# Town of Hinesburg
# Planning Commission
## June 27th, 2012
*Approved 07/11/2012*

**Members Present:** Joe Iadanza, Johanna White, Carrie Fenn, Maggie Gordon, Tim Clancy, Bob Linck. Ray Mainer arrived at 7:55pm.

**Members Absent:** Kyle Bostwick and Jean Isham.

**Also Present:** Alex Weinhagen (Planning/Zoning Director), Freeda Powers (Recording Secretary), Renae Marshall (ghost minutes). Public included Bill Marks.

Joe Iadanza chaired the meeting, which was called to order at 7:32pm.

Alex W provided the board with a revised Objective #3; Defining Development Density and advised the board to crystalize their discussions on PUD Density Bonus and Open Space requirements and to further discussions on how to streamline the PUD process in order to make it more efficient. Alex W said from previous discussions, he understands the board does not want to do a tiered system of bonuses and the bonus should be a set 25% (if any).

Carrie F asked if the Small Lot Exemption (Preexisting Lot Exemption) was set at 8 or 12 acres. Alex W said he understood the board wanted that to be set at 12. The board agreed. Carrie F asked what the language "*notwithstanding"* means under Small Lot Exemption in PUD. Alex W said that essentially means there is another option. Carrie F said that needs clarification.

Tim C said he still does not see the point in the PUD process; he feels most of the concerns for PUD development are taken care of with the Design Standards which attempt to protect sensitive areas and create open space.

Joe I said he was an early proponent of the PUD process, but says he sees it in some ways as an increase in cost and work for developers to create a Master Plan. He said incentives do help. Alex W said there are two bonuses to the PUD process; density and other waivers or exceptions to zoning regulations (i.e., setbacks/frontages). The "payment" of PUD development therefore, is the more comprehensive master plan which considers the bigger picture.

Joe I wants flexibility but encouraged a crossover of the ease of creating lots vs. increased value/ the amount of bonus, minimum lot size, etc. He suggests it is better to go with the approach that standard Subdivision offers, letting the land "speak for itself" rather than the "easy" way through PUD. Tim C said he thinks Design Standards cover this, replacing the benefit of the Master Plan & creation of Open Space. Bill M voiced his concerns that new zoning will replace the current safeguards in place through PUD. He encouraged the board to look closely at the language and incorporate it into the zoning.

Carrie F said she appreciates that developers get two options, saying she does not see the 25% bonus as bad for the public good. She feels the Town Plan requirement for Open Space merits the PUD bonus. Maggie G agreed. Bill M recalled that previously Alex W had mentioned that the existing 25% bonus for PUD development was not incentive enough to be taken advantage of. Alex W clarified, saying in the past it has not been but noted that in the past there was no fixed density numbers, people looked to the Minimum Lot Size. Now with set density numbers in place, the 25% bonus might be more of an incentive.

Alex W said the main reason for PUD development currently is the waiver for Minimum Lot Size. Therefore, with discussions resuming on that subject, the main impetus for PUD development is diminishing.

Joe I wants to encourage PUD development. Tim C said it doesn't make sense to him; the nature of the density numbers they have set address the need for conserving space and rural character. Alex W said that PUD density bonuses won't destroy that rural character, it is more about Master Planning. He reminded the commissioners that currently the most popular reason for local subdivision is for family or revenue purposes. Alex W feels that development is likely to turn out better with planning rather than incrementally.

Bill M said he feels the Design Standards push the DRB to cluster, share access, etc. already. Joe I said in PUD development, those objectives are achieved. Alex W agreed that to an extent, the Design Standards do cover much of these concerns; that the discussion here is an attempt to clarify and reorganize what is covered there, to make PUD development easier and better.

Bob L suggested as even though there are not a lot of applications for PUD development based on the bonus, it should be kept as an incentive, saying changes can be made later if needed. Johanna W said she is ambivilant about the bonus %, but agrees the PUD option should be kept on the table. Ray M felt more clarification on the PUD process is in order.

Carrie F **Made a Motion** to keep the PUD option with a density bonus set at 25%. Bob L **Seconded** the motion. Tim C Opposed and Ray M Abstained from the vote. The board voted **5-1.**

Alex W said there is no criteria for scale or lot size, and it can be difficult to discuss the Open Space requirements on small lots. Tim C said the numbers don't work for him, in regards to land size. Alex W asked if the board wanted to round the numbers or not. Joe I suggested setting a % (i.e., 50% or 75% of lot). Bill M suggested limiting to "major" and defining (i.e., 3 lots). Tim C said no more than 50%, he feels 75% is too high. Maggie G agreed to 50%. Joe I liked 50%. The board agreed.

Joe I said given the small numbers, he feels they should not be rounding. The board agreed. Alex W asked how the board felt about the Open Space Requirement in PUD development. Tim C said keep it. Bob L asked if it included take-outs. Alex W said yes it does. Carrie F asked if that meant that some of the take-outs could be included in the Open Space area. Alex W said yes, absolutely.

Bill M asked the board to consider changing the language in the context of PUD development, saying Open Space should be referred to as Green Space. He feels a change of the term focuses and unites the meaning of the Zoning regs. Alex W said they would need to include a definition of Green Space but felt it was a good idea. Alex W said that some people are unclear on just what constitutes an *Open Space*, saying it is more than just an undeveloped area, it must serve a purpose (i.e., farm field, managed forest). Joe I had trouble with this, saying to him it was playing with semantics. He has a real problem with the idea of mandating green space. Alex W reminded him that the applicant has to define a purpose for the space. Ray M suggested it could be as simple as defining it as *Habitat*. Alex W agreed.

Alex W reviewed PUD Section 4.5 with the board. Carrie F asked for clarification on the "*…outlying industrial zone*." Alex W said covered here are the Giroux & Cheese Plant; not covered would be the Sand & Gravel pit, Clifford Lumber and Iroqouis. Alex W said this is an attempt to differentiate who qualifies for PUD development based on where they are located in the town.

Bill M had some grammatical corrections/suggestions.

Joe I suggested getting rid of all the Objectives, and simply having PUD require a Master Plan. Bill M was opposed to this idea, saying the purpose is to protect the environment and community on large development projects. Joe I agreed, but said he is concerned the DRB is able to disallow PUD development based on objectives. He said if the aim is to encourage PUD development, he feels it inappropriate to then say you must meet this litmus test first; it seems limiting. Ray M asked without the Objectives, what would be the point of having the PUD option at all. Tim C agreed. Joe I said the new Design Standards do cover conservation of sensitive areas and feels future development will be mostly residential. He says, for example, residential development wouldn't qualify as PUD if it didn't *bolster the economic development* of the area/land. Carrie F suggested changing the language to require PUD projects to "*Support in spirit one or more of the following Objectives…*" Alex W showed the board members on Page 47 #5, which tells how to get density bonuses. He noted a reference to the Objectives there as well.

Tim C said if goal is to incentivize the PUD process, they should be working to make it more efficient. Johanna W cautioned they do not want to lose the flexibility and possibilities for creative planning. The board agreed to do away with the Objectives.

Tim C said they should set clear expectations and the DRB should implement them.

Bill M would like to see Forested Areas mentioned under Open Space (pg 47). Joe I said the goal was to protect large tracts, connectivity coridors and to avoid fragmenting of land. He cautioned against overloading the Sensitive Areas list. Bill M said he understands that concern.

Discussions turned to Minimum Lot Size. Tim C said his concern is that with road based density, this could result in "walled-off" development, with Open Spaces in the center, less accessible and less visible. Joe I said Rte. 116 is limited in Road Cuts by the state.

Carrie F asked if frontage pertains to driveways as well as roadways. Alex W said yes. Tim C asked about the purpose of frontages. Alex W said historically, they were a way to force some space between new lots.

**Minutes from June 13th, 2012 Meeting:**
Ray M **MOVED to approve** as amended. Carrie F **SECONDED the motion**. Joe I abstained. The Motion **PASSED 6-0**

**Other Business:** None.

Joe I **MOVED to adjourn**. Johanna W **SECONDED the motion**. The motion **PASSED 7-0**. The meeting adjourned at 10:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Freeda Powers Recording Secretary