

# NVDA Town Plan Regional Approval Hearing Town Plan for Review: Lunenburg

**Tuesday, March 19th, 2024, at 6:00 PM  
at the Lunenburg Town Offices, 9 West Main Street, Lunenburg**

## **Minutes**

Attending from the NVDA Regional Approval Committee: Justin Barton-Caplin, Mike Metcalf, and Paul Brouha (Zoom); Attending from NVDA Staff: Alison Low and Nicole Gratton (Nicole on Zoom)  
Attending from the Town of Lunenburg: Tina Breault, Gary Briggs, Chris Donovan, Harry Williams, Mike Mutascio, Mary Vackley, Annabelle Burke (Ampersand), Gerald Mertens, Karen Abbruscato, James Abbruscato, Nancy Benoit, Debbie Thomas

Prior to the opening of the public hearing, the NVDA Town Plan Approval Committee appointed Mike Metcalf to chair the hearing. The hearing opened at 6:18 p.m. After introductions all around, Alison Low explained the purpose of the hearing to consider regional approval (in accordance with 24 VSA Sec. 4350.)

The committee wanted to know about the motivation for writing the plan. Gary Briggs stated that it all started when it was noted that the town lacked nice signage at the gateways to town. He found out about Village Center Designation, which could help revitalize the village area (in addition to creating signage), and he spoke with Richard Amore at the State of Vermont Village Center Designation Program, who explained that the Town of Lunenburg needed a plan to get designation. The ball was now rolling. Nicole Gratton helped the Town write their first-ever plan.

The committee wanted to know what was next for the community, now that the plan has been adopted. It was noted that the Town does not have a lengthy history of pursuing grants, but this will be the time to do it. NVDA might be able to help with grant writing and administration.

Some of the major needs noted in the plan are the fire districts and their capacity for accommodating density. Lunenburg has a water system, and Gilman has a water/sewer. There is no more capacity for the water system in Lunenburg. In fact, a recent fire drained the reservoir, leaving users without water. Both fire districts have their challenges, and they received about \$50,000 in ARPA funds to address damage to water lines. In reality, both systems need millions of dollars! Fire Districts and Town representatives are preparing to meet with Tom Brown of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund to discuss options.

Justin commented on how much he loved the plan and its extensive community engagement process and priority actions. He noted that the rail line is privately owned and presents a great opportunity to connect to regional recreation trails. Mike echoed that the plan was “well put together” and that the surveys and extensive public outreach certainly contributed to the quality of the plan. Paul noted that improving communication should be identified as a priority, and Tina Breault clarified that the prioritized list of implementation actions will certainly include it.

Gerald Mertens, who serves on the Lunenburg Historical Society, noted that the LHS has been grappling with the challenge of maintaining the buildings on the Common. This planning process was an eye opener for him.

Town officials are already working on Village Center Designation, and once the plan is regionally approved, they will be able to pursue it.

Justin mentioned that the Department of Health has resources and grants available for planning for designated cooling centers. He was going to send the information to Town officials.

At this point, Justin made a motion to recommend approval of the Lunenburg Town Plan from the full board of NVDA, which meets on March 21<sup>st</sup>. Paul seconded the motion, and the motion passed with all three voting in favor.

Justin made a motion to close the hearing at 6:45. The hearing adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Low