

Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission
January 28, 2015
Approved 2-11-15

Members Present: Joe Iadanza, Maggie Gordon, Neal Leitner, Kyle Bostwick, Rolf Keilman, Aaron Kimball, Dennis Place.

Absent: Russell Fox, Tim Clancy.

Also present: Alex Weinhagen (Director of Planning & Zoning) and Freeda Powers (Recording Secretary).

Public Present: Lenore Budd, Frank Babbott.

Joe I. chaired the meeting, which was called to order at 7:30pm.

There were no changes to the agenda.

Submitted written comments were acknowledged from Carla Munson in regards to the Transportation portion (Section 6) of the Town Plan.

The Board briefly discussed the Traffic Congestion Forum held the previous evening (1/27/15). Kyle B. said there was a good mix of people present. He said issues were identified adding that he would have liked to have seen more solutions reached.

Joe I. said he liked the idea from the forum to include our expectations in the plan. It seems obvious, he said, that we should look at the peak level and duration (of traffic) and plan for it.

Maggie G. said it will be important to consider this issue in the larger context of “what is acceptable?” and what are we willing to live with? Are the peak numbers acceptable or not? Are we willing to live with it or not? This is an important conversation to have.

Joe I. said planning, education and encouragement will be needed to get the traffic load down by 10%, as was suggested at the forum. The forum feedback suggested that we need to achieve fewer vehicle trips and will see a healthier community for it. It is important that we set our expectations for congestion and encourage other forms of transportation and different behaviors. In that regard, he asked, what is our role? To figure out traffic on Rte. 116? He said we, as the Planning Commission, deem the acceptable uses of areas. If projects fall within those permissible limits, does it then leave our watch as the Planning Commission? Is it then dealt with at other levels, i.e., the DRB review, or the Select Board? Alex W. said the Commission should remember to look at the big picture and the overall village growth area (in this case) to come up with estimates once it is built out. Consider what it would look like within say, a 5 year timeframe. He said he personally feels that the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) did not nail it in their Rte. 116 Corridor Study; he feels their numbers should be revised upwards and the modeling should be done again to include queue lengths, wait times etc. in terms of full build out.

Joe I. said we have the responsibility to consider the road network into the future, and that should include pathways beyond Rte. 116 and paved roads to get through the village. This can be executed through the Town Plan.

Kyle B. said developers also need to consider the feasibility of large projects. Alex W. said there is additional review by the DRB and Act 250 which address those large scale projects. He reminded the Board to look beyond the individual review of projects to the larger context as well.

Dennis P. said in his opinion, we should have never said where we wanted the density and growth (village area) without knowing if we had the infrastructure to support it. Alex W. said that was considered, and that in 2005 the focus was to grow where there was infrastructure and where focused development-created problems could be more easily resolved vs. a more scatter-shot development pattern throughout the town.

Kyle B. said all projects have the obligation to demonstrate no undue adverse impacts. Just because density allows a project, that is not the single measure. Dennis P. added that it is important to consider how multiple projects impacts act collectively and how projects impact each other.

Alex W. reminded the Board that the numbers in the modeling do consider the full build-out of projects either already approved or "in the works". Joe I. agreed, adding in response to Dennis' comments, we did consider density in 2005, but concedes we did not look specifically at the issue of traffic. He said we made at that time a trade to develop in the village area to keep development out of the rural areas. Dennis P. reiterated his frustration at the capacity limitations within that growth area of the village. Rolf K. and Kyle B. both agreed, it will be important to get developers to take on their responsibility regarding infrastructure impacts.

Neal L. said thru traffic may not be such a problem as anticipated in the projections which appear to assume the downward trend in N/S traffic will reverse itself.

Dennis P. asked why it is so difficult to get a change made to the light at the Charlotte Road/Rte. 116 intersection (coming out of Lantmans to be allowed a left turn on red). Alex W. said in short the answer is money and red tape. There was some discussion of how the town's potential to "take over" Rte. 116 from the state would affect getting these types of light changes made. Alex W. said if the Town were to have responsibility for Rte. 116 in that way, it would become an issue of lack of staffing to address the issues/change the lights.

In general, Joe I. said we should set expectations; consider whether that is to decrease resistance and increase flow. Rolf K. said we will need to change habits and he encourages incentives.

Alex W. said currently there have been +170 responses to the online follow-up survey, which closes this week.

Trails Committee: Lenore Budd addressed the Board to offer changes and feedback on behalf of the Trails Committee. There were no major policy changes proposed by the Trails Committee, who encourage updating info and detailing an emphasis on connectivity (Charlotte Rd & Richmond Rd noted as priorities for safety of bike & pedestrian travel). She reviewed Map 13 which is the Trails Committee's vision and suggested revisions to reflect work done (sidewalks completed etc.) as well as the following changes to that map: Removal of trails #2, #9, #12. Shifting of trail #14 to the West & update map to reflect the latest Carse Wetland conservation. Moving of trail #8 to the N/NW to connect to the back of the Garvey land. Shifting of trail #6 to the North to avoid existing wetlands. Maggie G. suggested using alternate colors in defining existing trails and the "vision" trails. Alex W. agreed to work with Lenore on the map to make it more readable and a bit less busy. Lenore B. said

they have also considered adding the VAST trails to the map. Kyle B. cautioned against that as the VAST trails are approved/changed yearly.

Section 6; Transportation: Joe I. allowed public comments on Section 6 first. Frank Babbott spoke from the audience, a landowner with land in the RR1 Zoning District. He said in his opinion, traffic is absolutely an issue and he recommends that the Board put a moratorium on development in the village until this issue is addressed. He feels that the pace of development is compounding an existing problem without any proposal for what to do with the volume we have now. The concept offered in the modeling at the Traffic Congestion Forum last night which essentially says that the shortest wait time is best, in his view, is outdated. It is an unsustainable long-term goal. He went on to say that he feels the village area should be used for such things as light manufacturing rather than for residential. Don't use "primary space" for residential development when we can't put commercial & manufacturing elsewhere. He has concerns with the ability of a single developer changing Hinesburg forever and said once the developer is gone, we as a Town lose our leverage. He told the Commissioners that their responsibility is to protect his investment as a local landowner. He encouraged the Board to demonstrate sensitivity to the landowners. He strongly urged them to address ways to get our current traffic issues resolved before adding to it.

Joe I. offered his feedback on Section 6. He would like to emulate something the town of Jericho does which is to include a road table listing such things as ROW width, mileage, paved/gravel/dirt status, etc. Alex W. said the Select Board has done this but not in a systematic way with all the roads in town.

Rolf K. said he would like to see some language pulled from the Rte. 116 Corridor Study and said we should also talk to the aspirations we have for the pedestrian experience. He said we also might want to consider reformatting the plan to make it more readable.

Kyle B. said he specifically liked the language offered in 6.6A to encourage and incentivize vs. forcing. He questioned 6.2F regarding vegetation barriers along roadways, asking can we enforce this? Alex W. said the Town does own the ROW (with the exception of Rte. 116) so it is possible, yes. Kyle B. reiterated his concern regarding 6.4B regarding the implementation of the West Side Road. The Board agreed to put this discussion off to another time.

Minutes from 1/14/15: Maggie G. **made a motion to approve as amended** the minutes from 1/14/15. Dennis P. **seconded the motion**. The board voted **6-0**.

Other Business: The DRB will begin a general conversation regarding the Water Supply capacity issues as it relates to future projects. This meeting will be on 2/3/15 at 7:30pm at Town Hall.

Joe I. made a **motion to adjourn**. Dennis P. **seconded** the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Freedra Powers, Recording Secretary