

1 **BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING**

2 **130 RIVER STREET**

3 **BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

4 **MAY 9, 2022**

5 **MINUTES**

6 **SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jeannie Jenkins-Chair; Jeanne Conner-Vice Chair; Bruce
7 Lee-Clark; Jim Carroll; Gary Corey; and Sarah Perrin.

8 **SELECT BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Tom Haley.

9 **ALSO PRESENT:** Stuart Hurd-Town Manager; Dan Monks-Assistant Town Manager; Shannon
10 Barsotti-Community Development Director; Jonah Spivak-Communications Coordinator; Police
11 Chief Paul Doucette and Lt. Cam Grande; Stephanie Lane and Madison Kremer-Shires Housing;
12 Jason Morrissey, Michael McDonough, Kevin Dailey, Ken Swierad and Robert Ebert-Land Use
13 Regulations and Plan Amendment-Everett Estate; Shirley Adams; Al Bashevkin; Jenny Dewar-
14 BBC; Tortis Engelhardt; Nancy White; 10 citizens; Jim Vires-CAT-TV; and Nancy H. Lively-
15 Secretary.

16 At 6:00pm, Chair Jeannie Jenkins called the meeting to order.

17 **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

18 The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

19 **2. VISION STATEMENT**

20 Ms. Conner read the Town’s Vision Statement that was adopted by the Select Board on
21 August 24, 2020:

22 “Bennington is a welcoming, engaged, inclusive, resilient community where everyone
23 regardless of identity shares in our vitality and benefits from an outstanding quality of life.”

24 **3. CONSENT AGENDA**

25 **A. MINUTES OF APRIL 25, 2022**

26 **B. WARRANTS**

27 **C. LIQUOR LICENSES**

28 *Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Jim Carroll seconded to approve the Consent Agenda as*
29 *presented. The motion carried with Tom Haley absent.*

30 **4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

31 Ms. Jenkins explained the Public Comment process and corrected an error that had
32 been stated at a previous meeting. The Senior Center’s assessed value is \$400,000.

33 Ms. Conner added that most Board members will be attending a training on Wednesday
34 put on by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns on how to conduct an informative, well run,
35 public meeting so changes may be coming.

36 The following Public Comment Practices to make the experience for all involved a
37 productive and informative use of the Public Comment period at Select Board meetings was
38 placed on the podium for those that wish to make Public Comments to reference:

- 39 1. Public Comment is to allow residents an opportunity to share information or make
40 announcements that benefit the community at large.
- 41 2. The topic should not be related to an agenda item. If a member of the public wants to
42 comment on an agenda item they can do so during the discussion of that item.
- 43 3. Comments should be 3 minutes or less.
- 44 4. You are required to state your real name and town of residence.
- 45 5. Sharing comments, announcements and concerns are encouraged rather than asking
46 questions. Public Comment is not a time for discussion. If you have specific questions it is best
47 to call the Town Manager to get a full explanation and accurate information.
- 48 6. If the topic requires much discussion the item will be considered as an agenda item at a
49 future meeting.

50 _____
51 _____

52 Al Bashevkin and Madison Kremer: We will be creating a Bike Hub in Bennington to be modeled
53 from the one that is in Burlington. Board representatives are from the greater Bennington
54 area, New York and Massachusetts. Activities will include the sale of new and used bicycles,
55 bicycle repair and maintenance, classes on bicycle repair and maintenance, safe riding classes,
56 community rides, and other bike culture activities. Our first activity will be a Bike Safety Fair at
57 Highlander Bicycle on 160 Benmont Avenue on May 21st from noon to 3:00pm.

58 Jenny Dewar-BBC Executive Director: Downtown updates -

- 59 • Two 3-dimensional cases on the Downtown are at the Welcome Center.
- 60 • The fountain next to 215 is being painted and the water should be on next week.
- 61 • The moose is back and is getting a “moose lift” done by local artists.
- 62 • The Thursday Night Live series fundraising was very successful so this will take place.
63 Will be at Mission City if it rains.

- 64 • The first Hemmings Cruise-In with 250 cars will be May 19th on Main Street and School
- 65 Street and is cancelled if it rains.
- 66 • Mayfest will be May 28th with around 75 vendors rain or shine.
- 67 • All Downtown events are on the BBC website home page.

68 Nancy White: Why has the Senior Center been valued at ¾ of a million dollars over the past
 69 several years and has now been said the value is \$400,000? *Staff will check this out and get*
 70 *back to Ms. White.*

71 Nancy White: There is supposed to have been a vote on changing the Public Comment rules.
 72 When will this be done to make it official? *This will be verified and get back to Ms. White.*

73 Gentleman (name not given): Wanted to be sure that there wouldn't be any interruption in
 74 service from Meals on Wheels at the Senior Center to when they move to Benn High. *Ms.*
 75 *Jenkins verified that there would not be any interruption of Meals on Wheels service.*

76 **5. PUBLIC HEARING - LAND USE REGULATIONS AND PLAN AMENDMENT - EVERETT ESTATE**

77 Dan Monks, Assistant Town Manager, did the following presentation:

- 78 ○ The Southwest Vermont Medical Center (SVMC) has purchase the Everett Estate
- 79 property formerly known as Southern Vermont College Campus.
- 80 ○ The Planning Commission has prepared a proposed amendment to the
- 81 Bennington Town Plan and Bennington Land Use & Development Regulations (IP
- 82 District Table and Zoning Map) for the purpose of allowing and encouraging
- 83 appropriate development and re-development of the Everett Estate property.
- 84 ○ This does not include the portion of the Everett Estate that is in the Forest
- 85 District and does include protections to not negatively impact historic and scenic
- 86 resources.
- 87 ○ Proposed changes to the IP District:
 - 88 ✓ Allowed Uses - Add Hotel - the best, and probably only, use to re-develop
 - 89 the Mansion.
 - 90 ✓ Front Yard Setback - increase to 50 feet from Monument Avenue
 - 91 Extension.
 - 92 ✓ Building Height - decrease to 40 feet for all lands west of Monument
 - 93 Avenue Extension, 30 feet for lands within 50 feet west of Monument
 - 94 Avenue Extension.
 - 95 ✓ Building Coverage - decrease to 25% west of Monument Avenue
 - 96 Extension.
 - 97 ✓ Hazardous Waste Management - not allowed.
 - 98 ✓ Multi-Family Dwellings - allow for true multi-family dwellings.
 - 99 ✓ Adult Oriented Businesses - hotels limited to west of Monument Avenue
 - 100 Extension.

- 101 ✓ Everett Estate Preservation Standards - section added to maintain the
- 102 integrity of the property's historic and scenic value.
- 103 ✓ With the additions of the Historic Preservation requirements, Act 250
- 104 requirements, and the Land Trust requirements, "this property is the
- 105 most heavily protected property in the Town of Bennington, by far."

106 *Board questions/comments:*

107 Mr. Corey: Is the Hotel addition for all IP districts or only specific to this one? Mr. Monks: It is

108 for all IP districts west of Monument Avenue Extension which is only the Everett Estate.

109 Mr. Corey: What acreage is the 25% based on? Mr. Monks: It's based on the complete acreage

110 within the IP District. The majority of the 350 acres is the Forest District that is protected by

111 the Land Trust.

112 Mr. Carroll: Do you know of any plans for the property? Jason Morrissey: The hospital has been

113 using the property for health care primarily for COVID testing and vaccination purposes. The

114 hospital has hired consultants for marketing ideas for re-development with no specific plans in

115 place at this time.

116 *Public questions/comments:*

117 Nancy White: This property, though privately owned for 100 years, has had a large impact on

118 the local economy and the State seems to be willing to continue to make investments going

119 forward. How many acres will be part of the subdivision for the Estate? Mr. Morrissey: It

120 depends on the project, the developer, financing, etc.

121 Nancy White: Does a subdivision come back to the Select Board before approval? Mr. Monks:

122 No, it goes to the Development Review Board.

123 Nancy White: Is the spring still active that was on the 4-acres subdivided 50 years ago to the

124 Putnam Hospital, and if so, where does it go and what purpose does it serve? Mr. Morrissey:

125 We are not sure what this is referring to and it wasn't a part of the discussions with the

126 Planning Commission.

127 Mr. Monks added that the 2nd Hearing will be at the Select Board Meeting on May 23rd

128 whereupon the Board will close the Hearing and vote on whether to adopt or not.

129 **6. PUBLIC HEARING - SQUIRE HOUSE - VCDP FUNDING**

130 Shannon Barsotti, Community Development Director, did the following presentation:

- 131 ■ This Hearing is to furnish information concerning the amount of funds available, the
- 132 range of community development activities that may be undertaken, the impact to any
- 133 historic and archaeological resources that may be affected, and to give affected citizens
- 134 the opportunity to examine the proposed use of these funds.

- 135 ▪ The proposal is to apply for \$700,000 VCDP funds that include reapplying for \$500,000
136 in RHP fund and applying for \$200,000 in CDBG funds.
137 ▪ These funds will be used to acquire the Squire House at 185 North Street for use as
138 recovery housing and building updates to meet programmatic needs.
139 ▪ The project will be developed by Shires Housing with support from Vermont
140 Foundation of Recovery and Mission City Church.
141 ▪ As with all VCDP funding, the Town is the grantee and Shires Housing is the sub grantee
142 with a Resolution stating this approved by the Board.

143 Stephane Lane, Shires Housing Executive Director, and Madison Kremer added the
144 following information:

- 145 ✓ We have presented before on the limited funding availability for recovery
146 housing.
147 ✓ We were, however, able to purchase the Squire House last week.
148 ✓ We will be reapplying for the \$500,000 in Recovery Housing Program (RHP)
149 funding and applying for \$200,000 in Community Development Block Grant
150 (CDBG) funding “to fill the gap”.
151 ✓ The approval tonight is for the \$200,000 since the \$500,000 had already been
152 applied for once.
153 ✓ We are also doing Capital Campaign fundraising that will end on May 19th.
154 ✓ We see the Squire House and 612 Main Street - two houses - as one project that
155 are funded separately.
156 ✓ The Squire House is historic and will be divided into 3 units plus an office space
157 and will house 8 women and possible some children, as well.
158 ✓ This will be the first recovery house in Bennington and the first within 55 miles of
159 Bennington.
160 ✓ Shires Housing will maintain the building and other agencies will provide the
161 support services to the tenants within 20 hours of arrival.
162 ✓ Clarification was made that the Church will not be running the Squire House
163 programming - they are an interested partner.
164 ✓ This is considered interim housing for 8-14 months depending on the needs of
165 the family when they will then move on to more permanent housing with the
166 help of the program.

167 *Board questions/comments:*

168 Mr. Lee-Clark: What do you anticipate the acquisition and renovation costs to be for the Squire
169 House? Ms. Lane: The overall budget is \$1.5M including acquisition.

170 *Public questions/comments:*

171 Jenny Dewar: Will you accept clothing donations? Ms. Lane: Yes, wrap around services are
172 welcome.

173 Nancy White: Does Vermont still allow recovery houses to “kick their tenants out” depending
174 on what rule is broken? Ms. Lane: We are working with several partners such as UCS, the
175 hospital, etc. to have a safety net in place should this occur.

176 Nancy White: Is surprised that we haven’t heard from the Opioid Group that was formed some
177 time ago and that UCS isn’t present this evening. Is Shires Housing going to be running one of
178 these houses? Ms. Lane: Absolutely not. We are the owner and developer of the house and do
179 not run the programs. The homes are very regulated and will be run by the Vermont
180 Foundation of Recovery. Ms. Jenkins: Added that the Opioid Task Force will hopefully be
181 reporting to the Board in June, and the Co-Chair, is from UCS.

182 Nancy White: Is concerned about the impact a recovery house will have on property value,
183 locations, and how the programs are run. Ms. Jenkins: These questions were asked and
184 answered at a previous meeting.

185 ***Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Jim Carroll seconded to approve the Vermont Community***
186 ***Development Program (VCDP) application for \$200,000 for building updates by Shires Housing***
187 ***at the Squire House to meet program needs for a recovery house. The motion carried with***
188 ***Tom Haley absent.***

189 **7. BENNINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT PRESENTATION**

190 Chief Paul Doucette and Lieutenant Cam Grande did the following presentation:

- 191 ➤ We budget for 26 police officers and we currently have 21 that are Level 3 certified.
- 192 ➤ We will hire a Level 1 recruit at the end of May who was an officer in another state and
193 expects to become Vermont Level 3 certified in February 2023.
- 194 ➤ We are competing with 49 other states and federal agencies for officers but have been
195 working with Mr. Spivak on our own recruitment efforts noting that the younger
196 generation is more interested in time off and benefits than the rate of pay.
- 197 ➤ We are the 2nd busiest police department in Vermont and producing 85% of the criminal
198 cases in Bennington County.
- 199 ➤ We have been behind the Community Policing concept 100% from the beginning,
200 including the upcoming CPARB.
- 201 ➤ We are glad that we can receive compliments and complaints on the website and we do
202 receive more compliments than complaints. Chief Doucette read a couple of the
203 compliments.
- 204 ➤ We’ve been working with the Vermont Department of Health on Active Shooter
205 trainings for over 3 years. A video of the trainings has been made but we will also be
206 doing in person trainings.
- 207 ➤ All police officers received Mental Health 1st Aid Training and Human Trafficking
208 Training. Chief Doucette and Lt. Grande also participated in the FBI Leadership Training
209 that will soon be offered to the other officers.

- 210 ➤ We have applied for a \$10,000 grant from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns and
211 will be applying for another grant from the Department of Justice. We have ordered 10
212 of the new technology vests and will be ordering more updated body armor as funding
213 comes in.
- 214 ➤ We are utilizing the Guardian Tracking software as a leadership tool for our staff, as well
215 as, an evaluation tool for both positive and negative performance. All staff will be
216 trained on this by June or July.
- 217 ➤ We are looking forward to all of the upcoming activities in the Downtown. We are also
218 having our own event, the Bicycle Rodeo, on May 14th from 11:00am-1:00pm where we
219 will be handing out free helmets at the former Bennington Station parking lot.

220 *Board questions/comments:*

221 Ms. Conner: Was there a portion of the Mental Health 1st Aid Training for the police officers?
222 Chief Doucette: Yes.

223 Ms. Conner: Are there different levels of police officers? Chief Doucette: Yes, there is a Level 1,
224 Level 2, Level 2E, and Level 3. All officers in the Bennington Police Department must reach
225 Level 3 and the Police Academy is looking into alternate ways for officers to attain that.

226 Ms. Jenkins: Do you receive a format on what to track from Guardian? Chief Doucette: We build
227 it ourselves with additional recommendations from Guardian.

228 Ms. Perrin: What size helmets will you have to give away? Chief Doucette: We have 300
229 helmets from various sizes to fit toddlers to extra-large on a first come/first serve basis. They
230 can also be used for riding skate boards or scooters.

231 *Public questions/comments:*

232 Jenny Dewar: Thanked Chief Doucette and Lt. Grande for welcoming her to the Bennington
233 process.

234 **8. IMPLEMENTING THE TOWN VISION UPDATE**

235 **A. JUNETEENTH UPDATE**

236 Ms. Conner reported the following:

- 237 • The confirmed date is June 18th from noon to 3:00pm at the Middle School.
- 238 • They have received another grant to fund a drum circle.
- 239 • They're working on expanding the food choices for traditional Juneteenth food.
- 240 • Bennington Free Library is creating activities for children, as well as, a bibliography of
241 resources for anyone to read about Juneteenth.
- 242 • The SVSU Facebook Page has a link to more details about the Juneteenth Celebration.

243 **B. PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES**

244 Ms. Jenkins reported the following:

- 245 • We are still moving forward on the Town’s ADA Transition Plan.
- 246 • Paul Dansereau is assessing buildings and the Vermont Center for Independent Living
247 (VCIL) has provided some helpful resources on ADA Transition plans done within the last
248 5 years.
- 249 • VCIL is also looking for end user volunteers to look at our buildings and provide
250 feedback.
- 251 • We are asking the Select Board members to share what initiatives they would like
252 addressed over the next year. This will be an agenda item at the next meeting but this is
253 what we have now:
 - 254 ✓ Pedestrian Walkways and Bike Pathways - an update on the Pathways and a
255 criteria list for sidewalk improvements.
 - 256 ✓ Do an analysis of the current housing stock in Bennington - how many single
257 units, how many multi-family units, the age of the buildings, how are they
258 heated, and how to improve housing to make them more efficient to save
259 money and be more saleable.
 - 260 ✓ Focus on and support recovery housing in Bennington.
 - 261 ✓ Anything that can be done to remedy the housing shortage in Bennington.

262 *Public questions/comments:*

263 Tortis Engelhardt: Expected CPARB Training Proposal to be on this agenda and reminded
264 everyone that the deadline for applying for Boards and Commissions is May 16th. Ms. Jenkins:
265 We had thought we would have the CPARB proposal tonight 2 weeks ago but were not able to.
266 It will be on the May 23rd agenda.

267 **9. MANAGER’S REPORT**

268 Mr. Hurd did the following report:

269 Road Closures -

270 *Jim Carroll moved and Bruce Lee-Clark seconded to approve the following road*
271 *closures:*

272 *Cruise-Ins - Main Street east to Valentine Street and School Street to Pleasant*
273 *Street on May 19th, June 16th, July 7th, and August 11th, 5:00pm-8:00pm.*

274 *Bennington Price Day 2022 - June 26th, the Museum parking lot east to the TD*
275 *Bank lot entrance beyond School Street and Main Street from School Street to*
276 *Pleasant Street, 11:00am-5:00pm.*

277 *BBC Community Tag Sale - July 24th, School Street from Main Street to Pleasant*
278 *Street, 11:00am-6:00pm.*

279 ***The motion carried with Tom Haley absent.***

280 Hazmat Collection Day - With a 46° wind chill there were 200 vehicles that came to the Middle
281 School to what is hoped to be the last collection day of this kind. The Bennington County Waste
282 Alliance has received a grant from the State to build a permanent facility at the Transfer Station
283 that will be available to all people in Bennington County at least one day a week from May
284 through October.

285 TIF Extension - VEPC held a hearing on April 28th on our TIF Extension request. Some revisions
286 were made so we must now consider the amended plan at a second public meeting. This has
287 been scheduled for May 23rd. When submitted by June 10th, VEPC will undertake a final review
288 and issue its findings within 60 days.

289 Willow Park Playground Selection - This has been completed with the overwhelming majority
290 selecting the Canopy Discovery Plan with the Orchid color scheme. There will be a Final Design
291 Presentation at Willow Park on May 19th at 4:00pm.

292 Transportation Grant - We received a \$200,000 Transportation Grant to be used within 2 ½
293 years for the Riverwalk improvements but we will do the improvements in the next
294 construction season.

295 **10. UPCOMING AGENDA**

296 May 23, 2022 - Public Hearing - Town Plan and Zoning Use Regulations - SVC Property

297 May 23, 2022 - BBC Work Plan and Budget

298 May 23, 2022 - Department of Health - Health Equity and Inclusion

299 May 23, 2022 - CPARB Training Proposal

300 May 23, 2022 - TIF Extension Hearing

301 May 23, 2022 - John Lamson - Legal Clinic Funding Support

302 May 23, 2022 - Discussion on Projects and Initiatives

303 REMINDER: BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS LETTER OF INTEREST MUST BE IN BY MAY 16TH
304 AT 4:00PM. INTERVIEWS WILL BE DONE ON THOSE WHO HAVE NOT PREVIOUSLY
305 SERVED DURING THE WEEK OF MAY 23RD.

306 **11. OTHER BUSINESS**

307 Mr. Lee-Clark: May 18th, 4:00pm-6:00pm at the Depot Street Parking Lot, GMP is doing an EV
308 Test Drive event. Drivers will get a free electric trimmer and a \$25 Gift Certificate to Bringing
309 You Vermont.

310 Ms. Jenkins: May 21st - Community Garden Celebration from 10:00am-Noon at the Community
311 Garden with free plants, snacks, and kids activities. And, the Bike Hub Event is at 160 Ben Mont
312 Avenue from Noon-3:00pm.

313 Ms. Conner: Tickets for the high school production of Mama Mia are on sale today for the May
314 19th thru May 21st performances. And, Ms. Conner was honored to have been asked to
315 participate in a Green Mountain Bus video done by CAT-TV who had one of the Afghan refugees
316 running the camera. The final production will be in both English and Dari.

317 **12. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

318 **A. REAL ESTATE**

319 ***At 8:04pm, Bruce Lee-Clark moved and Gary Corey seconded that the meeting was***
320 ***adjourned finding that an Executive Session be held on Real Estate as premature public***
321 ***knowledge would place a person involved in the subject matter at a substantial***
322 ***disadvantage. There will be no actions taken on this item when going back into Open***
323 ***Session. The motion carried with Tom Haley absent.***

324

325

326

327 Respectfully submitted,

328 Nancy H. Lively

329 Secretary

330

**SELECT BOARD
MINUTES ADDENDUM**

May 9, 2022


Present: Jeannie Jenkins, Chair, Jeanne Conner, V. Chair, Sarah Perrin, Jim Carroll, Gary Corey, and Bruce Lee-Clark. Absent: Tom Haley

The Board went into executive session at 8:03 pm. for a real estate matter.

The Board came out of executive session at 8:33 pm.

The Board took no action. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Stuart A. Hurd