Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission
April 10th, 2013
Approved May 8th, 2013

Members Present: Grace Ciffo, Joe Iadanza, Jean Isham, Tim Clancy , Johanna White, Bob Linck, Maggie Gordon, Aaron Kimball.
Members Absent: Kyle Bostwick.
Also Present: Alex Weinhagen (Director of Planning & Zoning), Freeda Powers (Recording Secretary). *Public Included:* John Roos.

Joe I. chaired the meeting, which was called to order at 7:37 p.m.

Minutes from March 27th, 2013 meeting: Johanna W. made a **MOTION** to **approve minutes as written.** Bob L. **seconded the motion.** The motion **PASSED 5-0;** Joe I, Jean I & Aaron K all abstained as they were not present at the 3/27 meeting.

Stormwater Regulations: Review of model regulations

The board welcomed Aaron Kimball to the Planning Commission. Aaron previously served on the Village Steering Committee.

Discussions began by reviewing samples of regulations from other towns, including Fayston, Jericho, Woodstock & Norwich as well as the model offered by VLCT. Jean I. noted that to her, stormwater regulations seems to be one of the more important pieces they will work on and she feels the town could pay a high price down the line if they don't get it right. Johanna W. noted the stormwater runoff problems and poor infiltration in the Village core. Grace C. agreed, saying this is a unique area. Alex W agreed, but reminded the board that the intent is to make improvements in water quality and stormwater runoff town-wide, even if most of the impact is felt in the village.

Bob L said while the sense is that we want to do the best we can to minimize stormwater impacts, the restrictions we set must be both reasonable and affordable to the average landowner in order to best maximize the collective benefit. It is important to remember that staff must be able to address it all. Alex W said while that is true, it is also important to remember that a *lack* of standards or too generalized standards puts its own burden on staff and the DRB. He said if the board chooses to tie standards to specific protocols, this implies staff need to "bone-up" on that; it's a balancing act. Alex went on to say that the town does tend to rely on the experts brought to the table *by* the appilcants. He believes that some clarity in the standards and professionals involved in the planning of projects would lessen the burden on staff.

Jean I asked if the DRB can retain professional assistance on projects that come before them. Alex W said for subdivisions, yes, but for the typical site plan review, no. Jean I asked about the language in the VLCT model which references a Municipal Land Use Permit. Alex W explained that is essentially where you insert your level of impact (threshold; i.e., >1A). He said the board can change that language if they choose. Jean I reminded the board to keep in mind the cumulative effect of small projects.

Bob L proposed language that recommends or suggests implementing rain-gardens or other alternatives, or other simpler applications such as rain barrels which are small ways to have a positive cumulative impact. Joe I said like with permits, there needs to be education about pre/post construction for erosion control etc. Alex W. said that is a good idea, adding that staff can offer resources such as referencing www.smartwaterways.org, but it's not a *plan* for long-term treatment. He suggested the board consider adding erosion control to all permitted projects with water treatment plans tied to a decided threshold.

Grace C. asked if the board is in a position to put something together that staff could offer property owners when they come into the planning/zoning office seeking permits or info. Alex W. said yes, and encouraged the board to work with Peter Erb (Zoning Administrator) to implement this. Jean I suggested adding references to LID practices; perhaps a 1 page fact sheet on Swales, Detention Ponds, etc. Bob L agreed that LID practices need to be emphasized as they seem to be highly recommended and the most cost effective approach. Alex W. cautioned the commission to be sure the Zoning Administrator is on board and understands it as well.

Maggie G noted that the state standards are based on outdated data. Joe I restated his concern that the state standards alone will not keep the town out of trouble with impaired waterways.

Grace C. said while reviewing models from other towns, she notices that Fayston regs are very lengthy and she prefers the simplicity of the Jericho model. She suggests taking what makes sense from the state standards, adding LID language and keeping it succinct. Alex W. suggested whatever the board come up with, they keep it concise.

The board asked what the MS4 Permits were about. Alex W. said those are for towns with impaired waterways; the MS4 regulations are more in depth.

Alex W. said he would like to see the town take the **lead** on this issue, so that every developer doesn't have the individual burden as has been previously discussed. He told the commission that ultimately, that's a Selectboard decision, but the Planning Commission can look at these studies and suggest to the Selectboard that the Official Map be amended to include Stormwater Treatment Areas in which they can designate central stormwater treatment systems, and for which they can make capital budget (long-term) suggestions as well.

Johanna W asked where would such "facilities" go. Alex W. reminded the board of a study done a couple of years ago which identified a space behind the Elementary School (off of Silver Street) where a tiered raingarden system could go to correct currently untreated pollutants. He noted another place behind the Russell barn where an existing wetland area has the potential for improvement with detention ponds etc. Aaron K. asked if the current waste water ties into treatment plans. Alex W said no, it is not a combined system.

Jean I asked about proposed treatment plans at the new FAHC sight at Ballards Corners. Alex W. said they have proposed plans which include their own detention pond and noted it as a symptom of what could happen with future development.

Tim C. said when he hears "waste water treatment facility" he imagines this could mean something like an increased area of wetlands. He said the board is wrestling with a lot of things here and noted the regs are actually just a small piece of it. How would a centralized system be funded? By permits? Jean I agreed, saying a treatment facility does not have to be a brick & mortar structure, but reminded the board it would be up to the town to maintain it. Johanna W. said if done correctly, it could be attractive and actually be an asset to the town. Alex W. agreed with where the board was going, but cautioned them that the state is touchy about using existing wetlands as receiving areas for stormwater discharge. Joe I. said he is picturing essentially, an engineered wetland. The board agreed. Alex W. again cautioned that the state may already have designated areas as wetlands.

The board looked at the other town's models to discuss determining a threshold. They viewed for reference, the back parking lot of the Town Hall building. They determined this area to be roughly ¼ acre. Joe I. said slopes seem to be an important factor in this discussion as well, and suggested the threshold be tied to some function of slope + area. The board felt this might be too complex and ultimately decided on a threshold of impact on ¼ acre (roughly 10,000 sf).

Aaron K. asked about maintainance. Alex W. said state permitted projects are required to have an annual inspection and are required to file that report with the state. He said the state stopped enforcing this for a long time, but have recently been getting back on track.

Grace C. voiced her concerns about the impact farms have on runoff and water quality. Johanna W. said cumulatively speaking lawns have a bigger impact and are a more immediate concern. Alex W. also noted that Agricultural operations are exempt from regulations and are handled by the Agency Of Agriculture. Alex W. suggested the board consider expanding the 75' Stream Buffer Zone town-wide. The board agreed that makes sense.

Other Business & Announcements: Johanna W. asked if the Planning Commission will be presenting at the ACT 250 Hearings for Hannaford. Alex W. said there is an upcoming prehearing conference held at Town Hall on May 15th. He said they can, but it might be awkward as the DRB has overruled the Planning Commissions' decision on Hannaford in regards to the Town Plan and as the Selectboard will not be fighting the decision. The board agreed to take up this discussion further at the 4/24 meeting.

Joe I. made a **Motion to adjourn.** Maggie G. **Seconded the motion.** The meeting adjourned at 10:05p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Freeda Powers--Recording Secretary