



**WEST LEBANON REVITALIZATION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2021-5:30 PM
REMOTE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
LEBANONNH.GOV/LIVE**

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- 1. Call to Order**
 - A. Review of meeting procedures and NH RSA 91-A "Right-to-Know" requirements.
 - 2. Approval of Minutes**
 - A. January 12, 2021
 - 3. New Business**
 - A. Review of draft statement supporting removal of Westboro Buildings
 - B. Outreach subcommittee preliminary plan for contacting owners.
 - 4. Other Business**
 - 5. Adjournment**

The order of agenda items is subject to change.

Due to the current situation with the COVID-19 Pandemic, the City of Lebanon is offering its meetings via Microsoft Teams. Members of the public are encouraged to attend by going to LebanonNH.gov/Live where you will find instructions on how to enter the meeting. Members of the public will be able to participate and ask questions through the Microsoft Teams software or by phone. Please visit LebanonNH.gov/Live for full details.

THE AGENDA, IN ITS ENTIRETY IS AVAILABLE ON THE CITY'S WEBSITE AT [LEBANONNH.GOV](https://LebanonNH.gov)

Agenda
West Lebanon Revitalization Advisory Committee
January 26, 2021

Agenda Item #2A
Approval of Minutes

January 12, 2021

1 DRAFT

2 CITY OF LEBANON
3 WEST LEBANON REVITALIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
4 MINUTES, JANUARY 12, 2021
5 REMOTE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
6 LebanonNH.gov/Live
7 5:30PM
8

9 MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Winny (Chair, City Council Rep.); Lauren Groves; Chet Clem
10 (Vice Chair); Chris Lin; Dean Cashman; Laurel Stavis (Planning
11 Board Rep.); Gregorio Amaro;

12
13 MEMBERS ABSENT: Graziella Parati; Kevin Purcell (Economic Development
14 Commission Rep.)

15
16 STAFF PRESENT: David Brooks, Planning & Zoning Director; Shaun Mulholland, City
17 Manager
18

19 -----
20
21 1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Winny called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm
22

23 A. Review of meeting procedures and NH RSA 91-A "Right-to-Know" requirements.
24

25 Mr. Brooks shared the State directive and participation details for the online meeting in Microsoft
26 Teams. All speakers identified themselves.
27

28 2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
29

30 A. December 15, 2020
31

32 ***A MOTION by Ms. Stavis to approve the December 15, 2020 Minutes as presented.***
33 ***Seconded by Ms. Groves.***
34

35 ***Roll Call Vote:***

36 ***Members voting in favor included: Mr. Clem, Mr. Lin, Mr. Cashman, Ms. Groves, Ms. Stavis,***
37 ***Chair Winny.***

38 ****The Motion was approved (6 - 0)***
39

40 3. **NEW BUSINESS:**
41

42 A. **Overview of CBD Zoning, Development Review Process**
43

44 Mr. Brooks reviewed the current Central Business (CB) District zoning provisions, allowed uses,
45 and dimensional requirements. He discussed proposed amendments currently under review by
46 the City Council. There was discussion of the differences between the current CB regulations for
47 West Lebanon Village and the recently-adopted Lebanon Downtown (LD) District provisions. Ms.
48 Stavis hoped the Committee would be able to recommend amendments to the CB District to help
49 achieve what is desired for West Lebanon Village. There was discussion about potential uses of
50 the Westboro property within the zoning regulations.
51

52 Mr. Brooks reviewed a map depicting the extent of the CB zone and surrounding districts. There
53 was discussion of the ownership of properties within the CB District for outreach purposes. Mr
54 Brooks briefly discussed the Site Plan Review process by the Planning Board.
55

1 There was discussion about parking requirements within the CB district and the need to identify
2 potential locations for public parking in West Lebanon.

3
4 **B. Discussion of Urban Planning with Architect Dan Winny**
5

6 Architect Dan Winny shared a presentation regarding general concepts of urban planning. He
7 suggested the City's Master Plan and the recent visioning charrette and summary report represent
8 very good planning work relative to West Lebanon Village.

9
10 He noted there are three areas of potential intervention, including public street improvements,
11 public amenity and recreation improvements, and private-sector development. He noted the
12 relative consensus from the Master Plan and visioning effort that West Lebanon Village should
13 have a "real Main Street". The Master Plan talks about infill and redevelopment, higher-density
14 mixed-use projects, and commercial storefronts with upper-story residential units, which implies
15 a fairly significant level of redevelopment compared to current conditions. He pointed to downtown
16 White River Junction, Hanover, or Woodstock as potential examples of what some people mean
17 by a real Main Street.

18
19 Mr. Amaro arrived at 6:00pm
20

21 Mr. Winny noted the current traffic level of about 14,000 cars/day along Main Street can be
22 positive for some and negative for others. Due to the location of rivers and bridges, traffic is
23 funneled toward West Lebanon and concentrated along Main Street. He suggested this condition
24 is unlikely to change and may be difficult to mitigate. He noted some of the urban design
25 improvements highlighted in the visioning charrette report as good ideas for Main Street.

26
27 Mr. Winny reviewed a conceptual mixed-use building with parking based on current CB zoning
28 provisions. He suggested a general vision of apartments over commercial space with a focus as
29 a center for local shopping seems appropriate for Main Street. He noted that more apartments
30 would increase the overall housing supply and could have other potential benefits including higher
31 transit usage, support for local businesses, and increased neighborhood vitality. He noted most
32 properties are well below the allowed dimensional standards of the CB district.

33
34 Mr. Winny showed an analysis of the existing building footprints and parking areas in West
35 Lebanon Village. He noted how much pavement for parking and circulation is available compared
36 to building square footage. He noted that previous parking utilization studies indicate that existing
37 parking, both public and private, is not heavily used in the area.

38
39 Mr. Winny noted the existing development pattern is heavily auto-oriented and not reflective of a
40 downtown area. Lot configuration and ownership patterns impact opportunities for
41 redevelopment. Small lots are difficult to redevelop. More could happen on larger lots or on lots
42 that could be assembled by common ownership. Mr. Winny suggested that it should not be difficult
43 to find a building type that would make for a good main street. A shared vision is important to
44 motivate people, but it must be realistic.

45
46 Mr. Winny felt it is important to figure why more redevelopment hasn't happened in West Lebanon.
47 He suggested it is not because of zoning, parking, or traffic levels, but may be the complicated lot
48 configuration and ownership pattern and the lack of a long-term vision. Mr. Winny recommended
49 talking to landowners to find out what would make them redevelop or participate in improving
50 Main Street. Local commercial brokers should also be approached to learn more about the
51 market.

52
53 There was discussion of methods to improve West Lebanon Village, including through aesthetics,
54 additional public parking, communication and outreach to local business and property owners,
55 encouragement and incentivizing new business and redevelopment. There was agreement that
56 a clear vision with stages built in was needed for the area since there is so much to do. It was

1 noted that some of the recent successful reuses of properties could form the nucleus of a
2 redevelopment effort if similar businesses could be attracted to the area. Ms. Stavis suggested
3 that a non-profit could be created to fund certain projects.
4

5 It was noted that owners frequently operate in their own self-interest and the challenge is
6 implementation and how to incentivize redevelopment in the broader interest. The community
7 needs to set the tone and trust that individual owners will do their part to achieve the greater good.
8 It was noted that the City owns very little land in West Lebanon and property owners will need to
9 work together to achieve common goals. The potential opportunity to connect existing parking
10 areas behind buildings as the type of project that will take cooperation among the owners and the
11 City to achieve.
12

13 There was agreement on the need to operate on multiple tracks simultaneously, including
14 outreach, aesthetics, synchronizing public and private improvements, and on the urgency of doing
15 something with Westboro Yard. It was suggested that a mini "chamber of commerce" is needed
16 for West Lebanon Village to help articulate a new vision.
17

18 **C. Discussion of Westboro Yard Lease Proposal**

19

20 City Manager Mulholland talked about ongoing efforts to have the Westboro buildings removed.
21 He reviewed several potential options under consideration by a strategy group including state
22 legislators and some city councilors, including seeking the release of previously-appropriated
23 funds, adding more funds in the next state budget, offering a short-term loan to the state, raising
24 funds to demolish the building ourselves, and enforcing the state building code. He noted the City
25 Council will be providing direction to the administration on February 3rd relative to Westboro Yard.
26

27 He suggested that demolishing the Westboro buildings would be an investment in the future and
28 a benefit to the community. The South Main Street "dry bridge" project will invest \$8-10 million in
29 West Lebanon and provide access into Westboro. There was agreement that demolishing the
30 buildings is essential to the revitalization of West Lebanon.
31

32 There was discussion about how the Committee could be helpful to the process. Mr. Mulholland
33 suggested it would be helpful to have the Committee members attend the February 3rd Council
34 meeting to advocate for West Lebanon. Mr. Mulholland noted that getting the buildings down can
35 be done, but the City needs to decide how much risk to accept and how badly it wants to get it
36 done. There was agreement that a multi-faceted approach is best. It was noted that funding relief
37 from the federal level could make it easier for the state to release frozen funds.
38

39 Mr. Mulholland reiterated the City's intent to proceed on multiple fronts. The City Council will
40 decide which efforts to pursue. There was a suggestion of starting a conversation on social media
41 to help spread the word quickly and to create a movement of people to help push this issue along.
42

43 ***Ms. Stavis MOVED to authorize Mr. Clem, Mr. Lin, and Ms. Groves to draft a statement to***
44 ***be delivered by Councilor Winny at the February 3rd City Council meeting and that we***
45 ***review that statement at our next West Lebanon Revitalization Advisory Committee***
46 ***meeting.***

47 ***Mr. Clem seconded the motion.***
48

49 ***Roll Call Vote:***

50 ***Members voting in favor included: Mr. Clem; Mr. Lin; Mr. Cashman; Mr. Amaro; Ms. Groves;***
51 ***Ms. Stavis; Chair Winny.***

52 ****The Motion was approved (7 - 0)***
53
54

55 **D. Creation of Subcommittees** 56 **- Westboro Yard**

1 **- Outreach**

2
3 Chair Winny noted that a Westboro subcommittee will be created. In addition to drafting a support
4 statement for the Council, the subcommittee should think about what the City should do with
5 Westboro if the buildings are demolished and City gets control. Ms. Stavis agreed to participate
6 along with Mr. Clem, Mr. Lin, and Ms. Groves.

7
8 Chair Winny suggested another subcommittee would be for outreach to local business and
9 property owners to learn more about what would trigger them to make improvements and how
10 the Committee and the City could help owners achieve longer term goals. It was noted that a
11 listserv for West Lebanon residents exists, but something more specific could be created for
12 business and property owners.

13
14 There was discussion about defining the work of the subcommittee. Chair Winny felt outreach
15 would help the Committee learn who community partners might be and who is not interested in
16 participating. Mr. Clem and Mr. Lin expressed interest in participating with outreach. Chair Winny
17 will communicate with other Committee members about interest in either subcommittee. Mr.
18 Cashman expressed interest in the subcommittees and asked for more information on past
19 communications with property owners. Chair Winny summarized that Mr. Clem, Mr. Lin, and Mr.
20 Cashman would be involved with the Outreach subcommittee.

21
22 It was suggested that efforts to consider a non-profit organization should get started to get the
23 gears in motion.

24
25 Mr. Mulholland suggested a narrowly-focused effort for outreach, such as communicating about
26 a specific project for connecting existing parking areas behind buildings. He felt it could develop
27 into a public-private partnership to create additional public parking. A specific concept might be
28 easier for property owners to consider and comment on and could lead to other projects.

29
30 Chair Winny asked the Outreach subcommittee to put together a plan for contacting property
31 owners. Mr. Amaro expressed interest in resident outreach when the time comes. The Committee
32 will talk more about focused discussion points on January 26th.

33
34 **4. OTHER BUSINESS:**

35
36 None.

37
38 **5. ADJOURNMENT:**

39
40 ***A MOTION by Mr. Clem to adjourn the meeting.***

41 ***Seconded by Ms. Groves.***

42
43 ***Roll Call Vote:***

44 ***Members voting in favor included: Mr. Clem; Mr. Lin; Mr. Cashman; Mr. Amaro; Ms.***

45 ***Groves; Ms. Stavis; Chair Winny.***

46 ****The Motion was approved (7 - 0)***

47
48 The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

49
50 Respectfully submitted,
51 David Brooks
52 Planning & Zoning Director

Agenda
West Lebanon Revitalization Advisory Committee
January 26, 2021

Agenda Item #3A
New Business

Review of draft statement supporting removal of Westboro Buildings

1 To: Members of the Lebanon City Council

2 Date: tk

3 From: The West Lebanon Revitalization Advisory Committee

4 **Re: Revitalizing downtown West Lebanon requires the demolition of Westboro Yards: A**
5 **Motion to Empower City Manager to Proceed with Negotiations on Westboro Demolition**
6

7 The West Lebanon Revitalization Advisory Committee (WLRAC) is tasked with envisioning
8 and enacting a strategy that will inject new energy into decades of study of our historic
9 downtown village. The comprehensive planning effort dates back to 2004 and culminated in the
10 2019 Visioning Charrette. The 2012 Lebanon Master Plan clearly states the mission:

11
12 *“Downtown West Lebanon shall be a vibrant village - a crossroads where residents and visitors*
13 *work, meet, shop, and share in a good quality of life and a firm sense of community and*
14 *belonging. The City of Lebanon seeks to promote and enhance downtown West Lebanon as a*
15 *historic center offering a “small-town” atmosphere, serving the commercial, service and*
16 *recreational needs of residents in surrounding neighborhoods, and providing opportunities for*
17 *professional and similar businesses seeking the benefits of a downtown location.”*
18

19 In reviewing this body of knowledge it is impossible to avoid the reality that the Westboro
20 Railyard remains the biggest impediment– and in turn the biggest opportunity– for the future
21 success of downtown West Lebanon. The dilapidated buildings, situated on land owned by the
22 State of New Hampshire, must be demolished, the land remediated, and public access to the
23 Connecticut River shoreline restored. This will provide long hoped-for relief to West Lebanon
24 residents, begin to address long-standing environmental and economic issues, and provide an
25 incentive for further investment in this historic part of our City.
26

27 The City Manager, working with City Council members and Lebanon’s Legislative delegation,
28 has developed a straightforward and effective strategy to work with the State on moving the
29 demolition and remediation forward. ***We, the members of WLRAC, strongly urge the City***
30 ***Council to empower the City Manager to move forward with this strategy. A vote to do so***
31 ***would constitute the most substantive progress to date in the City’s decades long attempt to***
32 ***deal with the blight of Westboro.***
33

34 Past efforts to revitalize West Lebanon have resulted in a lot of talk, well-intentioned ideas, and
35 visioning of what *could* be done. Some of these strategies have been realistic, whereas some
36 would have required a well-capitalized “magic wand,” one that doesn’t exist. And now, as in the
37 past, these efforts have collided with the immovable reality that without some degree of control
38 of Westboro Yards there is little that can be accomplished. Control of Westboro Yards means
39 control of the future of West Lebanon.
40

41 We applaud the recent work by our City leadership and elected officials at the local and state
42 level in translating these ideas into a pragmatic approach by identifying tangible steps for
43 incremental progress.
44

The strategies outlined by the City Manager represent an approachable and achievable path towards progress, allowing us the first tangible opportunity in more than 30 years to regain control over the destiny of our waterfront and our downtown.

We must move forwards.

The first step is the safe demolition and removal of the dilapidated structures currently on the site. Last year, working with the City, Lebanon's Representatives in Concord secured an appropriation in New Hampshire's 2021 budget for this purpose. Despite that success, the Governor has frozen appropriations in the 2021 budget because of the COVID-19 pandemic and it is unclear what will happen to those funds going forward. ***The State budget expires June 30, 2021 therefore it is imperative that we act quickly and decisively, proceed with multiple strategies that account for unpredictable circumstances, and start solving this problem once and for all.***

Although these specific funds are for a demolition project, they are really an investment in the opportunity to rebuild. This is less about taking down buildings and more about enabling the future of downtown West Lebanon. More than 14,000 cars travel through downtown West Lebanon each day, and our Main Street and waterfront can once again become a viable downtown and a lively destination.

We urge the City Council to further its clear and unwavering commitment to the revitalization of West Lebanon by empowering the City Manager to pursue the strategies he has outlined to secure the funding necessary to make this critical investment in our future.

We thank the City Council for establishing WLRAC, and for providing us the opportunity to present our views. We look forward to continuing our vocal support for addressing the Westboro Yards situation and championing the ongoing revitalization of downtown West Lebanon.

Sincerely,

The West Lebanon Revitalization Advisory Committee

Councilor Jim Winny, Chair

City Council Rep.

Chet Clem, Lyme Properties, Vice Chair

Business Owner/ Ward 1

Chris Lin, Consign and Design

Business Owner/ Ward 1

Dean Cashman, Mascoma Bank

Business Owner/ Ward 1

89 **Graziella Parati**
90 Resident/ Ward 1
91
92 **Gregorio Amaro**
93 Resident/ Ward 1
94
95 **Lauren Groves**
96 Resident/ Ward 1
97
98 **Laurel Stavis**
99 Planning Board Representative
100
101 **Kevin Purcell**
102 Economic Development Commission Representative