

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE**

Minutes of February 20, 2025

Full meeting recording is available at

<https://youtu.be/AsTYoILd5V4>

I. ROLL CALL

- a. Jeff Schulz, Town Manager, Lydia Petty and Charlie Morse, Select Board Members, Tom Davis, Economic Development Director

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED): None

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the last meeting were approved unanimously.

IV. DISCUSSION

a. Tax Stabilization Policy –

1. Current policy requires applications before construction begins but lacks clear definition of “construction” No final agreement on suggested definition was reached in this meeting.
2. Need to clarify policy only applies to municipal taxes, not education property taxes
3. Committee discussed need to add headers to policy document to clarify:
 - i. Commercial projects section
 - ii. Housing projects section (3-year and 5-year options)

b. Discussion of Timeline Requirements

1. Debate over whether construction can begin after application submitted but before approval
2. Mr. Morse argued that allowing construction during review provides flexibility. Ms. Petty maintained tax stabilization should be worked out before any construction
3. Committee discussed potential 3-month window after permit issuance
4. No consensus reached on timeline modifications

c. Masonic Temple Application Review

1. Requesting tax stabilization for 15-unit apartment conversion

2. Project qualifies under current criteria:
 - i. Downtown location with water/sewer
 - ii. Preserves historic structure, maintains brick façade
 - iii. Converting vacant building to active use
 - iv. Committee recommends 3-year stabilization unless applicant commits to low-income units
 - v. Parking requirements met through DRB approval despite limited on-site spaces

d. Parking Discussion

1. No formal study has confirmed parking problems downtown
2. ParkMobile system discussed as potential future option:
 - i. No upfront capital costs
 - ii. Generated \$98,000 revenue for Montpelier last year
 - iii. Flexible implementation options
 - iv. Provides usage data
 - v. Can be tested in limited areas

e. Process Improvements Needed

1. The Economic Development Director wasn't aware of the tax stabilization policy
2. Need better communication of available programs
3. Policy should be more visible on website
4. Application process needs streamlining
5. Committee discussed adding waiver language to policy

f. Next Steps

1. Will email Masonic Temple applicant about 3-year recommendation
2. Need to finalize construction definition in policy
3. Will forward recommendation to Select Board
4. Further discussion needed on policy updates
5. Committee will continue review of additional applications expected

g. Other Matters - None

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED) None

VI. ADJOURNMENT