

Zoning Advisory Committee – November 30, 2023

Committee Members Present: Mat Ercoline (Chair), Jared Iacolucci (Secretary), Marilyn Stephenson, Anna Stanko, John Menzie, Rory O'Connor, Margaret Danison, Mike Coffey, Kamran Parwana, Pete Martin

Others: Mayor Frank Rossi

On Zoom: Jennifer Moskowitz

Called to order at 7:02

Pledge of Allegiance

[Agenda Item #1 – Subcommittee \(John Menzie, Margaret Danison, Rory O'Connor\) to provide readout of interviews with consultants and research into references.](#)

Margaret began debrief. Fisher had a strong presentation, answered questions before they were even asked, and was fully prepared. Behan did not appear to show up with the same level of interest. As an example, Fisher had prepared answers regarding effects of climate change whereas Behan did not even address. Behan sought to focus on cost and ways to cut costs, any subcommittee notes that they are utilizing subcontractors to conduct work which adds cost. Both Fisher and Behan were represented by their full proposal teams. Fisher, while located in Rochester, have an office in Saratoga and are opening another in Albany. A reference, Karen Joseph (Town Planner, Scituate, MA) found Fisher very responsive as they sought to rezone using form-based zoning (Ballston Spa Comp Plan recommends form-based or hybrid zoning).

John agreed with Margaret's analysis. Fisher had thorough answers and Behan didn't show up fully. Rory was similarly struck by the lack of urgency in the Behan approach to the presentation. Rory asked both consultants about the immediacy question (needing 3 months to get prepared) and both thought that this makes sense and would be acceptable. This time could be used to conduct diligence and better define specific goals for the ZAC.

Question raised about the need for public meetings and whether or not we would need to use them. Would we only need public meetings to go over what the final zoning would be as an explanatory session? Comp Plan committee included the goal to seek out public input on zoning issues on a neighborhood basis, specifically Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and home businesses and whether or not they are suitable in each neighborhood.

[Agenda Item #2 – ZAC determines next steps in RFP process.](#)

Mat outlined three possible paths: select and engage a consultant now; select a consultant to begin at a date TBD and provide an updated outline of what we want to accomplish at this date TBD; punt on selection and tailor a new RFP. Consensus to select a consultant now and begin at a date in the future TBD.

Consensus vote that Fisher is ZAC's selection.

ZAC will identify clear terms ensuring that we are clear on where/when we are being billed for their services. Additionally, want to be sure we conduct our own diligence in order to better define scope.

Next question is on how much time we anticipate needing to conduct our diligence. February 1st, 2024 proposed as possible date to engage with Fisher with 5 meetings scheduled between now and then. Concerns raised that we may need another two meetings due to the amount of information the ZAC needs to process. March 2024 identified as start date, with a total of 7 meetings prior during which we can address and discuss the key topics identified in the ad hoc committee report and other issues raised in the comp plan and elsewhere. Need to have specific agenda items based on that report for each of the upcoming meetings.

Next Steps:

- Mat to reach back out to Village Board stating that we have selected Fisher and that we are seeking authorization to conduct additional diligence in order to revamp the scope of work over the next 3 months.*
- For December 7th meeting:
 - Rory to develop a proposed agenda for meetings over the next 3 months
 - Presentation of key issues from Anna, Rory, and potentially Dave LaFountain.

Anna has a conflict for the next meeting, but will share her research into issues with Kamran who can present at December 7th meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:53

* Mayor Rossi joined meeting at 7:45 and Mat asked for thoughts on engaging with board on next steps considering ZAC desire to conduct additional diligence internally and revamping scope of work. Ultimately, in the longer term, the board will vote to authorize mayor to conduct contractual negotiations with Fisher. Since ZAC plan to use next 3 months for background research and diligence, in the short term we can ask board to authorize ZAC to revamp scope of work for consultant. BOA interviews will be happening according to state law requirements. Timing may line up well as we seek to engage with Fisher in the new year.