

**Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission
August 8, 2018
Approved August 22, 2018**

Members Present: Maggie Gordon, Rolf Kielman, John Kiedaisch, Barbara Forauer, James Donegan

Members Absent: Jeff French, Marie Gardner, Dennis Place, Joe Iadanza

Also Present: Alex Weinhagen (Director of Planning & Zoning), Kate Kelly (Recording Secretary), and Lenore Budd, Sue Rusten, and Jane Sheldon – the last three all from the Trails Committee

Maggie G. chaired the meeting, which was called to order at 7:03 PM.

Agenda changes: None.

Public Comments for Non-Agenda Items: None.

Official Map Revisions: - continued from 7/25, 7/11, 6/27 meetings

Alex W. displayed map 13 (trail network vision). He proposed a question about whether the official map (now just the Village Growth Area) should be expanded to include the entire town.

Members of the Trails Committee were asked to discuss their memo.

Lenore B. brought up the pros and cons of including trails on an official map. Alex W. agreed it is a policy choice to be made by the PC, to include trails on official town-wide map, and that there are both pros and cons.

Lenore B. said they are looking for happy landowners; including trails on an official town-wide map would draw more attention to map (good), but are we ready to approach landowners?

Maggie G. asked if money is exchanged when dealing with landowners. Lenore B. replied it is not (no budget for it, and it sets a precedent). Maggie G. thought that the Commission had talked about this as a way to purchase property. Alex W. replied that Map 13 from the Town Plan is not a regulatory map. The official map is needed to ensure that when development happens, trail networks aren't cut off.

John K. asked if future connections should maybe not be on the official map because they haven't been put together, and we haven't talked to landowners. We'd then have existing trails on the official map when development occurs, and easements are in place. He asked if the town owns any trails, or just easements. Lenore B. replied that the town owns easements (except for on Hinesburg Town Forest and

Geprag's Park). Alex W. replied that in past discussions we've talked about how there are certain trails we are interested in seeing a connection in, but we are not ready to enforce a regulatory regime. Are we ready to do that for some trails? He doesn't see that they have to be existing trails; they could be future trails we want to have in a general location, but there isn't a trail on the ground yet.

Lenore B. replied that not all the proposed trails on the map are equal in certainty, so she set out categories of trails in her comments. She mentioned it because once it is on the official map, you'd need to reach out to landowners. Examples of these are trails 2 and 3. These were meant to achieve the goals to get from town forest to other roads, but they haven't been explored/mapped, so it would be very premature to put these on an official map. Another example is getting from the library to Geprag's Park; they have discussed with the landowner of Travia's the possibility of developing a trail north into Geprag's, but they were unwilling, so they are now looking at extending a trail west along Shelburne Falls Rd. to the corner of Geprag's. She felt it would be best to show both trails on map, in case there is a new owner of Travia's at some point in the future.

Rolf K. asked if the Trails Committee sees an advantage to putting some of these routes on an official map even if they are not resolved. He felt the soft sell could be more effective. However, perhaps for #9, it would be useful for someone planning a development to be aware that the Town is planning a pedestrian access through there.

Maggie G. mentioned that for Quinn property, there will likely be a park on the official map. Maybe the trail could be more flexible/open, to be left as a discussion with the Planning office when the developer comes in. Alex W. replied that on this property, we know we want a connection with Lavigne Hill Rd., but we don't know the exact route we want it to take. It's a good example of both arguments (putting vs. not putting on official map).

John K. asked if we could make a map where the trail location is not exact, but is well described. Alex W. replied we'd want to consult with attorney. We could possibly map a trail with a large buffer, to show that the trail could meander within that area. A problem is that the DRB would have a hard time enforcing this. Alex W.'s sense is that some flexibility is possible, but we can't have complete flexibility.

Alex W. wondered if any other trails have the certainty associated with them like Geprag's does. Lenore B. replied that the Quinn property is fairly easy because it is only one property.

John K. brought up trail number 11, that would pass through some state-owned conserved land. Lenore B. clarified the location. She mentioned that there is a license agreement with the state (5 years) to operate the trails within certain parameters. John K. asked if they would intend to have an easement with the state. Lenore B. replied they haven't asked. John K. asked about other situations like this, agreements between the state and the town. Lenore B. replied she couldn't say, but is less concerned about that WMA than other places in town.

Maggie G. asked if there are any additional trails that would benefit from being on the map. Lenore B. felt trail #4 would benefit. There is some conserved property there (Lang Farm), and the Trails Committee hasn't approached them. She would argue that some other existing trails in that area could be mapped. The owner has hosted a trail, but has declined to give them an easement. Should it go on official map, so a future landowner can't put a house in middle of trail?

Alex W. replied that the chance of a trail being infringed upon through development is unlikely. But a future landowner no longer wanting the public on their land is a possibility. Rolf K. asked if that is common (an existing trail where a new landowner has said no). Lenore B. said they haven't, but it is sometimes vulnerable with a new property owner.

Rolf K. said if we were to consider placing trails on the official map, he sees Hinesburg village as the official hub, with intense development. Applying the official map in that hub would be prudent. Going out much further would seem to be an overreach. Lenore B. said they could use this type of map (map 13) as outreach to landowners; maybe it should be a more public document.

Discussion ensued about trails and connections. James D. commented that putting a trail on a map will make some enemies. John K. asked James D. if the trails on their property have had a negative impact. James D. replied there are occasional complications/extra steps to take when moving animals, but no problems.

Alex W. noted there is a section in the Subdivision Regulations that encourages facilitating access to trails/connections; this means that the DRB should take this into account.

Lenore B. asked if the Board was reaching a consensus about just using the map in the village. Maggie G. felt around Geprag's it would be good to delineate connections. Lenore B. asked if the extent of the official map (Village Growth Area) has a regulatory meaning. Alex W. replied that yes, things not shown on the map don't have to be considered.

John K. pointed out that trail #9 is actually shown on this official map.

Lenore B. didn't know if we can put a public trail on a private road (such as Partridge Hill).

Discussion ensued, and Lenore B. asked if we can make a buffer on these trails to show that they can meander.

John K. asked if they have ever discussed with the Cemetery Committee about connecting with the trails there, and encouraging people to use them. Sue R. replied many people already walk there.

Barbara F. said if they're not included on a map, we have no option in the future. Could we state that they are just proposed? John K. agreed; how loose can we make the trail location? Discussion ensued

about this. Jane S. asked if there was a way that on the official map we could require developers to refer to map 13. Alex W. said we would need a legal opinion to know. His sense is that it would be easier to make the language in the subdivision regulations stronger than to try to merge the two maps.

Jane S. asked about how we would modify these regs; it would have to be voted on after public comment. Alex W. added you'd also need off-ramps in case there is a better place for trails to go, etc.

John K. asked about Hinesburg Town Forest – they don't show any trails coming down into the village area; is this important? Lenore B. replied that the public feeling when the maps were created was that the dirt roads were the best way to town, and it seemed redundant to create a new trail.

Discussion ensued about the Buck Hill trail that goes through to North Rd.

Barbara F. asked where Cottage Hill is (mentioned in the Trails Committee memo)? It is just north of house north of Geprag's. There is an approved 8-lot subdivision there; the developer/owner (David Carse) approved an easement through there to Route 116 near Place Road West; the town hasn't accepted it. James D. asked for clarification. The easement would be accepted when the development happens. James D. asked what it would take to walk through there now. Alex W. replied the town would need to formalize and accept the easement. James D. suggested that CVU running teams would likely use this connection.

John K. asked the Trails Committee's view on the trails shown on the official map draft, e.g., through area D. Lenore B. replied that trail 15 is the one by the wastewater facility, and is shown on map 13 already. The trail near the Bissonette Recreation Facility is temporary now. Lenore B. liked the map through area D. She wondered about the wetness of the O'Donnell property. James D. would like to see a connection to the Town Cemetery from here. Others felt it was too wet.

Alex W. asked about the network in the new Haystack Crossing area – do we want just sidewalks, or also trails near Patrick Brook? Lenore B. said the rec fields are now a destination – would be great to have a trail along there, but then there are constraints with developing and flood hazard areas.

Maggie G. suggested that the next steps would be a discussion about tweaking subdivision regulations, or putting certain pieces on the official map. John K. added that we've also talked about making decisions/descriptions about what the lettered facilities would be. Maybe some of this language could also get attached to trails in the village growth area.

Lenore B. asked about the proposed sidewalk and road shoulder improvements on map 13 – is there reason to include these? Alex W. said these are within town's right-of-way, so there isn't a need to include them on an official map. However, having it on map 13 is a good idea, so the Selectboard and road foreman acknowledge it.

Lenore B. asked about the next steps for the Trails Committee. They will be included with any future changes/discussions.

Trails Committee left the meeting.

Maggie G. asked what to proceed with. Alex W. felt the Commission could continue this discussion at the next meeting. He will continue to tinker with the descriptions of the lettered areas.

Village Area Design Standards – continued from 7/25, 6/13, 5/23 meetings

Alex W. asked for feedback on village design standards. If we're going to show large community areas on the official map, maybe we don't need this in the design standard, so we could focus these standards on the smaller areas.

Maggie G. mentioned it is a financial issue; if a developer is in charge of landscaping, it is a big chunk of change. She said if the town was responsible for larger spaces, the developer would be responsible for the smaller spaces.

Alex W. brought up the Blackrock proposal, where they had proposed that greenspace already. It was included in the official map with tweaks. In other cases, maybe it should be the town that does it at a later date, after further discussion from the town.

John K. replied that the larger spaces need to be the responsibility of the developer; they need to work with us to determine how that space gets outfitted. We aren't telling them to do something that would devalue their property. We should hold to that standard, so that they create well-designed usable green spaces. Alex W. said one advantage to the standards is it would provide the public with an understanding of how these spaces would look.

Rolf K. felt that the creation of public spaces are the responsibility of the developer. He felt that public space is very important, and enhances the value of the houses. Area B, for example, could be made better, but is important. John K. replied that we have some beautiful town greens surrounded by buildings in Vermont, and this could be possible here.

Maggie G. asked how we sync the open greenspace with an official map where town buys these spaces. Are we buying those large areas, or are we requiring that they develop it for us? Alex W. replied this could take the official map from accommodate to create. The official map is already referenced in the greenspace document. If you have an official map element on your property, these design standards must be applied, and that space must be developed as noted below. If you don't, you must create and follow these design standards. John K. clarified that we wouldn't require town to purchase the space. Rolf K. asked about the mechanism to make a developer comply. Alex W. said the mechanism only

applies to the developer leaving the space aside as per the official map, but not to the developer choosing to meet the design standards.

Maggie G. suggested we look at the numbers in the draft design standards again. Alex W. wondered about either decreasing the numbers (would this make the areas too small?), or jettisoning the numbers altogether.

Barbara F. said the Bristol Bakery area has too much in it (trees, sidewalk, benches) for the size of the space. Discussion ensued, and Alex W. said maybe the space is more about where they're located and their design, than about their size.

James D. pointed out that on the four large development properties within the village, we have official map elements on 3 of the 4, so maybe small public spaces are adequate. Alex W. replied that once we determine the details of all the larger facilities, maybe we'd see that we are missing something (or not).

John K. felt lot 15 should remain as we show it currently (with the entire lot for public use/public facility). He didn't like the idea of leaving the rest of the lot as open to potential development. The PC's before us have set that mark, and we should maintain it. He is not in favor of filling in the canal. Rolf K. said his filling of the canal proposal was not serious.

Maggie G. felt the best possible public good for lot 15 would be to let it revert back to a wetland.

Barbara F. asked for clarification from John K. Rolf K. stated that previous ideas for lot 15 would include public facility on there where land configuration allowed it. Alex W. commented that approaching landowners with entire lot as public facility would be hard here unless we approach the landowner with money to purchase it. John K. replied that there is strong interest, and pledges have been made, to purchase this property.

Barbara F. asked Alex W. about checking with the Selectboard about a town land-buying fund. Alex W. clarified that we had discussed contributing to a new fund for opt-out. The Commission felt there should be a separate fund (not Land Preservation Fund), and Alex W. said the creation of that fund would need to go through the Selectboard. But, if we are only discussing smaller areas, we may not need to have a fund or opt-out.

Maggie G. suggested focusing to enable finishing at the next meeting (Aug. 22). Alex W. commented that they've made good progress, in agreeing not to do a townwide official map, and adding more clarity to design standards.

Minutes of July 25, 2018 Meetings:

John K. said he would add to his comment at the end of p. 3, and would get his revisions in soon.

Barbara F. asked about John K.'s comment about not acquiring the fire station. He clarified that there are elements of the structure that are not adequate or are undersized.

The Commission chose to delay approval of minutes until next meeting.

Other Business & Correspondence:

VT Electric Cooperative & Northern Power Systems substation upgrade project. Alex W. asked the Commission on the memo he drafted with comments on the project. The memo makes suggestions about the impact to steep slopes and the need for plantings to better screen the facility. He spoke with someone with the project last week, and their representative was appreciative that the Commission was looking at it. They are aware of the slope issue, and are working on possibly adjusting the arrangement of objects on the pad. They had already planned to do plantings, and will be clarifying that for their application.

John K. would like to encourage the use of native plant material. All agreed the memo looked good.

Barbara F. **made a motion to accept the motion as written.** Maggie G. **seconded.** The Commission voted **5-0.**

Rolf K. **made a motion to adjourn,** John K. **seconded.** Meeting adjourned at 8:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Kelly, Recording Secretary