Town of Charlestown

Planning Commission Design Standards Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 14, 2025 at 3:00 P.M.

Charlestown Town Hall, Council Chambers

4540 South County Trail, Charlestown, RI 02813

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1. CALL TO ORDER:

Ms. Topping called the meeting to order at 3:02 P.M.

2. ROLL CALL:

Members present: Ruth Platner, Frances Topping, Carol Mossa, Charee Jackson, Lorna Persson

Members absent: Paula Orsini

Others: Sean Henry, Town Planner

3. MINUTES APPROVAL:

Discussion and/or potential vote concerning:

A. Minutes from March 5, 2025

The Committee reviewed the March 5, 2025 meeting minutes.

A motion was made by Ms. Jackson to approve the meeting minutes as written. Seconded by Ms. Platner and carried by unanimous vote.

4. CONTINUED DISCUSSION:

A. Development of guidelines that can be accepted by the Town Council and adopted as an ordinance

Mr. Henry informed the Committee that at the request of the Town Council he provided a memo explaining the Committee's progress up to this point and informed them that the project would require more time to complete.

Ms. Jackson distributed and discussed the notes that she had prepared explaining the position and comments received from the EIC. Some of the comments were:

- EIC has a new appreciation for the work of the Committee and the input received to date.
- The Libra document is a narrative and outline. The EIC does not support the Libra document as a standard or guideline.
- The Shannock document is more in tune with the EIC's vision. The EIC feels they can support a temporary adoption of the Shannock Village guidelines town wide. They strongly encourage

different standards be developed; one for the actual villages, one for the TVD outside of Cross' Mills, and one for the scenic highway along Route 1.

- It is the opinion of the EIC that a guidance document vs. a standards document is more in line with the EIC vision, but they understand the need for enforceable standards. It is the opinion of the EIC that a living document, similar to a Comprehensive Plan will allow the Town to grow with the times.
- EIC supports a more prescriptive document if done correctly by providing choices. A clear vision of the future in the TVD and how it will look for generations to come is important to the economic stability of the Town.
- EIC supports maintenance and preservation of properties with new construction as described on page 26 of the Libra document. The Town should promote the stewardship of properties.
- Commercial and village have different connotations of uses. Commercial is pharmacy, hotel, retail, etc. Village is Ma and Pa stores and small businesses.
- The Libra document crossed lines when speaking about pedestrian uses and future standards.
- The EIC needs more time to digest the dimensional standards contained within the Libra document.
- The EIC could support renovations to existing properties that would require certain design guidelines.
- The EIC would like to have the opportunity to advise on commercial projects.

The Committee discussed at length the items presented by Ms. Jackson.

Ms. Platner suggested that the EIC develop some prescriptive ideas and bring them to the next committee meeting.

Ms. Topping suggested the subcommittee discuss at the next meeting some of the problem areas that they would like to use the word "shall" to be more prescriptive.

A date for the next meeting was not set. It is anticipated that it will be in July. This will give Ms. Jackson and Ms. Persson time to further discuss and gather additional input from all EIC members.

5. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Ms. Platner to adjourn at 4:28 P.M. Seconded by Ms. Jackson and carried by unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janet Lombardo
Recording Secretary

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