

**Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission
September 26, 2018
Approved October 10, 2018**

Members Present: Dennis Place, John Kiedaisch, Barbara Forauer, Marie Gardner, Joe Iadanza, James Donegan, Jeff French

Members Absent: Rolf Kielman, Maggie Gordon

Public Present: None.

Also Present: Alex Weinhagen (Director of Planning & Zoning), Kate Kelly (Recording Secretary)

Joe I. chaired the meeting, which was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Agenda changes:

Alex W. made a couple changes to the agenda: the correct date for review of minutes should be September 12, 2018, and strike "discuss legal review by town counsel" from official map revisions.

Public Comments for Non-Agenda Items: None.

Official Map Revisions

Alex W. discussed the letter to landowners, which Barbara F. already provided comments on.

Joe I. liked the explanations included in the letter. Marie G. and John K. agreed.

James D. suggested the letter should be more upfront at the beginning, e.g., "You are receiving this letter because the Planning Commission is considering a proposal that could affect your property." Most liked this suggestion. Discussion ensued about wording.

Jeff F. asked if the map will be sent with the letter. Alex W. responded that we will. James D. asked if this only applies when the property is developed; Alex W. replied this is true.

There were no other suggested changes.

John K. asked what the schedule is for sending the letter and map out. Alex W. replied it will likely go out Oct. 1 (Monday) to landowners who have an official map element on their property.

Village Area Architectural Design Standards

Alex W. said John K. thought we could brainstorm a little before we begin in earnest with help from the Municipal Planning Grant. Alex W. suggested the Commission look at the existing design standards, which are excerpted and in their packets.

Alex W. pointed out that we already shape development through site planning (sidewalks, parking areas in relation to buildings, connectivity between sites), building (garage setback, rooflines), and landscaping. He proposed that we look at the actual buildings themselves, to give the community some comfort that we won't see buildings that are out of character with the existing village. Other communities have various standards (e.g., window treatments and first floor height). He asked the Commission to think about what they imagine for designs, and suggested they look in particular at the requirement for multi-story buildings (e.g., Kinney Drugs).

John K. said getting into building specifics is a delicate area, and we need to be sensitive. How much about forms/colors should we specify? He felt it would be helpful to see (visually) what different towns say about form-based codes. Alex W. clarified we are not talking about form-based codes here. However, most form-based codes have visual descriptions or pictures of what they are referring to; perhaps some of those pictures could be pulled together to show the Commission.

Alex W. stated that in the past people have stated that there are no defining features in Hinesburg that you could pick out for a code. He felt this is an overstatement, and there are some defining features that you could pick out.

John K. felt there is a mixture of buildings in Hinesburg, but there is a time period that holds it all together. It doesn't seem valid to reproduce that environment today. We need to be broad in our acceptance of what is appropriate.

Jeff F. felt it would be easier to say what we don't want (e.g., big box stores). Alex W. replied that most codes are prescriptive, but as John K. was talking about it, it would be interesting to do a slideshow of contemporary architecture.

Joe I. said he has a brother-in-law who lives in a neighborhood where there are many Colonial/Cape houses, then someone built a house that looks like it belongs in Florida, and it really stands out.

Dennis P. mentioned that in most developments you only get 5 or so different designs. Do we want to specify that we want more than 5? Many agreed.

Alex W. said maybe the design standard shouldn't be uniformity but variety, with a list of "don't do's". John K. said he is unaware of examples of regulations where they show and say this; Alex W. mentioned

that in outdoor lighting in the new standards, they did include pictures of what would be compliant/allowed, and what would not be.

Alex W. mentioned that with larger businesses/franchises, they will build to whatever design standards we request, as long as functional space is the same. There may be a significant difference in design between commercial/residential.

Joe I. said he likes the idea of a heterogeneous mix of housing, multi-story commercial buildings, pitched roofs, and a variety of types of buildings.

John K. mentioned that Columbus OH has a huge number of architect-designed buildings. In that city, somebody said if you hire the architects I want for your public buildings, I'll pay for the engineering and design. Can we create an incentive to do this?

Alex W. pointed out that we have different design standards for the different districts of the town. Do we want to make these standards more consistent? Or does it make sense to treat a commercial area differently? Joe I. felt it doesn't make sense to treat a commercial area differently, but a heavy industrial area like I-1 makes sense. He felt that different standards should apply to each different area, should each be treated differently (like NRG area should be different than other areas like near the gravel pit).

Jeff F. mentioned Cheese Plant and Commerce St. At 5 PM it shuts down, until Frost Beer Works came in. Marie G. mentioned Commerce St. is becoming more retail, as opposed to the area near her. Joe I. said that even in I-1, as you bring things forward closer to 116, you may want different standards. Alex W. said the standards could be different based on district (e.g., Brattleboro).

Jeff F. asked about the specificity in 5.2.2.7: what is a large building in a residential neighborhood? Most agreed it was not well defined, and should be defined by square feet or volume. Alex W. replied that to him, a single-family home is not a large building; the multi-family dwellings on the southern edge of town are a large building.

John K. said it would be useful to have everyone bring in images of buildings in each category that they like.

Dennis P. reiterated that most developers would only have a certain number of designs. How would you tell a developer you want 20 designs, and only 5 can be the same thing? Alex W. replied it would go to DRB.

John K. stated we need to consider solar energy, social spaces, etc. Alex W. felt we could take pictures of structures here in town. John K. suggested the Commissioners also look at examples around the

world, online, and show them at the next meeting. Alex W. said he only cautions that it grows out of this community.

Jeff F. said he would like to bring pictures of what he doesn't like. Marie G. mentioned that peoples' opinions of design change; some were upset with NRG when it was built, but now most people like it.

Alex W. said it is important to state/discuss what we will accomplish with these standards.

John K. felt it is wide open to us to say what we don't want/do want. We can then figure out a way to turn that into words/pictures.

Jeff F. brought up the idea of designing the larger subdivisions with the contours of the land. Joe I. tried to find language about topography.

Jeff F. asked about 5.2.2.4, freestanding commercial signs: should be limited in this area. Who gets it and who doesn't? Alex W. replied it is an advisory statement; that we prefer signs on buildings than in the field. Jeff F. said it should be one or the other ("will be" instead of "should be").

John K. pointed out #2, development shall be set back. Do we want to say shall there? There was discussion about this area (northern gateway), do we want the signage regs to apply to both sides of road (west side is the linear park, do we want it to apply to east side)? John K. said on the east side, we should let the building setback distance wander. He asked what the Blomstrann development proposal is. Alex W. said they have quite a setback from the road. They have a campus of buildings close to NRG, just north of Riggs Rd. On the south side of Riggs Rd., there is not a uniform setback from 116.

There was discussion about section 5.6.4 lighting standards and standards for landscaping. Alex W. said these was recently changed, and now addresses the issues Jeff F. brought up.

Joe I. could not find mention of building with topography.

Marie G. asked about the compliance checks of landscaping. Alex W. mentioned that some people have replaced dead shrubs/trees voluntarily. Barbara F. asked about the trees on the solar development on Magee Hill. John K. suggested we send a letter to the developer. Alex W. said he could not right now, but if someone wanted to write a letter, he could send it.

Discussion ensued about renovation of old police station, old Geprags house, other properties in town, new Rec Fields.

Barbara F. mentioned to Jeff F. that she met someone who moved to Hinesburg because it was walkable.

Minutes of September 12, 2018 Meeting:

Several changes were made. Discussion ensued about the official map & open space.

Dennis P. **made a motion to approve the September 12, 2018 meeting minutes as amended.** Marie G. **seconded the motion.** The Commission voted **5-0 to approve** the motion, with Jeff F. and Joe I. abstaining.

Other Business & Correspondence:

Alex W. mentioned that in the last couple days, the town of Shelburne sent a notice about proposed changes to regulations: there is a public hearing on Oct. 25. They will be changing PUD requirements and open space.

Upcoming conferences and workshops were in the email Alex W. sent. Additional ones include:

Oct. 10, South Burlington workshop on municipal energy improvements (ways municipalities could improve vehicle fleets and town building energy efficiency), 8-11:30 AM.

Nov. 16, Middlebury, all day, annual meeting of Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network. Opportunity for energy committees and coordinators to share information.

Oct. 17, Hinesburg, Conservation Commission is planning Natural Resources mapping, and will host Jesse Mohr from Native Geographic to present on mapping possibilities, and to get information from the town committees and boards on what would be useful to them. 7 PM.

Alex W. will not be here for the October 24th meeting; landowners may attend this meeting. Do others have conflicts with meetings?

Alex W. attended two conferences in the last week; including in the Northeast Kingdom, and in DC for policy and advocacy conference; the focus was on housing this year, and he talked to staffers in Leahy, Sanders, and Welch offices about housing in Hinesburg.

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Kelly, Recording Secretary