

**RYE TOWN CENTER COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, July 7, 2021**  
**5:30 p.m.**  
**Rye Town Hall**

*Present: Karen Stewart Chair; John Loftus; Victor Azzi; Kaitlyn Coffey; Funi Burdick, John Mitchell, Lydia Tilsley and Selectboard Rep Mae Bradshaw*

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Stewart called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. Continuation of Visioning Process**

Chair Stewart reviewed where the Committee left off at their last meeting, which included starting to reactivate the charge of articulating a vision and finding a plan for the Town Center. They started with a discussion regarding the culture; what is the culture or experience that people should have while visiting the Town Center? What should the Town Center stand for? Some of the ideas from that session include; welcoming, pro-bikes, water fountains, and highlight the museum. Also, there was discussion that the front lawn of the cemetery is the town green. Because of this, the Committee discussed approaching the Select Board to get permission to expand the Town Center to include the town green.

The Committee agreed that including the town green makes the Town Center more delineated.

Chair Stewart suggested that the Committee talk about the different areas and destinations of the Town Center. She asked; “What does the Committee want to see the town green service?” It was noted that there may be use restrictions in the deed that would prohibit some usages. Selectwoman Bradshaw will get a copy of the deed. The Committee will put this discussion on hold until they have that information.

Selectwoman Bradshaw updated the Committee on the Town Hall Annex. The plans for the interior of the building are almost complete. There is a contemplated Phase 2, which would be a bump-out of about 350 square feet on the back of the building. This would house two or three offices. All of finance would be in the annex. The building department, planning and zoning would remain in the Town Hall. The meeting room will be upstairs in the Town Hall. There is also a small conference room at the annex that can accommodate small committee meetings.

There was discussion regarding the previous work that Grass Roots (Historic Structure Report) and Nancy Barba of Barba and Wheelock Architects (interior space study & drawings) has done on the Town Hall. The discussion led to what type of events the Committee would like to see the second floor used for.

**Note: Member Tilsley arrived at the meeting at this time.**

There is \$280,000 from the sale proceeds of the Trolley Barn dedicated to the Town Hall Annex. The designs will be completed and the work will go out for bid. Until the costs are finalized, the money for the Town Hall renovations will be on hold. There will probably have to be some fundraising.

Chair Stewart suggested that the Committee go on a walking tour of the Town Center at their next meeting. She suggested that the Committee tour the Town Hall Annex and the Town Hall. By that time, the plans for the Town Hall Annex will be solidified.

The discussion continued about making the upstairs in the Town Hall accessible, including the placement of an elevator. Also, there is a possibility of creating access through to the second floor from the parking lot at the church.

Selectwoman Bradshaw stated that the Historic District proposed to the School Board to place their solar panels as ground mounts behind the Town Hall Annex, if there is enough room on the parcel, instead of on the front of the Rye Junior High School. The time to connect between the Town Offices and the school would be when the street is torn up during the construction of the bike lines, etc. If they generate it behind the Town Hall Annex there should be enough to supply both the school and the town offices.

Member Burdick stated that the Committee really needs to understand the key functionalities or key elements of the site plan, in order to develop a center. She emphasized; “What are the buildings? What are their functions? What is happening with each one of them and what is happening between them?”

Selectwoman Bradshaw stated that by understanding each building’s function, it will help the Committee to understand the connectivity that is needed between them.

Member Azzi recommended getting access to a two-dimensional map/plan or representation of the area involved.

Chair Stewart referred to the drawing that was done by CMA for the TAP Grant application. She felt that they could get a larger format of it to work with.

The Committee agreed it would be beneficial to have a map of the area that includes the Grange Park and the town green, in order to get a better visual of what they are working on.

Selectwoman Bradshaw spoke of the proposed coffee shop. She stated that if the Committee decides that having the coffee shop is a great idea, then a very important step would be to work on supporting the approvals of that process and making it a part of the recommendations of this committee.

The discussion regarding the safety building revealed that there is a large potential for parking behind the building. So, if there were any event or function in the Town Center, that area should be considered. Member Loftus pointed out that it is a tiered lot and is also where they dump the excess snow. Also, the police and fire departments use all the space on their lot for operational purposes and don’t want people driving around in there for safety reasons. Member Azzi suggested that it still could happen as the events would be scheduled in advance. It was also noted that there is also land behind the museum and the library that could be considered for additional parking. It would require a different curb cut off Olde Parish Road to access it. Member Azzi pointed out that the area is a 35-foot ravine that would be extremely hard to use as a parking area. It is doable in engineering terms, but it is not going to be easy.

Selectwoman Bradshaw reminded the Committee that there are 250 parking spaces already in the Town Center. Selectwoman Bradshaw also reported that the Recreation Commission has hired the new recreation director and that person should be brought into this process early on; especially, where the teen and senior center will be at the church. The Town is leasing the space on a long-term lease. Chair Stewart suggested that the Committee add these facilities to their tour at the next meeting.

Member Mitchell stated that he would work on developing a map from the resources the Committee already has that they can work from.

Chair Stewart stated that she will contact Janice to make arraignments to tour the buildings at the beginning of their next meeting, on Wednesday, August 4<sup>th</sup> and they can meet at the Town Hall at 5:30.

**III. Warrant Article 6 Promotion – Not Addressed**

**IV. Modified Charge (Expansion of District) – Not Addressed**

**V. Approval of Minutes – Not Addressed**

1. 05/05/2021
2. 06/17/2021

**VI. Other Business - None**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by John Loftus to adjourn the meeting at 6:46 p.m. Seconded by Lydia Tilsley. All in favor. Motion passed.**

Respectfully Submitted;  
Dyana F, Ledger