

July 1, 2002



Chuck Karparis, Mayor  
City Council Members  
William Fraser, City Manager  
City Hall  
Montpelier, VT 05062



Dear Mayor Karparis, City Council Members and Mr. Fraser:

The Montpelier Downtown Community Association is in receipt of a copy of the recommendations of July 8, 2002 of the Montpelier Economic Development Advisory Committee and the July 11, 2002 letter from two members of this committee dissenting from the July 8<sup>th</sup> letter.

There is a third option. The Montpelier Downtown Community Association wrote the enclosed policy to provide guidance to our members of the economic development committee in their work. This document establishes a deliberative process for assessing the economic development needs and opportunities in this community and for considering those needs and opportunities in light of other issues. The majority opinion expressed in the July 8<sup>th</sup> letter appears to have "leapfrogged" this process; and the minority opinion appears to have not gone far enough through this process to reach its conclusion.

The Executive Committee of the MDCA met with representatives of the Economic Development committee at their request to discuss the specific question of whether the MDCA would consider a relationship with an economic development entity. The Executive Committee's response was that if there are two entities in the City pursuing economic development (that is, an economic development corporation and the MDCA), there must be a relationship. The relationship of these two entities, as well as the role of the City's Department of Planning and Development, and how policy is developed must be addressed before the structure of an organization can be considered. This has not happened.

When the Council was considering the formation of the Economic Development Committee, it was stated that the proposed committee would engage in the same sort of process which lead to the creation of the MDCA. This process was facilitated by a planning grant the City received from the Department of Housing and Community Affairs. The Council may wish to apply for such a grant to facilitate consideration of economic development.

We believe that the successful growth of this community is based on the sort of deliberative policy development process outlined in the attached document. We urge that before the City Council adopts the position of either of the recommendations for economic development that the process outlined in this document be followed.

Montpelier Downtown  
Community Association  
Partners  
for a Vibrant Montpelier

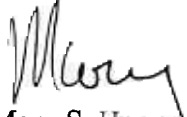
**BOARD MEMBERS:**  
Heather Shouldice, Chair  
Rich Hansen, Vice Chair  
Alan Lendway, Sec/Treas.  
Jon Anderson  
Claude Stone  
Jay Ancel  
Anita Bird  
Jody Brown  
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Mary S. Hooper  
Executive Director  
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Economic development is one of the most important issues facing Montpelier. How we manage it will shape this community for generations. The right choices now will assure that the unique character of this City, supported by a vital economic base, thrives. We appreciate the hard work done by many people to develop a proposal for creating an entity to manage economic development. Successful economic development requires community consensus and support. We do not believe that has been achieved. You have received two options for considering economic development, we suggest our proposal creates a third option.

Sincerely,



Mary S. Hooper  
Executive Director

- C. MDCA Board  
Montpelier Economic Development Advisory Committee  
William Ricker, Chair  
Fred Connor, III  
Thomas Greene  
Timothy Heney  
Alan Lendway  
William Patno  
Gerald Tarrant  
Beth Wagner-Boutin  
✓ Valerie Capels, Director, Montpelier Planning and Development

**The City Council's charge to the economic development steering committee:** To provide recommendations to the City Council which may include potential economic development strategies, suggested organizational and /or staffing structure and plan for sustainable funding.

**The Montpelier Downtown Community Association's proposal** for responding to the City Council's charge:

**Establish a vision** of what Montpelier should look like in 25 years. Following is a proposed vision.

In order to maintain, develop and enhance Montpelier's high quality of life and unique character for the people who live in, work in and visit the city, the City will develop into the 21st century as a vital and diverse community center for retailing, cultural activities, education, recreation, business/professional services, dining, government and residential use.

Montpelier's private and public sectors will work together and in partnership with the wider community to enhance the city's competitive advantage as a location for regional or statewide business.

The development of Montpelier will support a compact, land-efficient design which enhances access to the city's unique environmental features (riverfront, parks and open space), and preserves its historic neighborhoods, structures and sites. Finally the city shall be a steward the of "the sense of place" that defines the city.

Downtown Montpelier will attract interests through cultural activities, and grow as a center for the arts and entertainment, youth and senior activities, and tourism. Montpelier's downtown will be accessible and pedestrian-friendly, with aesthetically pleasing streetscape and design.

2. **Establish guiding principals which shall be the basis of all work.** These principals shall be the standard against which outcomes shall be measured.

Development shall reinforce the compact urban form and enhance the small-scale intimate character of Montpelier.

- A. Growth shall be in established commercial and industrial areas and strengthen the tax base.
- B. Growth shall preserve the cultural, natural and historic features of the City.
- C. Growth shall attract employers who fit the scale of the city and provide quality jobs that pay above average wages.
- D. Growth shall be targeted to complement existing businesses.
- E. Growth shall take place within the confines of infrastructure capacity of the City and shall be according to a plan which assures demand does not exceed capacity and that future demand can be accommodated.
- F. The capacity for growth does not necessarily imply a mandate for growth. "Capacity" shall be understood to be more than the carrying capacity of the roads, parks, neighborhoods, as well as water, sewer and schools; it is also associated with Montpelier's sense of place. The positive and negative impacts of growth on Montpelier's sense of place, including the nonphysical assets of the community, shall also be considered.

3. **Consider diverse models** for economic development. **Identify communities** with similar goals for development and consider their development models.
4. **Gather data** on Montpelier's economy and the sort of growth which will complement the established goals and principals of development.
5. **Understand the financial costs** and benefits of development and create a plan for managing the financing of services.
6. **Develop community support of plan.** Hold public meetings, communicate with the public.
7. **Based on this information develop a plan which supports the retention and growth of existing businesses and recruits new businesses which are complementary to the existing businesses and which meet the established principles.** Based on this plan, recommend to the City Council economic development strategies (including the merits of forming an economic development corporation), suggested organizational and /or staffing structure and a plan for sustainable funding.