

Community and Economic Development Report - April 06, 2022

Members present: Michael Talbott (chair), Sharon Davis, Devon Neary

Others present: Mike Doenges, Carrie Savage, Bill Gillam, Anna Tadio, Dave Allaire, Kim Peters, Tyler Dahlin, Shelley Lutz, Mary Beth Poli, Andrew Shinn, Gordon Dritschilo

Other: Thomas Franco (via phone)

The meeting was called to order at 5:35pm

The first item on the agenda was the Velomont Trail and associated VT Huts project.

Shelley Lutz explained that the Velomont Trail will be a bike trail running the state of Vermont from the Canadian border to the Massachusetts border, approximately 485 miles in length. She emphasized that the trail will link communities across the state. The trail is being organized primarily by the Vermont Mountain Biking Association chapters, with each working on small segments.

In Rutland, they are working to bring the trail down from Mendon, through Rutland City, to West Rutland and Poultney. They are hoping the trail will cut through Northwood Park and connect to Pine Hill Park. They brought this item to the Board of Aldermen because they need the city's support.

Their favored route, which prevents the trail from crossing Route 4 more than once, involves crossing the watershed by the city reservoir. Shelley and Mary Beth met with DPW representatives, who were not in favor of having the trail cut through the watershed.

Committee members recognized the economic benefits offered by the trail and discussed possible routes around the watershed, and voiced hope that there was an opportunity to support the trail's preferred route while sufficiently protecting the watershed.

The Velomont Trail representatives hope to be able make a presentation to DPW representatives and hear their concerns, specifically to learn how much of a buffer is needed to protect the reservoir.

This item will remain in committee, and a future meeting will be scheduled including DPW and the Velomont Trail representatives, to discuss the best path to bring the trail down from Mendon into Rutland City.

The second item on the agenda was the R.A.I.S.E. grant application which was approved at the Board of Aldermen meeting on April 4. The CED committee was tasked with compiling a list of transit-oriented development projects in need of additional planning.

Alderman Neary listed a number of potential projects, including an updated hotel market analysis, a streetscape plan for downtown around multi-mobility, a master plan update, pedestrian safety around rail crossings and connectivity to downtown, transit connections to mobility hubs like Amtrak. Additional potential projects were suggested, including manufacturing and warehouse development adjacent to rail, food and freight related to VFFC, and a bike/ped plan.

The meeting adjourned at 6:14pm.