

MEMORANDUM

From: ZPED
To: Selectboard

Date: 2/12/2024

Re: Weekly Report

- Planning Commission met last Wednesday. Pretty much a ZA report on what has been a busy January and discussion of economic development elements for a village master plan which would then feed into the coming update of the Town Plan. Doug Tiff plans to stand on Town Meeting Day and he has a background on the schoolboard which will probably be useful. We are still short one.
- Attended a zoom meeting with USDA on Enterprise and Opportunity Grants. These are grants directly to businesses and applications are scored on job retention and creation. Incubator funding is available but it is not a source of seed money for a redevelopment non-profit that may be needed if the school is closed. Looks like the Town's role would be assisting in the application process and drafting letters of support. There is a push to link this to developed regional and town level economic development plans which buttresses the link to expanding this part of the Town Plan in the next update.
- Tri-Town Housing Taskforce meeting was last Wednesday afternoon, notes from that meeting:
Fairlee reports:
 - The Gryphon Barn and the rear ell of the Chapman's Store will receive grant money to restore the barn and adapt into housing, both parts of the project should net 5 more housing units.
 - Hollywood Motel property has been purchased and the property owner plans to rehab the larger house, subdivide it from the hotel section and then rehab the 4 motel cottages that can be saved, result in 5 units.
 - Chapman's Place has received a community Partnership for Neighborhood Development grant for almost \$180k, development plan is for a mixed-use three-story building, retail on the ground floor and two floors of housing or offices.
 - Fairlee town government is trying to make sure they have a seat at the table if and when Rivendell decides to divest itself of Samuel Morey. Such an event could be a crisis turned into an opportunity.
 - Fairlee opened the year with two zoning permits for changes in use to dwelling units.Thetford reports:
 - efforts to quantify capacities for economic development and housing are to be undertaken.
 - TM sees a future need to take current private water systems public.
 - TM states that while short term rentals are not yet an acute issue, vacant houses owned by absentee owners are taking housing out of the inventory.
 - There was discussion of the requirements for Neighborhood Development Area designation currently being sought by Fairlee, ZA states that the requirements are designed around towns with sewer and there are difficulties associated with AOT control of RTE 5 preventing complete streets

implementation, but that ACCD seems flexible if nothing else then to get at least one water system village into the program.

-Discussion of historic preservation funding being called “housing funds”. Fairlee ZA has no objection to historic preservation so long as the funding is distinct from housing monies and believes conflating the two is inflating the per square foot cost of housing.

-Discussion of the RTE 5 bicycle corridor proposal, all towns on the corridor support the proposal but foresee engineering challenges and the need for large infrastructure investments for complete implementation.

- Issued permit 24-Z-02 for a dwelling unit (600 sq ft 1-bed) in the Mixed Use Area, this cures the violation reported last week.
- I will be taking vacation time the week of March 18th.