

DRAFT

**Brandon Planning Commission
May 20, 2013**

Planning Commission Members Present: Anne Bransfield, Marty Feldman, Jeff Guevin, Linda Stewart

Others present: Charlene Bryant, Tina Wiles, Robert Black, Jim Leary, Steve Beck, Jim Stewart, Alyssa Zollman, Devon Fuller

Call to Order:

Anne Bransfield called the meeting to order at 7:05PM.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Jeff Guevin and seconded by Linda Stewart to approve the March 18, 2013 and April 15, 2013 meeting minutes. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Public Comment Period:

. Robert Black of the DBA Design Committee

Robert Black provided a communication from the DBA design committee. Blaine Cliver has stepped down as chair from the design committee due to his appointment to the Select Board. The list provided work that was done during the last meeting. The progress of CLD and VBH regarding Setment 6 and Bridge 114 was confirmed. Following the February 13th letter regarding directives for design changes, the DBA, in their advisory capacity, would like to work in concert with the planning commission regarding Segment 6 work. Other topics of discussion could be the parks reconstruction and other activities. The DBA recommended scheduling a facilitative joint work session on June 4th from 7 – 9PM to get the various committees together. It is understood there is some overlap and through a directed work session, it is hoped to find alignment to make the alliance work. The planning commission is the planning body and the DBA would like to coordinate this in order to tailor some activities of the DBA. It was noted there are several groups that include the Select Board, the Town Manager, the Economic Town groups and the DBA and it is felt there could be a lot done to channel the alignments. Due to a conflict with the budget revote on June 4th, the decision was made to schedule and warn the joint meeting for Wednesday, June 5th from 7 – 9PM. Tina Wiles suggested review of the various committee appointments and purpose of each committee. Bob Black advised that information would be issued ahead of time. He will draft an agenda and distribute for comments.

Stakeholder Discussion (with Downtown Brandon Alliance Economic Development Committee):

1) What are DBA/EDC's goals and strategies?

Jeff Guevin noted some of the things the planning commission is charged with include areas of economic development, agriculture, aesthetics, etc. Mr. Guevin contacted Alyssa Zollman to get people together to open up the lines of communication that are complimentary to better support efforts. Alyssa Zollman stated when it comes to economic development, suggestions can be made and she would like a better communication level to have a shared vision in helping to facilitate business and a better downtown. She had a meeting with Frank Spezzano to discuss clearing communication. Anne Bransfield requested clarification of each of the groups and what the shared priorities are. Jim Leary stated the downtown designation, under the state statutes, has to have a specific committee (the DBA). The economic development committee is to develop a variety of areas, not just the downtown. Devon Fuller stated the economic development committee was developed when the town hired

an economic development director and its purpose is to determine what the economic development director will do. The designated downtown committee had not been maintained. Steve Beck was working on keeping the designation current, which involved the development of the DBA. Now that the designated downtown has been approved, it was felt that Mr. Beck should now move forward with the bigger picture. Tina Wiles noted the resolution needs to be reviewed, as there had been a resolution to hire a director to market and create a viable climate for business in the Brandon area. This would include creating business opportunities, assisting businesses create new business and do things that are a little different than what has been done before, while being responsive to the needs of businesses. Devon Fuller suggested researching the resolution to review the details of the committee. Alyssa Zollman advised she is the Chair of the committee. There were four people appointed by the Select Board to get the economic development committee started that initially were Jim Leary, Janet Mondlak, Bernie Carr and Linda Stewart. From that point, businesses have been invited to participate on the committee. Tina Wiles stated it is similar to the recreation committee. Jeff Guevin asked if they would prefer to be a hands-off committee or policy driven. Ms. Zollman stated suggestions could be made, such as the development of a tool kit for developing businesses in Brandon. Mr. Beck stated this has been drafted and will be available after the next meeting. Mr. Beck stated Brandon needs to figure out what it wants and until this is accomplished and move beyond the division in the town between the “flatlanders” and the “woodchucks”, it is not felt that this will happen. He stated there are divisions with some people who do not want change, with others wanting to move forward. There have been some very positive things that have happened over the last couple of years, but things do not seem to move forward. Tina Wiles asked what the economic development director has done to market the town plan. It was noted he talks to many people who visit Brandon and discusses potentials in viewing buildings that are available. Mr. Beck noted businesses are not showing interest in the Tubbs building; as there have been issues with subdividing the building. He stated there seems to be other towns that are more receptive and potential businesses run into barriers, either perceived or not, and there are other places where permitting is faster and resources more readily available. Mr. Beck will be meeting with Jamie Stewart regarding the J-Building and has been discussing with Mr. Stewart about a food venture. He is unsure where this idea is going to go, but there will be an effort to try to find out what businesses are out there to potentially use this space. Devon Fuller stated the economic committee needs to promote the education system when marketing the area. Jim Leary stated the town can develop the best zoning ordinance, but there needs to be qualified, capable people to interpret and enforce the land ordinance. Tina Wiles noted there are many appeals and it is difficult to enforce. She noted most prudent business people will avoid this situation; such as the case of Hannaford’s where there were three businesses interested in developing in this town, however, due to issues, the town lost three businesses. It was noted that stronger definitions are being developed to provide better interpretation. Mr. Leary stated there will need to be some latitude. Bob Black stated there is a division in the town and noted that there are different processes that can be done to assure that all area groups are heard. He stated there are very few things that are unresolvable and if everyone has an understanding; it will help with crafting the decisions of what the planning commission should do. If it is known there is a vision, the town can be marketable. Anne Bransfield stated the water charrette will be a good way to provide information. Ms. Bransfield advised the planning commission is trying to get public input on the Wildlife Corridor and there have been some good discussion at these meetings with all demographics. She has a mailing list developed from the Wildlife Corridor meetings for contacting people. Alyssa Zollman stated what has kept people and brought people to Brandon are similar, such as the wildlife. She stated an inventory should be taken of the skills that are in town to provide a toolbox of businesses available. She noted that Brandon is not for everyone and how the information is framed is important. There has been discussion whether Union Street could be used for small in-house businesses. Jeff Guevin advised the development of form base codes will assist in these areas. Most people are concerned with how a town looks, rather than strict use controls. Anne Bransfield stated there may be a way to work together on zoning in advising the interested parties. Tina Wiles is the liaison for the planning commission and suggested contacting her with questions from the economic development committee. Ms. Wiles sees a lot of holes in the zoning ordinance and areas that can be revised and she plans to assist the

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planning commission as they move forward with the form base codes. Alyssa Zollman advised every third Thursday the economic development committee meets at the Stephen A. Douglas House. Jeff Stewart advised the DBA is an alliance of the groups that are in Brandon. There is a finance committee chaired by Buzz Racine and they are working on a survey of what people who shop in Brandon think about Brandon. This will be distributed to the groups as soon as it is available. An inventorying of space that is available in town is also being done. The design committee is very vibrant and the publicity committee will be providing information on the water main project. On June 26th, it is hoped to have a meeting regarding this item. The group also works in concert with the Brandon Chamber of Commerce. The organization meets the second Thursday at 9AM at the Brandon Library. Mr. Stewart stated there is also a business breakfast the 2nd Tuesday of the month that starts at 8AM at the education center of Cafe Provence. The meetings are advertised in The Reporter. Alyssa Zollman stated in the interest of public outreach, if the planning commission would like to write a column to let the community know what is going on with their committee, space could be made available in The Reporter. She stated it is important to have a community forum for these types of items. Ms. Bransfield stated there has been good interest in the Wildlife Corridor and there will be two hearings scheduled prior to development of the Wildlife Corridor ordinance. Ms. Bransfield suggested doing a joint effort in reaching out to various groups in town. Devon Fuller questioned whether there could also be training provided with regard to zoning. Tina Wiles advised she has in the past organized a zoning workshop for the members of the DRB. Ms. Wiles stated the appointed members of the DRB are qualified, but guidance of the committee is needed. Ms. Bransfield thanked the DBA, the Economic Development Committee members and Mr. Fuller for attending the meeting.

Wildlife Corridor:

1) Discuss/Approve Draft Regulations

Discussion was held concerning the activity within the wildlife corridor prior to the adoption of the ordinance. Tina Wiles noted once the ordinance is submitted as public notice for hearing and adoption, it becomes effective and holds everything to the ordinance. Mr. Guevin will review the process of review and approval. Tina Wiles noted once the Select Board warns its hearing, it puts the draft into effect for 180 days.

Further discussion regarding specifics to the ordinance was held. Ms. Stewart questioned whether the Section X.15(5) should read County Forester or whether there are several foresters that work within the department. Mr. Guevin noted the section needs to note one person to certify the plans. Tina Wiles requested clarification of heavy cut and was advised by the county forester this would be 40 acres. She stated if a person is cutting on their own property, they can cut what they want. There is a lot of cutting taking place in the town and it is uncertain what the detriment will be. Linda Stewart noted under X.15(5c), there should be a requirement to provide a management plan and the zoning administrator should not have to request it. Tina Wiles stated if there is already a plan in place, it fulfills the requirement. This is for existing plans only. Linda Stewart suggested a change from "should" to "shall".

On Page 3, Section X.20(B), development envelopes have not been defined. Jeff Guevin stated there is a definition of a development envelope and what is needed is a label. Tina Wiles stated this would be anything outside the delineation. Mr. Guevin stated on Page 3, Section X.20 (A2), it has to be within a cleared area or if there is no cleared area, within 500 feet of the town highway. Linda Stewart went on record that she does not agree with 500 feet. It is hoped to minimize "creep" and keep the development closer to the road. On Page 4, Section X.20(3), regarding the DRB, a change from "may" to "must". Jeff Guevin stated the minimums will be met and these are additional requirements. With regard to the recreational activities; there will need to be discussion held. It was suggested to take a "Google" picture at the time of approval of the Wildlife Corridor. With regard to motor sports, there was discussion of whether ATV's and snowmobiles should be allowed. It was noted this will require review in creating a balance, as there are already some existing trails. Marty

Feldman stated if too many restrictions are included in the ordinance, it will not pass. No new roads or trails are to be developed, and it needs to be defined what a trail is. Tina Wiles stated there are no new curb cuts according to state law. It was suggested the total footprint noted on Page 2, Section X.15(1) be changed from 10% to 30%. This would provide the homeowner more leeway. Jeff Guevin will review the section on impervious items. It was noted the wildlife corridor is limited to mainly the large animals. Tina Wiles advised having a good development plan will trump many of the percentages noted in the document. She noted anytime construction is done, a permit is required from the state and they review flood areas, hazardous waste and stream alteration. She stated if construction is proposed for wetlands or in a streambed, a state permit is required. This Wildlife Corridor and overlay is a buffer zone that buffers more intensive development. In an effort to not become more regulatory, there needs to be someone with expertise review the document.

Draft Merchandise Display Ordinance:

1) Discuss/Approve Draft Ordinance for referral to Select Board

At the last meeting, it was discussed that the draft is acceptable and should be presented to the Select Board.

A motion was made by Jeff Guevin and seconded by Marty Feldman to draft a letter regarding the Display Merchandise ordinance. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Proposal for Two Meetings in June:

There will be a joint meeting held on June 5th and there is a second regular meeting scheduled for June 17th. A meeting location is to be determined for the June 5th meeting.

Reports:

Zoning Administrator's Report:

There was a budget discussion held with the interim town manager and it was discussed that more funds are required. Tina Wiles stated there is the possibility of a municipal planning grant, but would not be applied for until fall. A discussion was held concerning the funding of a consultant to assist with form base coding. The planning commission's budget for this year totaled \$2,000.00. When adding this figure to the \$2,000.00 budgeted for next year, the planning commission would need an additional \$2,500.00 for the consultant. It was the consensus of the commission for Ms. Bransfield to submit a request to the Select Board for the \$6,500.00 to fund the consultant contract. Ms. Wiles suggested submitting this request to Richard Baker by Friday for inclusion on the Select Board agenda for next Monday. Ms. Wiles has been charged with preparing the documents for a hazard mitigation grant that will be due by July 12th. One request will be an application for the overflow and one will be for the buyout of the Fjeld building on Newton Road. Ms. Wiles provided an update on the town office repairs, as they relate to the H & H study. Ms. Wiles will be attending the flood plan managers' meeting in Hartford. Linda Stewart noted none of the flashing signs have been removed yet.

Other Business as Needed:

Tina Wiles advised letters of interest for submission to the Select Board will be required from Linda Stewart and Anne Bransfield to continue on the planning commission, as their terms will be expiring.

Upcoming Training Opportunities:

. June 7th - Downtown and Historic Preservation Conference in Barre

Next Meetings

- . *June 5, 2013*
- . *June 17, 2013*
- . *July 15, 2013*

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Anne Bransfield and seconded by Linda Stewart to adjourn the meeting at 10:00PM.
The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary