris Cole noted that it is typical for VTrans project managers to meet with community members before starting a project in the form of a public local concerns meeting. The fact that a public local concerns meeting was held years ago warrants a public meeting at this time, because of the changes to existing conditions, interests, policies, and staff.

6. Bridge Street & Railroad Street Update and Light Fixtures – Venkataraman said there is no update on the project because staff are still exploring options and discussions with Dan Noyes (who owns Railroad Street ROW) about light fixtures. The Transportation Committee did discuss light fixture options from Venkataraman that are available from Green Mountain Power. Venkataraman noted that GMP does not offer ornamental fixtures without cost at this time. Damico noted that ornamental fixtures are not viable without underground utilities being in place. Damico and Kart said that, in recognition of night sky pollution, downlit fixtures are preferred. Venkataraman said the RSW series are downlit. *Motion by Damico, seconded by Kart, that the Transportation Committee recommends the RSW series for this application. The motion was approved unanimously.*

7. AARP Walkability Tool Audit – Gent reviewed the pieces of the AARP walkability tool audit. Venkataraman has reached out to AARP and Kelly Stoddard-Poor is available to attend a Transportation Committee meeting in March to provide tips on using the audit tool. There was consensus that the committee would like to move forward with the project and would like Stoddard-Poor to attend a meeting, perhaps March 8th. Knowles said his wife and a neighbor with mobility challenges would like to be on an audit team. Gent will reach out to people who have said they are interest in the project to let them know the transportation committee is moving forward with next steps.

8. Grant Opportunities

a. Building a Better America grant opportunities – Committee members reviewed the grant materials descriptions. A number of grant programs will begin accepting applications in the coming months, therefore, Gent suggested this is an important time for the committee and staff to identify projects and opportunities. Cole pointed out that some federal grant programs are administered through the state, which is a different process, and some appear available directly to municipalities. Venkataraman said he will coordinate with CCRPC staff about which programs will be run through the state, and what Richmond projects may be most appropriate for specific grants. Gent asked committee members to review the grant programs ahead of the next meeting.

b. Better Places Grant – Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development, and other agencies – Gent and Damico pointed out the grant program seems a good fit for village identity potential or streetscape design planning. Venkataraman is attending information session and will provide more information at the next meeting.

Daniel Mullen joined the meeting at this time and Damico left the meeting. Mullen explained that he is coordinating communications with several town committees for the planning commission's tracking of activities related to the town plan. Gent will communicate with Mullen about adding that topic to a future Transportation Committee meeting.

9. Old and New Business – Meeting on the Future of Richmond Town Center and Library Buildings – will be held on February 17. Committee members are invited to participate. Knowles pointed out that sidewalks on the east side of Bridge Street would be an asset for getting to the town center and the library.

10. Adjourn – At 7:17 PM, motion to adjourn by Cole, seconded by Knowles. Approved unanimously.

-Minutes taken by Cathleen Gent