

**Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission
February 22, 2017
Approved March 8, 2017**

Members Present: Maggie Gordon, Barbara Forauer, Joe Iadanza, John Kiedaisch, Rolf Kielman

Members Absent: Jeff French, James Donegan, Dennis Place

Public Present: None.

Also Present: Dawn Morgan (Recording Secretary)

Joe I. chaired the meeting, which was called to order at 7:33 pm.

Agenda Changes: None.

Public Comments for Non-Agenda Items: None.

There was a brief discussion about housekeeping items that Alex W. will draft and present to the Commission for review. The Commission agreed that none of the draft wording had been expected at this meeting.

Village Growth Area – Rezoning & Design Standards

The Commission discussed the definition of mixed-use, design standards and density allowances.

Maggie G. reminded the Commission of the mixed-use inventory that had been taken last fall and that there is a spreadsheet summarizing the results. The Commission agreed that they would like to review the results at a future meeting.

Rolf K. broached the subject of a recent application before the DRB that proposed a phased project. There was some general discussion about phased projects and Joe I. said that the overall goal is to create a contiguous village area. Joe I. talked about the possibility of a phased project not being completed and leaving the village area with unconnected development. Joe I. said that it requires master planning, but there are challenges with managing the phases within

the master plan while still taking into consideration an appropriate balance of mixed-use development.

Maggie G. agreed that there are challenges to master planning and it could be too complicated to simply say that within one large lot there must be a certain ratio of residential to mixed-use. She said that there are other items for consideration such as how mixed-use, light industrial and residential should be interspersed within the development.

There was brief discussion about the definition of mixed-use. Rolf K. said that he tends to think of mixed-use as being within a single building, or within a series of buildings that have a strong relationship to each other. Joe I. agreed that there can be mixed-use single buildings or multiple buildings with significant functional interrelationships and coherent physical design.

Rolf K. said that another component of mixed-use is open space itself, and Maggie G. agreed that it can help integrate the other uses. John K. noted that the definition includes institutional uses, which could mean public facilities such as Town offices or a senior center. Rolf K. went on to say that it would be good to provide a little more specificity in the mixed-use definition.

Maggie G. discussed the Blackrock project and how it is planned under the current regulations, with large single family homes appearing to be set apart. She wondered if that fit the definition of an integrated whole. Joe I. discussed the village as it is today, and compared it to older towns and villages that developed naturally with mixed-use and light industrial located near the main road. Joe I. went on to say that in these towns the percentage of residential homes increased as you follow the buildings further away from the main roads. He went on to say that within those neighborhoods there was still a mixture of small businesses such as convenience stores, restaurants, hair salons, etc.

There was discussion about the Commission's vision of a village style and how best to proscribe that vision in the zoning regulations. The Commission agreed that interspersing mixed-use buildings within residential area is desirable. Maggie G. and Rolf K. discussed mixed uses within single properties, noting that historically some of the village area was developed with businesses on the first floor and dwellings on the second floor. They discussed that new buildings developed with that type of use in mind could provide more flexibility for switching between residential and commercial depending on the occupant and their needs at the time.

John K. inquired as to how best to proscribe that vision in the regulations without locking it in, and also wondered if the town would be able to support that much commercial use. Joe I. said that commercial use could include professionals with offices within their homes. Joe I. went on to suggest that one way to proscribe the vision is to mandate multi-story structures while at the same time mandating mixed-use.

There was additional discussion about what mixed-use development could look like and options of how to proscribe it in the regulations. The Commission discussed the layout of Bristol vs. Hinesburg and John K. suggested creating illustrations that could be included in the regulations as a guide. Joe I. agreed and suggested that a map showing a street or grid-style layout could also be helpful. The Commission agreed that a map could be helpful and discussed the possibility of earmarking specific locations such as future streets, open spaces, institutional buildings, etc. The conversation then turned to the challenges of being too specific on the map and how that might impact the capital planning and budget.

John K. said that in some towns it is the Planning Commission who is responsible for preparing the capital plan, which then goes to the Select Board for approval. He wondered if the Commission should be included in more of the capital planning process to make sure that their plan aligns with the Select Board's. There was additional discussion regarding the idea of a map, the challenges of capital planning and earmarking funds to support that plan.

Joe I. moved the conversation to the topic of density and encouraged positioning density where it can be supported with public transportation, municipal services, etc. He said that he did not have an issue with the maximum density allowed, but would be in favor of changing the formulas for how maximum density is determined. Joe I. said that density along the main roads of town is a clear signal to motorists that they are entering a village setting and should be prepared to slow their speed as they drive through.

Rolf K. said that he would be in favor of reviewing density bonuses, noting that some of the incentives appear to be substantial. John K. agreed, saying that building standards for energy efficiency are now commonplace and developers should not necessarily receive large incentives for it. Joe I. agreed, saying that energy incentives were a progressive goal 8 years ago, but not necessarily progressive today and State regulations have since caught up.

There was discussion about how best to encourage density in the village area while balancing it with environmental considerations. The Commission discussed the challenges of developing a village area in lower, wetter areas that need significant regrading and fill. Rolf K. said that under the current regulations a developer can double density by providing 75% affordable housing.

Rolf K. expressed concern about the effect on the community, residents and the environment if a developer were to maximize the allowable density. There was general discussion about the current density in various village areas and developments in town.

Rolf K. returned the conversation to mixed-use and how best to proscribe mixed-use housing that also blended occupational activity. Joe I. spoke about a recent visit to Vancouver, BC where he observed homes densely positioned and taking up most of the frontage. Joe I. said that there was typically an alley located behind these homes, no driveways and a very small yard. Rolf K. noted that was the 19th century urban American pattern of development and something similar might be viable for the Hinesburg community, with green space and urban gardens positioned in between the homes.

Minutes of 02/07/17 Meeting: Maggie G. **made a motion to approve the 02/07/17 minutes as amended.** Barbara F. **seconded the motion.** The Board voted **5-0.**

Joe I. **made a motion to adjourn the meeting.** Rolf K. **seconded the motion.** The Commission voted **5-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Morgan, Recording Secretary