Planning Commission
Town Of Hinesburg
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Meeting Minutes - May 14, 2014
- Approved July 23, 2014 -

Members Present: Maggie Gordon, Tim Clancy, Aaron Kimball, Dennis Place, Neal Leitner.
Members Absent: Joe Iadanza, Kyle Bostwick, Russell Fox, Rolf Kielman.
Also Present: Alex Weinhagen (Director of Planning & Zoning), Freeda Powers (Recording Secretary).
Public Present: none

Maggie G. chaired the meeting which was called to order at 7:39 p.m. There were no public comments for non-agenda items.

Minutes of the April 23, 2014 Meeting

Dennis P. made a **motion to accept the minutes of April 23rd as written.** Tim C. **seconded the motion.** Aaron K. abstained as he was not present for the 4/23 meeting. All in favor, the Board voted **3-0.**

Stormwater Regulation Revisions (Cont'd from 4/23/14 meeting)

Maggie G. said she liked the addition of a stormwater "chart" which lays out degrees of improvements. She feels this conveys the intention. She wondered why the list of LID options did not make it into the draft. Alex W. said the draft does talk to LID practices without being prescriptive. He said they could add some specific examples but he is less inclined to do so as he feels the examples listed tend to be what people attach to. Maggie G. said the public hearing will allow the Planning Commission time to respond to feedback.

Dennis P. asked about state permits as they relate to minor revisions and older standards. Tim C. said if material improvements are being made, the project's state permit should be brought up to meet the current standards and regulations. Alex W. said no, they just need to make some incremental improvements. The estimated cost was around $5,000. Tim C. voiced his concern that "incremental" could be anything, including potentially inadequate implementations.

Alex W. said this could be tied to impervious surface area or to a disturbed area threshold.

Alex W. said the Board should also consider Dennis P.'s concern regarding projects which may have an existing storm water treatment plan that works, would they still require those incremental improvements? Tim C. noted that the village growth area needs improvements on lots with existing

development without storm water treatment or treatment plans in place. He is in favor of the incremental improvements requirement.

Dennis P. asked about situations where we are aware of an existing problem or lack of proper and adequate storm water treatment on a site.

Tim C. said the village growth area will grow in time, and will be a fairly dense area in a rural town. He does not think that incremental improvements will be a deterrent. Alex W. reminded the Commission that this will not be applied to new development, but rather to existing development that experiences some amount of modification.

Dennis P. said he feels it is time to send the draft before the public to get their feedback. Tim C. reiterated his frustration that the aggregate impact of smaller development is not addressed with the current regulations. Aaron K. said in his view, this is an attempt to improve the overall storm water treatment concerns with development both big and small scale, on individual properties and town wide. He is in favor of the "site area impact" approach which he feels makes sense.

Tim C. asked about the stream buffers. Alex W. said the proposal is to make the stream buffer 75' town wide. Current regulations exempt existing uses.

The Commission agreed to schedule the public hearing for June 11' 2014.

Town Plan Update

The Commission reviewed the 2003 community survey questions, results and lessons learned and brainstormed questions for the new survey.

Tim C. asked about the timeline and purpose of this survey. Alex W. replied that the goal would be to get the survey out this month and the purpose is to get community feedback regarding where people want to see the town of Hinesburg to head.

Maggie G. said it would also be good to get an understanding of what services are not available in Hinesburg. Aaron K. agreed, adding we should consider what the town is looking for in terms of further growth and the spawning of different development one project may generate.

Aaron K. said it will be interesting to get a gauge on the local view of development in regards to the community potential (i.e., how much development is too much, do we have enough?) This is a balance of sustainability.

Alex W. reminded the Commissioners that survey questions should speak to an issue we need more information on. The questions should be interesting and without open-ended answers (i.e., yes/no, or ranking by #).

Tim C. said he sees changes happening quicker than this process can keep pace with. Maggie G. asked about the timeline for this survey and the subsequent work from the results. Alex W. said preferably

the survey would go out this summer with the subsequent drafting changes in the Fall and then hand-off to the Select Board sometime in the Spring of 2015. The new Town Plan adoption will take place in 2016. Dennis P. asked what the purpose of revising the Town Plan is. Alex W. said it helps to get a sense from the community if the vision remains relevant. Tim C. and Dennis P. both felt it would be appropriate to ask that question directly. Alex W. said it will be inferred from the answers of the survey. Tim C. felt the survey questions should be more direct in hopes of getting back more direct answers. He suggests questions that address what is the biggest detractor. What is the most negative aspect of the Town Plan? Do we need to modify the Town Plan?

Maggie G. said the aim should be to get back as many responses as possible. Tim C. asked approximately how many people turned out to vote on the RR2 draft changes proposal. Alex W. said he thought about 1200 people had voted on those regulation revisions. He also reminded the Commissioners that the Town Plan is a very broad and comprehensive plan addressing much more than just land use.

Neal L. suggested a question framed as "if you could add something to the town, what would it be?" Maggie G. liked a variation of this; "if you could change one thing, what would it be?"

Dennis P. suggested sending the survey out with tax bills.

Aaron K. asked if the survey would be set up through Survey Monkey online. Alex W. said yes, Survey Monkey will be used. Alex W. also explained that the Town Plan is broken into six sections and suggested perhaps a couple of questions which would address or fall under each of those sections.

Aaron K. felt strongly that Fire, EMS & Police should be addressed in some form with the survey. Tim C. said those entities should be separated when those questions are formed, as people typically have strong and differing opinions on Fire Fighters, Police work and EMS crews. Alex W. said the police force in Hinesburg would like to go to 24hr service and suggested this may come into the survey in the form of a question to see how the community feels about this possibility. Dennis P. suggested providing a budget context.

Maggie G. noted that there is no goals/recommendations section on the Public Safety section of the Town Plan (Section 5.3).

Tim C. asked about density concerns. Maggie G. added that the pace of development would also be good to get feedback on. Tim C. reiterated his concern about the timeline. He suggested questions that address development in the sense of is it going too fast, too slow; is there too much, not enough? He wants to get out the visceral reactions from people. Alex W. said we also want to get a wider base of responses.

Responding to Tim C.'s concerns regarding the pace of development, Alex W. suggested allocation-based permitting may be an option. While not many communities use this formula, it works by limiting the number of units/yr. Neal L. asked if this was based on the current market. Alex W. said no, it is based on the work in queue.

Maggie G. and Alex W. both agree that the Town Plan is indeed a comprehensive document, and does not only pertain to issues concerned with the Planning & Zoning of the town. Alex W. said while the Planning Commission does deal with land use regulations, that work depends a great deal upon where the community's priorities are. The Town Plan is a way to inform the Planning Commission's work. He reminded the Commission that their job is not solely to talk about regulations but also to help educate and inform the people of the community.

Dennis P. asked if the previous survey helped in the development of the Town Plan. Alex W. said he thinks that it did, but cannot say specifically that it did. Dennis P. also asked about the concern with property taxes, asking if the Planning Commission can help in that respect. Tim C. agreed. Alex W. said there is a new section in the Town Plan regarding economic development. He also said the Commission should consider the municipal impact of projects in a financial aspect. The Board discussed how taxes are determined; 75% of tax bills are determined by the school budget but is regulated at the state level.

Tim C. asked the Commission to consider should future development be self-funding? Dennis P. also noted that the town needs the right kind of commercial development to increase the tax base. Tim C. said he feels this is for the economic development board to discuss.

Maggie G. said while the highway line is the biggest portion of the town budget, any undue impact on the roads should be considered.

There was some discussion around the municipal tax rate. Alex W. said while we recognize that property taxes are a top priority for individuals, there are ways to mitigate them. Tim C. said incremental development should help offset incremental municipal costs. Maggie G. said it might be a good idea to look at the economic development survey. In addition, she suggested, after each survey question a follow-up that asks to what extent would you be willing to accept an increase in taxes to pay for this. Alex W. said he has been in conversations with the economic development committee and agreed to send the draft questions of this survey to them for feedback regarding taxes. Neal L. suggested inquiring with them as to what types of development they feel would offset or lower taxes.

Regarding storm water treatment and potential areas where this could be achieved, Tim C. asked about the possibility of a storm water utility in the form of a managed wetland. Alex W. said you cannot use existing wetland areas as treatment for discharge. Also, he added, there are costs involved with managing a wetland.

Dennis P. asked about the impact of farms and other ag-use land. Alex W. said phosphorus runoff tends to be a large factor of farmland as it relates to water quality issues. Tim C. concurred but said there is also an important development component to consider, adding that in terms of regulations Ag land is hands-off. Alex W. said a storm water utility works at addressing as many sources as possible. Tim C. said a lot of impending development is coming up, and if developers could kick in to offset those impact costs, that would be favorable.

Dennis P. said in his view, ditches and their maintenance or effectiveness impacts storm water quality more than development does. Alex W. agreed that road impact is an important component to consider.

Tim C. said he is not convinced that money needs to be part of this discussion. He recommends letting people know where the majority of pollutants are coming from/going. Maggie G. followed up this thought by suggesting the Commission get people to prioritize their wants/needs with follow up questions of costs. Tim C. said he feels that the money angle biases the questions. He said he sees conflicting priorities of the Town (i.e., energy standards vs. traffic pollution). The Board discussed having some questions on the survey that relate to the Rte. 116 study, i.e., traffic calming measures, safety, time it takes to travel through town. Maggie G. felt it would be advantageous to get a direction of what the people's focus is: safety or efficiency.

Tim C. recommended some question to address recreation in Hinesburg as well.

Shoreline Zoning District Regulation Revisions (Cont'd from 4/9/14 meeting)

The Board decided to table this discussion to a future meeting.

Maggie G. made a **motion to adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 9:55pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Freeda Powers--Recording Secretary