

Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission
February 26th, 2014
Approved 3-26-14

Members Present: Maggie Gordon, Joe Iadanza, Aaron Kimball, Rolf Kielman, Dennis Place, Grace Ciffo, Kyle Bostwick.

Members Absent: Tim Clancy.

Also present: Peter Erb (Zoning Administrator), Freda Powers (Recording Secretary).

Public Present: None

Joe I. chaired the meeting which was called to order at 7:35p.m.

Rural Residential 1 Zoning District Revisions

The Board continued their discussion around potential revisions for the central area – e.g., Mechanicsville and Richmond Road areas of RR1. Aaron K. and Kyle B. presented their findings upon researching several aspects of the area, including possible new district boundary options, allowed uses, residential development densities and development design standards.

Kyle B. said the area of Mechanicsville Road, CVU Road and Richmond Road feels different for a variety of reasons; the class of road, the volume of traffic, the water & sewer capacity and the history of the area (i.e., small businesses). If the village grows significantly, the existing infrastructure will allow the opportunity to have a different variety of development here: Home Occupations, PUDs, etc. Allowed Uses might be expanded in the future in this area (i.e., Function Hall, Farm stand or small Market, Public or private school). If built on scope, Kyle B. suggested, perhaps even an eatery could be allowed in the area. Also, ag-based businesses could be allowed.

Kyle B. and Aaron K. said the area has a feeling somewhere between the village growth and Rural Residential.

Joe I. asked about multi-family dwellings? The sewer, road and other infrastructures appear to be in place to support that as well. Kyle B. agreed. He went on to say that while considering development density as it relates to the shoreline district in general, it is important to remain cognizant of how slopes impact runoff and that ultimately, he hopes that any future watershed provisions will trump all else. Aaron K. said in that respect this discussion should dove-tail nicely with the discussions about the boundary to the watershed.

Dennis P. asked about existing sewer lines. The Board viewed maps of the town and demonstrated where the town sewer line ends in this area (to Iroquois Manufacturing) and where the town water line goes (to Triple L Mobile Home Park).

Kyle B. and Aaron K. feel that in regards to Development Design Standards, there should be different standards for any development in the watershed vs. outside of the watershed.

Aaron K. and Kyle B. considered expanding the Village Growth Area or creating a new district to address this area (edge of VGA-Texas Hill intersection). Grace C. said that area was once a busier, bustling portion of town. The road there is tight with regard to the shoulder so she wonders about pedestrian access or connectivity. Aaron K. said they considered this as well and suggested a paved pathway vs. a fully constructed sidewalk. This would allow flexibility in placement as well and would not necessarily have to follow alongside the roadway. This would also potentially be a safer route for school kids.

Kyle B. also said they see a chance here to control growth in some ways. Joe I. said he does have concerns with allowance of an eatery in that area in consideration of traffic and parking. That, he said, seems more adaptive in the village area. Grace C. asked about a small market? Joe I. said he would have no problem with that or a small farm stand. Rolf K. asked about a Bed & Breakfast. Maggie G. said that would fall under Conditional Use review. Kyle B. wondered if the Conditional Uses make it easier or are a burden for the DRB. Dennis P. (also a DRB member) replied that it is easier overall with permitted uses. Peter E. said the key is to have clear conditions. He encouraged the Planning Commission to be clear in their language to say what it is that they want to see. Aaron K. said he finds that part of the beauty of Conditional Use is that it can be less restrictive, in other words, the DRB won't outright deny something just because it hasn't been previously considered. Joe I. said he sees that there are a number of circumstances to consider and cover, in that respect he says, Peter E. is right, language needs to be clear in order to best assist the DRB in their review process. Peter E. said what often happens is that the onus is put on the DRB rather than on the applicant.

Dennis P. asked if there are even any open or available lots in the area where these allowances are being considered. Grace C. said she recalls from previous discussions that there may not be many but that there are a few.

Joe I. said in regards to ag-based businesses as accessory to an already developed piece of land, that is a possibility on one of the larger parcels in the area.

Rolf K. said some community gardens have started small farm-share style businesses. This sparked some discussion regarding the definition of a farm. Joe I. referred to previous discussions when looking at RR2 and the Ag District, to define the possibility for business on its' own piece of land or as an adjunct to other agricultural enterprise (i.e., tractor repair etc.). With no farms, there are no adjunct businesses.

Peter E. also asked the Board why it was considering making these proposed changes. Joe I. said for the community need and to allow flexibility within good zoning practice. They are looking at the town's direction of growth. Kyle B. added that there seems to be resurgence now for multi-use facilities and diversified property use. In that respect, too, we would like to be as permissive as possible, he said.

Rolf K. asked about the possible option to increase the number of residences on a given lot noted under Allowed Uses in Aaron and Kyle's presentation. Peter E. clarified that this is not referring to independent structures, but rather connected units.

Joe I. posed the question, what is the right density for this area. Kyle B. said again that he feels it is between the Village & Rural Residential. Maggie G. noted that the existing overall density of the area is 6.3, indicating that the area is fairly well built-out.

Rolf K. asked what the differences between RR1 & RR2 are. Joe I. said the main differences are in Allowed Uses, Density, Historical Development and Topography. Rolf K. said to him, the lower portion of RR1 (below Richmond Road) seems very similar to RR2. Joe I. agreed.

Rolf K. asked about previous discussions around possibly expanding the shoreline district to include the larger watershed. Joe I. and Kyle B. both assured him that the Board had only just begun this discussion.

Peter E. encouraged the Board to consider Conditional Uses, with a smaller or overlay district work better with clear language. Dennis P. asked where one would consider putting such development. He asked can the land even handle what is being proposed. He noted the North Road area, which is mostly wet, swamp like land. Rolf K. said if you can divorce yourself from what is there presently, he can see potential for a small hamlet or mini-village in the area around the Pond Brook Road/Richmond Road area. He said as growth happens in town, we may want to consider these two areas coming together.

Dennis P. said the Board should consider future development of assisted living and also said there needs to be some mix of development. To offset the tax base, there needs to be some amount of commercial development. Joe I. agreed that we need more mixed use. He said he does not see Richmond Road as purely residential but more as a transitional area.

Peter E. encouraged the Board to think thoroughly, in other words, don't plan development in an area because sewer lines or other infrastructure exists or could be added but rather consider development because or where there is a need. Kyle B. said while he understands and appreciates the caution, it is important to remember that just because the Board approves of an expanded or conditional use, it won't necessarily be there tomorrow. Joe I. said he agrees with the wisdom from Peter and hears what he is saying about having a vision that works to meet needs. He went on to say that when entering the Village, it should be evident; there should be enough of a signature that tells you to slow down as you approach. If that is allowed to be built out further, the less you achieve that purpose.

Rolf K. said the Board should also consider that traffic will change, and in the future, could sustain small businesses, for example in the Richmond Road area. Dennis P. said he questions the proposed allowance of Function Halls with the majority of development in the area being residential. Peter E. said that wouldn't be permitted any way as the area would not support the required setbacks (500' from other residences). Joe I. said Peter makes a good point as well regarding the allowance of ag-based businesses as there is not agriculture there to support those enterprises. Peter E. also reminded the Board that Cottage Industry and Large Home Occupations are currently allowed.

Peter E. read from the regulations regarding multi-family dwelling units. Greg W. asked why they are allowed only in PUD development. Peter E. said they are held to different standards.

Joe I. reminded the Board to consider the premise; what is the vision, the goal? When the discussion begins there, the uses should fall out of that.

There was some discussion amongst the Board regarding the feel you get when entering the village from the Richmond Road area. While Kyle B. and Rolf K. both felt that the Richmond Road approach did achieve the signature of entering a village area, Joe I. disagreed. Rolf K. noted the development consisting mostly of single family homes fronting the street with regularity unseen in other parts of the rural districts. Rolf K. cited a lack of traffic queues in the area; no sidewalks or pedestrian accesses. Joe I. said if treated as a transition area, perhaps density needs to come up a bit.

Kyle B. and Aaron K. agreed to email the rest of the board members if they are prepared to readdress some of these issues at the next meeting.

Minutes of the 1/22 & 2/12 Meeting:

Maggie G. made a motion to approve as amended the 1/22/14 meeting minutes. Grace C. seconded the motion. Dennis P. abstained as he was not present at the 1/22/14 meeting. The Board voted 7-0.

Rolf K. made a motion to approve as amended the 2/12/14 meeting minutes. Dennis P. seconded the motion. Kyle B. and Grace C. abstained as they were no present at the 2/12 meeting. The Board voted 6-0.

Other Business:

Town meeting day is next week; Tuesday March 4th.

Joe I. made a **motion to adjourn**. Kyle B. **seconded the motion**. The board voted **8-0**. The meeting ended at 9:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Freedra Powers--Recording Secretary