

Minutes of Planning Commission Meeting of April 11, 2017

Commissioners present: Mike Foley, Mike Cichanowski, Chris Williams

Also present: Tim Scoggins, Art Whitman

Chris Williams called the meeting to order at 7:00.

Tim Scoggins gave a report on the Putnam Block redevelopment project. He pointed to local leadership (not town government) in economic development. He described symptoms of economic decline – taxpayers are tapped out, an aging population and low productivity per worker. He cited the example of the redevelopment of Brooks House in downtown Brattleboro which cost \$60 million. The fair market value of the property was much less leading to the conclusion that projects like this were not viable for private sector development. Putnam Block fits this same profile. He described the financing – federal historic tax credits, federal New Market tax credits, investments by community institutions (Bennington College, Southern Vermont College, South West Vermont Health Care, Global Z) and purchase of housing units by local people.

A discussion of revival of the Shaftsbury Country Store ensued. Art Whitman cautioned that town government shouldn't favor one business over another (in this case – Paulins). It was agreed that the Country Store location was problematic. Other possible locations and business models were discussed. It was agreed that case studies of the revival of other Vermont country stores should be researched.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Williams, Planning Commission Chair