

## **Town of Charlestown**

### **Commercial and Village Design Standards Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Thursday, September 28, 2023 at 5:00 P.M.**

**Charlestown Town Hall, Council Chambers**

**4540 South County Trail, Charlestown, RI 02813**

#### **Meeting Minutes**

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Topping called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

### **2. ROLL CALL**

Committee members present: Chair, Frances Topping, Carol Mossa, Peter Mahony, Brian Nieves, Carl Johnson, Erica Perry, Susan Cooper, Stephen Stokes, and Mike Chambers (for Paula Orsini)

Committee members absent: Paula Orsini

Others: Kim Salerno, Steve Irvine, Peter Friedrichs (virtual attendance) and Jane Weidman (virtual attendance)

### **3. MINUTES APPROVAL**

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

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

The minutes were tabled until the next meeting.

### **4. CHARLESTOWN BACKGROUND REVIEW – prepared by Libra Planners**

Ms. Salerno reviewed with the Committee the *Charlestown Background Review for Commercial and Village Design Standards* prepared by Libra Planners. Charlestown has three distinct and separate commercial village districts; Cross Mills, Shannock, and Carolina. Each area has its own characteristics, architecture, lot size and structure location in relation to the road and property lines. The topography of the land, rivers and streams played an integral part in development in the earlier centuries. The Carolina and Shannock villages were constructed around the mills. The mills provided employment for much of the area. Rich and poor lived next to each other, and large houses and small coexist in this area. The winding river dictated the form of growth. Ms. Salerno explained that in many cases, the architecture was dependent on the time period as well as the use and function.

She stated that each area has its own uniqueness and they wanted to be mindful of that.

Mr. Friedrichs looked at the zoning for of the properties in the three districts and Mr. Irvine developed the maps to overlay the zones and uses. Mr. Irvine reviewed the maps with the Committee.

Ms. Salerno said that Charlestown is different from other surrounding towns. It has a quaint New England rural feel and the concepts and designs must maintain that.

There was also a review of the areas within the Scenic Highway District and the Traditional Village District along Old Post Road and how Rte 1A evolved along the historical Post Rd rather than as a central commercial area. Parking design is important in both. Mr. Irvine created the maps based on proposed zoning.

## **5. PROJECT DISCUSSION**

Mr. Mahony presented an application that had previously been before the Planning Commission but has since been withdrawn. Charlestown Commons was proposed to be located in the Traditional Village District but within the view of Route 1 (Scenic Highway) area, but due to land constraints, the project was not able to move forward. Mr. Mahony used Charlestown Commons as an example of architecture and site plans that the Committee may want to consider as a positive example when moving forward.

Ms. Salerno asked about public input. She said that Libra felt that it is important to get the public involved early in the process. Discussion ensued as to how to go about engaging the public.

After much discussion, it was decided that the Committee would schedule a public meeting in early November. Information about the project would be available and it was suggested that photos of various properties would be available for the public to view. The public would be asked to rank the photos in order of their appeal, architecturally and if they felt it would “fit” in the commercial and village districts. It is important to note that none of the photographs would be from Charlestown.

Mr. Stokes said that he would get in contact with the Town’s PR person to see about getting this information on the Town’s website and Facebook page.

## **6. ADJOURNMENT**

**A motion was made by Ms. Mossa to adjourn at 6:55 P.M. and seconded by Mr. Stokes and carried by unanimous vote.**

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Lombardo

Planning Assistant