

Grand Isle Select Board
and
Grand Isle Planning Commission
Minutes of the Meeting for
Monday, January 31st, 2022 at 6:00pm at Grand Isle Town Office and via Zoom

I. CALL TO ORDER

Board Members Present: Select Board: Jeff Parizo – Chair; AnnaMarie DeMars – Vice-Chair; Ron Bushway; Adam White; Eric Godin

Planning Commission – Andy Paradee; Emily Clark; Jen Morway; Howard DeMars; Shawn Mercy

Community Members Present: Melissa Boutin; Colleen Bushway; Joe Longo; Susan Lawrence; Elise Whittemore; Josie Leavitt; Tonya Poutry; Janine Bank; Nathan Mauser; Laura Heberland; Couper Shaw; Greta Brunswick – Northwest Regional Planning; Bianca Adams; Ellen Paradee; Shannon Bundy; Peter Reigelman;

Board Members to Amend Agenda for Matters Not Listed:

II. GUEST OPEN COMMENT

III. NEW BUSINESS

Planning Commission: ARPA Funding and Other Updates:

Emily Clark of the Planning Commission says they have 3 items to discuss at this meeting. They are: 1) A proposed village designation for the town of Grand Isle; 2) ARPA funding update; and 3) Update on status of the Annex.

Emily says that she has invited Greta Brunswick, from Northwest Regional Planning to attend the meeting to speak about the benefits of a village designation for the town of Grand Isle. Greta explains to the Boards that a village designation is a program designed to revitalize our historic village centers. There are state and federal tax credit benefits for landowners that want to improve their property within the village center. Another benefit is priority when it comes to several grants available to municipalities, and priority consideration of state services when it comes to construction and permitting within the village center. Greta goes on to say that the next steps in moving forward with the process would be to invite Richard Amore from ACCV to attend a pre application meeting. Greta says that draft boundaries of a district would have to be presented as part of that meeting. Adam White asks what size a village center needs, and if there are state specific standards regarding size. Greta says the state will look at what historic structures are in the parcel, as well as what kind of commercial activity takes place within the proposed village district. Emily Clark says that South Hero has 2 village centers designated within their town, and she feels that Grand Isle's should be the Hyde Log Cabin all the way to East Shore South, and from the Town Beach to Island

Circle. Greta says that there are lots of grants available that require having a village center before they can be applied for. Emily Clark says that there are no real downsides to having a village designation, and the benefits were substantial. Greta says that the village designation is good for five years, and then has to be reapplied for, and it has no impact on the zoning authority of the town. Jeff asks about the process for continuing. Greta says that she can reach out to ACCV to set up a pre application meeting, and ACCV will help the draw the necessary maps. Greta says that there also some photographs and some letters required for the application process. Emily asks about the turn around time. Greta says that it depends on the meeting schedule of the associated board, but she recommends the town expect 4 months from start to finish of the process. Jen Morway mentions that the village district would need to be in the town plan. It is decided to have the Planning Commission take the lead on the application process, with Planning to update the Select Board prior to submission of the application. Jen Morway says that having a village designation would expand the town's access to grants substantially. There is discussion about several different scenarios where grants could be available, including for sidewalk construction, and a town sewage system. Emily Clark says that Planning will proceed with moving forward with the application process.

ARPA Update: Emily says that there is good news, in that a final rule was issued allowing each town to take a standard allowance up to \$10 million can be considered a standard allowance under the revenue replacement category, which means that no further reporting needs to be done to the state. Emily says that the money can then be used for anything within the town. Jeff says that the money has to be earmarked by 2024 and spent by 2026. Emily agrees and points out that the money can now be used for anything, with only a few exceptions, such as not being able to use it to reduce taxes or pay pensions and bonuses. Emily says that she wants to make sure that we choose where to spend wisely and make sure we don't spend on a project that we may be able to get specific grant funding a little further down the road. Emily says that the planning commission is planning on launching a survey to poll the residents of the town to see what the feeling around town was about how this money should be spent. Emily says that the survey is going to be considered by the planning commission at this week's meeting to finalize it. Emily says the survey consists of several options that had already been suggested by various town residents and entities, with the option to submit their own ideas as well. Emily says that the survey will be available on [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com), and there will be paper copies of the survey available at the town office. Shannon Bundy says she hopes that once a project scope is determined, the town will issue a report showing the costs of construction and future upkeep of the projects being considered. Emily says that she hopes to gather as many different ideas as possible for potential projects. Jen Morway says that this also will help determine what the town government can focus it's efforts to best serve the community. Adam asks about the timeframe for the survey. Emily says they plan on having it run through town meeting and the election to try and get as much information as possible. It is agreed that planning will give a quick overview of the process and the facts of the ARPA funding. It is asked if the residents of the town will be allowed to vote on the projects. Adam

White says that it was decided that the final choice would rest with the Select Board, with heavy input from the community. Jen Morway points out that the state has indicated the governing body should be making the final determination and that there are a lot of steps in the process of vetting projects and evaluating grants, and that restraint should be used to try to make the most of the monies that the town has received in federal funding. Jen Morway asks when the Select Board would like to get together again. Adam White says in about a month, once the survey data has come in. Jeff agrees, saying the end of March or early April would be ideal. Adam asks that if as part of the process, planning would explain why certain projects get rejected, to make sure everyone is fully informed. Jen points out that Northwest Regional Planning will assist with grant writing, but may need to ask the Select Board to hire someone to write a grant. There is discussion about the process of compiling and evaluating the data from the survey. Emily says that there will be a rubric used to evaluate and weight the data received from the surveys. Peter Reigelman suggests having an outside entity evaluate the survey questions to make sure there is no bias presented. Jeff asks if monies given by the town to other entities would have to be spent on the project the town earmarked it for. The Planning Commission and the Select Board agree. Emily and Greta both indicate that the rules have just been finalized in the last week, and there will be guidance forthcoming from VLCT. Adam suggests having the Planning Commission come to the April 18th Meeting. Planning agrees. Shannon asks if there is going to be a minimum number of surveys that would trigger other methods of data collection. Emily agrees, saying that if they only get 25 surveys returned, they know they will have to try and reach out in other ways. Jen says that she hopes people who are interested will give contact information as well, for the formation of a committee. It is agreed to continue discussion at the second meeting in March.

Annex Update: Jen Morway says that she has been speaking with Carol Egan, who is interested in renting the Annex space for use as a daycare. Jen says that Carol is finalizing her plans. Jen says that Nadeau's daycare from Chittenden County were also interested in the space, but wanted to know more about the childcare needs in the community. Emily says that there are voluntary questions at the end of the aforementioned survey to help clarify the childcare needs of the town. Jen confirms that both parties provide pre-K services for childcare, and that there are also ARPA funds available to go towards opening childcare centers. Adam suggests having Carol Egan attend one of the next Select Board meetings to speak to her proposal. There are discussions about the possible numbers of childcare positions necessary in the town, given the changes the pandemic has forced. Jen says that there are lots of large and small childcare centers closing due to staffing shortages due to COVID exposures, so the landscape is constantly changing. There is continued discussions about the hardships of the childcare industry and the difficulties in sustaining high quality childcare. The Select Board thanks the Planning Commission for all of there hard work.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

AnnaMarie DeMars moves to adjourn the meeting at 7:45pm. Adam White seconds.

No further discussion. Jeff calls the vote, which passes unanimously.

Select Board Scribe: _____
Eric Godin

Select Board Chair: _____
Jeff Parizo