

**Town of Charlestown**  
**Commercial and Village Design Standards Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 5:00 P.M.**  
**Charlestown Town Hall, Council Chambers**  
**4540 South County Trail, Charlestown, RI 02813**

**AGENDA**

**1. ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 P.M. by Frances Topping, Chair

Members present: Frances Topping, Carol Mossa, Peter Mahony, Susan Cooper, Erica Perry and Brian Nieves (arrived 5:05 P.M.)

Members absent: Pam Lyons, Paula Orsini, Carl Johnson, and Stephen Stokes

Others: Kim Salerno, and Steve Irvine from Libra Planners

**2. MINUTES APPROVAL**

**Discussion and/or potential vote(s) concerning:**

**A. Minutes from August 31, 2023**

The Committee reviewed the August 31, 2023 meeting minutes

**A motion was made by Mr. Mahony to approve the August 31, 2023 meeting minutes as written. Seconded by Ms. Mossa and carried by unanimous vote.**

**B. Minutes from September 28, 2023**

The Committee reviewed the September 28, 2023 meeting minutes.

**A motion was made by Mr. Mahony to approve the meeting minutes as written. Seconded by Ms. Mossa and carried by unanimous vote.**

**3. REVIEW OF SURVEY RESULTS – Libra Planners**

Mr. Irvine reviewed the survey results with the Committee. There were some very strong opinions among survey participants as to what they wanted and did not want to see in Charlestown. The types of buildings, architecture, building height, landscaping, and parking were broken down and Mr. Irvine shared the public's view on each item. He reviewed some of the written comments and opinions. Maintaining the rural character should be kept in mind when continuing forward. Townspeople in most cases want Charlestown to remain much as it is and any new commercial projects should blend in style and architecture with what already exists and should not be made to resemble other larger area towns. It was noted that the complete results of the survey are on the Town's website for all to review.

Discussion ensued with the Committee members offering their opinions and ideas.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

Ms. Salerno reviewed the working draft of the standards. She said it is very nascent and emphasized that the draft is for internal review only. She wants to be sure that the document does not go beyond the committee members as there is information and numbers in the draft that are not necessarily correct, but she incorporated them at this point to stimulate committee discussion but does not want it out in the public as misinformation could be distributed and affect the successful outcome of the project.

She began her presentation by going through the table of contents. She said that when they began the project, they thought that it was going to primarily be an image-based document that had dimensional standards. After doing the research and doing a study of the villages, understanding the context, and speaking with the committee members and thinking about the way oversight is performed, the document is going to essentially be half verbal language and half images. The images will serve dimensional regulation. At the end of the document there will be a section that will provide for the “dos and don’ts” although dos and don’ts are not enforceable but will be there to kind of qualify everything in the document.

Ms. Salerno gave a broad overview of the different sections of the document and what their purposes would be.

The goal of the document is to make it adoptable, something that will contain standards to follow and if chosen to do so, can be adopted into law.

Ms. Salerno referenced the now defunct Charlestown Commons project and stated that they considered a project like that when preparing the draft documents.

Ms. Salerno continued by reviewing the outline of the document and the different aspects that would be included for review, building design, building elements, building materials, details, and siting. Following the outline, there will be a dimensional standards aspect of the document that will contain pictures and dimensional number applications.

#### **5. GOALS MOVING FORWARD**

Ms. Topping stated that that she would like to start tasking Committee members with different assignments.

## **A. Assignments**

Ms. Topping asked that committee members consider volunteering their areas of expertise to the development of the guidelines. She asked that Ms. Perry and Ms. Lyons, at the next Historical Society meeting seek members' input and suggestions as to what the Historical Society would like to see for new commercial buildings that may in the future be constructed.

Ms. Topping asked Ms. Mossa, if she would go around town and photograph buildings and structures that appeared to epitomize Charlestown.

Mr. Mahony added that each Committee member had a lot to offer in the development of the project.

## **6. CHAIR COMMENTS**

Ms. Topping had nothing additional to add.

## **7. MEETING SCHEDULE**

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for 5 PM, February 21<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Salerno said that she would confirm with Mr. Friedrichs as to his availability, but she and Mr. Irving would be available to attend.

Ms. Lombardo said that she would wait to hear from Ms. Salerno and would then confirm with the Town Clerk's Office that the Council Chambers would be available for that date. She stated that she would send an email to committee members once the date has been set and would also include the Draft document from Libra Planners for members to review prior to the February meeting.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

**A motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:52 PM was made by Ms. Mossa.  
Seconded by Mr. Mahony and carried by unanimous vote.**

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Lombardo  
Planning Assistant