

**Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission
February 11, 2015
Approved 4-8-15**

Members Present: Joe Iadanza, Neal Leitner, Aaron Kimball, Dennis Place. Maggie Gordon arrived at 8:16pm. Rolf Keilman arrived at 8:26pm.

Absent: Russell Fox, Tim Clancy, and Kyle Bostwick.

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

Public Present: Jeff French (Village Steering Committee), Barbara Forauer, Mary Hurley.

Joe I. chaired the meeting, which was called to order at 7:36pm.

There were no changes to the agenda.

Growth Survey Results: The Board reviewed the results of the recent follow-up survey. Q#1) responses indicated priorities of revising & improving regulations, managing growth & development by limiting the number of permits, and consideration of a temporary moratorium, as well as an increase in development fees. Alex W. said the results here are pretty straight-forward and seem consistent with the results from the last survey.

Q#2) Williston style quotas and annual limits on new residential development; respondents indicate they feel this is a good idea to consider. Joe I. said the results to this one surprised him.

Q#3) responses indicate population range of 5-7,000 (i.e. Jericho or Shelburne). Further comments offered to this question, Alex W. noted, were mostly one the numbers picked vs. suggesting different numbers.

Q#4) was an open-ended question, as was Q#5 which was skipped a lot but these questions did see 173 responses (Q4) and 100 (Q5) respectively. Alex W. said themes he saw in these responses were: Slow it down, Do more planning to do it right, Clearer guidelines and fair review. There appears to be some perceived inequity of the DRB process he said, and a desire demonstrated in responses that we not let the developers dictate the growth of the town. There are clear concerns with the changes to the village are in particular. Joe I. said he saw some alternative numbers regarding the population growth, and would put that at the lower side of that 5-7K range. He said we need to consider putting some of these questions/responses into the Town Plan for further exploration.

Neal L. said he feels the responses put more stress on preserving the character of the village. Aaron K. agreed, saying there is a sense of place that people want to preserve. Neal L. said the responses indicate to him that people feel that we could have increased growth (5-7K range indicated) so long as it fits in.

Joe I. also noted that there is an aspect of these responses that is service-based i.e., people use the Kinney Drugs and Bristol Bakery locations regularly, therefore they are apt to have a more positive response to those developments from a services point of view.

Dennis P. said in his experience, when people think of Hinesburg, they think of what they see coming into the Village; they don't think first of the rural areas like Baldwin Road etc. They are indicating that they want to see light industrial and less residential in the Village. He sees the concern as being with that mix. Alex W. said the previous survey also asked about the mix of development and it was clear in those responses that an increase in retail and civic spaces would be good. Joe I. said the reaction to the residential development in the village area might have been about the mix or it might have been about the development pattern. He added that we haven't yet tried to direct that mix—it is somewhat symbiotic (residential/commercial). Alex W. said it is worth noting that Hinesburg Village has most of the services needed and therefore is a magnet for residential. How then, do we get more light industrial etc., and not more residential?

Aaron K. pointed out also that we often find constituents requesting opposite desires. Size/population responses tells him that people are okay with or at least expecting some amount of growth and said there is some infill still available. He said the Village is a big part of Hinesburg's identity and how fast it develops and what it looks like seem like a high concern as they relate to that character and identity. He said we should be mindful of developing smaller projects vs. larger projects. Joe I. said Master Plans only work on the large scale development projects and he appreciates the advantage of them; we are able to see a vision and react to it through the Master Plan in order to avoid the homogeneity people indicate they do not want. Aaron K. said we should remain mindful of the balance and consider form-based zoning, or a quota system (as in Williston). Alex W. said it is important to also remember that if the large projects that are currently before the town/DRB are approved, they are vested under the current regulations. Also, if considering a quota system, the Board could also consider a ranking/priority process.

Aaron K. asked if there are other large land parcels the Commission and Town should be considering or looking at. Alex W. said the Quinn property, which is zoned as Residential has high development potential in the Residential 1 District. Also, the Giroux property in the village has high redevelopment potential in his opinion.

Neal L. said he is in favor of considering increasing some development fees for larger scale projects at the Master Plan level.

Joe I. said results do indicate respondents are in favor of a moratorium but how to remain fair and equitable is a high priority. Also, the results demonstrate a desire to protect land rights and an outright moratorium defies that. He said also the larger projects before the DRB are likely to be exempted. Neal L. said temporary moratoriums in other towns were not seen as ultimately effective.

On the topic of the water limitations the Town is facing, Aaron K. asked if the Town is looking at other locations for more wells. Alex W. said yes although there is no time horizon or cost estimates on that. The first and best option will be on lands to the west of the new wells. Aaron K. said in a way, isn't the town's water limitations its own kind of moratorium? Alex W. said sort of, yes. Dennis P. said the bigger concern is the sewer limitations. Alex W. agreed there is currently a capacity limit of an additional 200 more units for sewer. Maggie G. said a true moratorium would be applied also to currently reviewed projects. Aaron K. said either way, we need to be clear what are we stopping for and what do we want to accomplish during that pause.

Town Plan Updates: The Board heard from the Village Steering Committee, via Jeff French, Chairperson and Mary Hurley, member. The VSC recommendations were reviewed. Jeff F. said the average resident gets lost in the regulations as they are written. He encouraged the board to let the public know what we want and why; we want the Village to maintain its livability. The VSC encourages the designation of a “commercial core”, saying the current designation of the Village Growth Area is simply too spread out to be truly walkable or definable as the “heart” of the town. There was some discussion about the “village center” which is currently seen as the area of Town Hall but will in the future be seen as the area of the Fire Station. Jeff F. said the fear is that the current build-out is happening in a disconnected way. The VSC also recommends more clarity and consolidation of the Town Plan through increased referencing, less repetition/overlap.

There was some discussion of considering form-based codes and absent that to consider a Design Review Board, as suggested by the Village Steering Committee. This Board would act as a sounding board to the DRB and take the subjective issues out of the DRB review. The Board would also aid developers in interpreting standards set forth in the regulations.

There was some discussion regarding historical structures. Barbara Forauer spoke to the Board from the audience, and thanked them for their thoughtful and insightful service.

Neal L. reviewed his feedback and comments (ct’d from 1/14 mtg) regarding Section 3.4 Rural Land Use. He said we should allow an increase in flexibility for landowners without the subdivision requirements. This prompted some discussion around accessory apartments which are currently allowed on all lots. They must be subordinate to the main residence (30% or 660sq.ft.), and the landowner must be living in one of the structures. The Board agreed they may revisit the accessory apartment restrictions.

Section 6; Transportation: The Board agreed to put this further discussion off to another time.

Minutes from 1/27&28: Dennis P. **made a motion to approve as submitted** the minutes from 1/27/15. Maggie G. **seconded the motion**. The board voted **6-0**. Aaron K. **made a motion to approve as submitted** the minutes from 1/28/15. Rolf K. **seconded the motion**. The board voted **6-0**.

Other Business: The 2/3/15 DRB discussion regarding water capacity and sewer capacity concerns went well; 3 select board members were in attendance. There may be a multi-board meeting on this topic to come.

Aaron K. said the upcoming Town Meeting might be a good opportunity for Commissioners to get the word out about the Town Plan revision work and get feedback about development and growth in the Village area. Maggie G. and Rolf K. agreed to attend with Aaron K. to talk to voters.

Joe I. made a **motion to adjourn**. Rolf K. **seconded** the motion. The meeting adjourned at 10:08pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Freeda Powers, Recording Secretary