

FINAL

**CITY OF LEBANON
WEST LEBANON REVITALIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES, NOVEMBER 16, 2021
LEBANON CITY HALL – MEETING ROOM 1
7:00 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Winny (Chair, City Council Rep.); Chet Clem (Vice-Chair);
Gregoria Amaro; Kevin Purcell (Economic Development Commission
Rep.); Laurel Stavis (Planning Board Rep.); Dean Cashman

MEMBERS ABSENT: Graziella Parati, Lauren Groves

STAFF PRESENT: David Brooks, Planning & Zoning Director

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Winny called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

- A. October 19, 2021
- B. October 26, 2021

A MOTION by Mr. Cashman to approve the minutes of the October 19th, and October 26th meetings as presented.

Seconded by Mr. Purcell.

**The Motion was approved (6-0)*

3. **OLD BUSINESS:**

A. Committee Recommendations/Priorities

Mr. Winny spoke with the mayor and confirmed the committee's recommendations will be a City Council agenda topic in December. The first item is the Westboro Yard. Within that topic, the committee has identified waterfront access, an amphitheater, a playing field, and a longer-term plan for the city to gain control over more of the property.

Mr. Clem asked to take the agenda out of order in the interest of guests in the meeting who own nearby businesses. Mr. Clem stated he spoke with business owners earlier in the week to discuss the proposed roundabout and the impact it could have on their properties and businesses. Brian and Spencer Molloy voiced their opinions on the roundabout and on the proposed streetscape plan. They have concerns regarding the potential loss of parking lots and other pertinent space. Ms. Stavis noted there has not been much discussion with the community about an implementation of a roundabout and that she is mainly aware of it from being a part of this group. Mr. Brooks stated that the concept of a roundabout was presented in the 2019 Visioning Charrette. There was discussion about whether or not it is too early to communicate the plans with the public or if it is the appropriate next step. Mr. Brooks stated that the Streetscape plans have only been presented to this committee so far, and that community outreach is the appropriate next step.

The committee viewed the concept plans to identify where there will be changes to existing conditions. Ms. Stavis noted the change will be disruptive to the community and there was discussion about whether or not it would be more practical to implement all the changes at once or to space it out over time. Mr. Brooks reviewed the traffic analysis prepared by VHB showing that a roundabout would function better than the existing traffic signal. Mr. Brooks also noted that a roundabout could have other benefits, including traffic calming to slow vehicles, a safer intersection for vehicles and pedestrians, and the opportunity to improve the appearance entering the Main Street area.

There was discussion about looking at these improvements from a traffic versus community perspective. Private property owners will need to make their own decisions about building improvements and who they sell or lease space to, but the City may be able to create some incentives. Improving the streetscape without creating incentives for change will not be fully effective. Another pressing issue that warranted discussion is pedestrian traffic and crosswalks.

The next topic to be presented to the City Council is the Rail Trail. Mr. Clem felt it should be handled similarly to the announcement of the roundabout by asking the community what they want to see happen with it. Many of the projects require approval of another department such as the NH Department of Transportation. A point that was added under this topic was working toward the relicensing of the dam.

The third item of discussion was Bridge Park. There was discussion over renaming the park after a significant member of the West Lebanon Community. A remediation plan is being prepared because the property was over-cleared. New plants will need to be installed in the Shoreland buffer. It was noted that there was a significant trash problem that was addressed. A suggestion arose that having the community help remove trash can make it feel like it is something created by them, something that is theirs.

The next topic was planning and zoning changes and how to improve the appearance and use of run-down buildings. There has been talk about changing zoning regulations such as heights which was previously met with resistance from the community, but is now supported by this committee.

One of the major zoning issues is the proposed elimination of drive-throughs from the district. Post-pandemic, it is unlikely that businesses will seek permits without the accessibility of a drive-through. Changing this zoning and permitting issue will eliminate the cycle of the inability to progress as a community. Mr. Brooks suggested that drive-throughs are not beneficial in a downtown setting, but are appropriate for a general commercial setting.

The next item of discussion was the Seminary Hill School that the city and school board are working on together. The potential idea would be to create a community center of some sort. Currently, the city owns the Dana House building but not the land.

The future of the committee was also discussed, including whether it should be extended or whether a civic association should be created that would be more flexible for gathering volunteers, fundraising, etc. After meeting with the mayor, the best option appears to be continuing this committee in a scaled-down version along with a civic group. There is a rough idea of the future and what should be recommended to City Council but nothing concrete yet. There are a few remaining small items to be presented to the City Council.

4. NEW BUSINESS:

No discussion.

5. OTHER BUSINESS:

No discussion.

6. ADJOURNMENT:

A MOTION by Mr. Purcell to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Mr. Cashman.

***The Motion was approved (6-0)**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Megan Mraz