

**Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission
January 9, 2019
Approved January 23, 2019**

Members Present: Rolf Kielman, Marie Gardner, Joe Iadanza, Maggie Gordon, Dennis Place, Barbara Forauer, John Kiedaisch, Jeff French, and James Donegan (entered the meeting a bit late)

Members Absent:

Public Present: Sherry Osborn, Steven Giroux, Dawn Francis, Nathan Fry, Johanna White, Tom Ayer, Catherine Goldsmith, Richard Watts, Peter Erb

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

Joe I. chaired the meeting, which was called to order at 7:02 PM.

Agenda changes: None.

Public Comments for Non-Agenda Items: None.

Election of Officers: Chairperson and Vice-chairperson:

Jeff F. entered the meeting. Barbara F. thanked Joe I. for his years of service. Barbara F. **nominated Maggie G. for chairperson**, and Rolf K. **seconded the motion**. Maggie G. accepted. The Commission **voted 8-0** to elect Maggie G. as chairperson.

Jeff F. **nominated Barbara F.** as vice-chairperson, and Rolf K. **seconded the motion**. She considered that her term expires this year. Joe I. mentioned that four members are up for renewal this year. Barbara F. declined. Jeff F. **nominated Rolf K.** as vice-chairperson, who declined. Rolf K. **nominated Marie G.** as vice-chairperson. Jeff F. **seconded the motion**. Marie G. declined. Maggie G. **nominated Joe I. as vice-chairperson**, Marie G. **seconded the motion**, and the Commission **voted 8-0** to elect Joe I. as vice-chairperson.

Official Map Revisions:

Alex W. reviewed the comments they've received since the last meeting from:
Mark Pendergrass, Kathleen & Dave Newton, Garen Frost, Nathan Fry, Lori Place, Cynthia Hendel, Jean Kiedaisch, Dawn Francis, Sherry Osborn, Catherine Goldsmith, and Andrea Morgante

Maggie G. asked if people have had a chance to read the last three comments that came in today; most had. Alex W. commented that he has made some revisions to the Official Map based on their prior meeting.

Barbara F. said she thought it divided between economics and natural resources. She doesn't have a solution. Joe I. said he sees things differently; he understands the arguments on both sides. As a PC member, understanding what he does about the Official Map, he has to base his decision on what the Official Map is supposed to do (set aside parcels to grow community in the future). Does this use fit in to how we see the future of Hinesburg?

Jeff F. asked about how the idea of taking lot 15 off the Official Map came up. The Commission and Alex W. replied it was from FPF and other correspondence.

James D. entered the meeting.

Rolf K. displayed the outlined village zoning district on the map. He wondered if HCS is in or out of the village zoning district. Alex W. clarified that Rolf K. highlighted the village growth district, and that the line should come straight across the bottom of the map (south of the school).

Rolf K. commented that they should be planning 50 years in the future. There are deficiencies in planning process. On the fourth page, the chart he made shows the village growth area is 507 acres. Meaningful public space currently adds up to 27.2 acres (a little over 5% of our community). In comparing to other towns and communities, he doesn't feel 5% is sufficient. He would not consider removing a portion of public space without making up for it somewhere else.

John K. pointed out that this is an ongoing process, and the initial creation of the Official Map was 2009; he wants to respect the effort the previous Planning Commission put in, that the Selectboard at that time supported, as guidance as to where the town is going in the next 50 years.

Joe I. felt this map is recognition of what has been already done, what is impossible (wetlands), and a growing Hinesburg village. We need to make sure our public facilities are adequate.

Alex W. and Rolf K. pointed out that the school isn't available to the public during the school year, and it isn't included in Rolf's calculation.

Dennis P. asked if we should include Geprag's; Rolf K. replied it is outside the village growth area, but it is nice to see that there is plenty of space surrounding the village (including the Bissonette Recreation Fields & Geprag's). Dennis P. asked if we are trying to promote both living and working in Hinesburg, and if so, why would we remove a commercial lot. Rolf K. replied we are, but added that the viability of one-story storage area, used car area, etc. won't be used the same in 50 years (will likely have more intensified use), and this means focusing on the 5% is even more important.

Peter Erb asked about the fields behind Town Hall, some of which are owned by the church. He pointed out that Lyman Meadows Field is part of the school district, so isn't available? Alex W. replied that the school has first dibs to this area, but it has been used in the past by the town Recreation Department.

Rolf K. pointed out that lot 1 has been bisected by the access road, and is now in two parcels.

Joe I. stated he was also looking at if there is duplication in uses, especially on the east side of 116. He looked back at the descriptions of #34 (lot 15) and #36 (Quinn property bordering cemetery). There is differentiation there; they are reasonably distant, there is a population closer to lot 15 already (village and Thistle Hill). The definitions for use are different (#34: band shelter, public facility, walking; #36: picnic shelter, shade trees, etc.) The proposed build-out densities will be well served by having both. He feels lot 15 still serves a purpose on the Official Map.

Marie G. mentioned that some of these lots are virgin lots, all just planning. #34 has had nothing but dissension surrounding it and was done poorly; Joe I. replied that it was a virgin lot then, but would agree that there hadn't been enough outreach on the Official Map when it was added to it). Marie G. said it had gone through subdivision and was declared a commercial lot. Joe I. commented that what they decide will have nothing to do with the ongoing proceedings in court.

Maggie G. said the purpose of the Official Map is to make sure critical areas are not lost as the town builds out. Dennis P. asked if village hasn't grown enough already to develop lot 1 (he keeps hearing it's too noisy). Joe I. said it depends what use you'd like to have for the lot. One use proposed is a bandshell; it is too noisy at lot 1. Maggie G. said the reason that lot 15 was chosen is location, in the middle of the Village Growth Area, easily walkable, between two schools. Dennis P. asked about wetlands – if it is all wetlands, how much can you develop? John K. said to look at lot 15 report for a description of the wetlands, which Alex W. pulled up and displayed.

Marie G. pointed out lot 1 is also in the middle. Joe I. felt that the lot 1 questions raised are good ones, but the Planning Commission can't answer those questions as they aren't under the Planning Commission's purview (the Selectboard declined development of a playground at lot 1).

Jeff F. quoted from p. 1 of our town plan, and historic discussions with the DRB about lot 15. His feedback to DRB was that this wasn't an acceptable public use space, not meeting our standards. When he looks at lot 15, he doesn't have an issue with someone developing the lot, but there needs to be something available for the community to use there. He hopes that any future developer will look at the town plan and Official Map and make it a forethought, to make something of quality that benefits the town.

Alex W. asked if he'd like a portion of lot 15 to stay on the Official Map (instead of all of it)? Jeff F. replied there has to be something there that is a true public facility. How do we use these to get quality (not just size)?

Joe I. commented that nothing in the Official Map says a whole lot about use. He would differentiate between what we sent the DRB (proposed use didn't meet Official Map at that time) and the question if lot 15 belongs at all on the Official Map? Jeff F. felt it does belong on the Official Map. Alex W. replied that an earlier discussion informed him that the PC wanted to put the entire lot on the Official Map. He felt it is important to clarify if Jeff F. is proposing putting only a portion on the Official Map.

James D. said looking at the lot 15 map suggested changing the Official Map to include a linear park along the canal; put one of the three corners on the map (that aren't wetlands) for a new fire station, library, or community center, the other would continue to be zoned commercial.

Barbara F. mentioned she walked on lot 15 a couple times last week; she could see something like that working, with small local commercial business around the exterior, paths through the center, increased canal walk.

Alex W. replied this is a pretty important decision point in removing or leaving everything on, or leaving a portion on the Official Map.

Rolf K. said that he believes we don't have enough as it stands. He would rather consider adjustments in zoning and locations, in the parcels just to the west of this lot for example. Lot 1 has 1 acre, the Bristol Town Green is ~2 acres, and the Vergennes Town Green is 1.25 acre. He would urge considering other under-used areas (both currently developed places and lot 1).

Maggie G. asked about what needs aren't being filled right now, and identifying spaces; a community won't regret having too much open space. Alex W. pointed out Mark Pendergrass's comment that they moved here because of the space, but if they had a local playground they would bring their kids there. Alex W. only cautions that if we have spaces available that we aren't developing today, how do we know we don't have the capacity in the spaces we have now to meet the village needs. He also mentioned that most people will not live inside the village even with build-out. Alex W. pointed out there are public spaces right outside the village growth area. Maggie G. said that is a good point, but there are people who drive into the village to walk on the sidewalks or play on the recreation fields, and they would come in if there were a playground here.

Joe I. said that is why he'd ask the Planning Commission to think about the area definitions; are the uses duplicative, or do they differentiate? We should be trying to look after all those different uses.

Dennis P. said he'd see these playgrounds going in in new developments. Joe I. pointed out Village Heights/Thistle Hill; it is easier to cross Mechanicsville than 116, to compare lot 1 and lot 15.

Jeff F. pointed out balance, on both sides of 116. He wants to have a livable walkable space nearby (won't walk to Geprag's, but would to lot 15). In the places we do have available, we should do something.

Tom Ayer commented that while the numbers are accurate within the gray area, they don't include other areas (schools, Geprags, etc.). He said it sounds like we are talking about a park as a public facility. Why would we take a commercial lot off the tax rolls as a commercial facility? He has a hard time getting on board with lot 15 as a park or fire station. We should feel fortunate we have applicants who have the financial ability to develop a lot like this one. A fire station on this lot is probably a non-starter; would take deep pockets to put a building on a lot like that. We shouldn't feel bad about someone putting a building on a lot like that. When we have a commercial lot served by town services, we shouldn't leave it on this map as a park.

Jeff F. said it could be a blend of both commercial and a library, etc. Dennis P. said things cost money, and we don't have a lot of it. Geprag's Park is donated, it's free; we could have a bandstand there. The whole town is going to use it, and Geprag's is the center of town. Jeff F. replied that the way the village lives isn't the same as in town.

Richard Watts commented that one reason to put things inside the Village Growth Area triangle is that then you can take one trip, then you have many places to go. This is a reason to bring things into one place. He agreed that the areas outside the core (Geprag's, Town Forest) are ones you would drive to and park at. A library makes sense in the triangle.

Peter Erb commented that all the land mentioned outside the village growth area is land that is used separately, not for gathering. As this town gets bigger, we will need spaces to bring the community together. Land in the middle of the village could have the community spaces that will bring us together. He also commented that with revised proposed open space standards, the Commission would require the Giroux's to put some of the lot into green space. You don't create green space & open space easily once it has buildings on it. 5% is miniscule; there will be nothing to be proud of if the Commission can't find more than 5%.

Dennis P. asked why everyone wants to move to Hinesburg. Peter Erb replied that they won't if there's no open space. Jeff F. said school district, cheaper than other three communities, can live in the area and walk. Dennis P. asked Jeff F. if he enjoys living here now without lot 15. Jeff F. replied he does.

Dawn Francis said we have public spaces that are undeveloped and underutilized right now. She'd recommend looking at community space and how we use those. Other populated areas in town need parks; those need maintenance. We need to think about other areas that need parks, like up Richmond Rd/North Rd. Lot 15 is better utilized for commercial, because there are many other spots for parks.

Maggie G. replied that they have talked about a park at the corner of Richmond Rd. and North Rd., but that isn't a part of this discussion.

John K. said they've had a focus on this area because they're working on the Official Map right now; they've worked on rural areas before and will come back to it. Dawn F. replied that we're proposing traffic improvements outside this area, so it would make sense to also include parks.

Catherine Goldsmith said there is a discussion about a village green. She had a call from a woman about to retire, who said she would need places to accidentally bump into people in town so as not to be isolated. Catherine G. commented from her own experience, when she had a child in 2006, she'd go to Richmond and Williston playgrounds to make friends. A Village Green is a place you can meet people at both ends of life. The Center for Rural Studies is completing a study now looking at the value to towns of having a village green; they are showing that there is an economic value to village greens.

Steve Giroux wondered why lot 15 should be on the map anymore anyways, because they are in the 120 days right now. When that's over, they have to live with it either way. He'd hate to think that any future applicant would have to go through this as well. Should be a one time shot, and it doesn't seem fair that it should happen again. Rolf K. said it seems it should be one time. Alex W. said it logistically doesn't work that way. The 120 days happens in reference to a specific development proposal; if the town doesn't show progress in 120 days, the development project would get reviewed without deference to the Official Map. If that particular project went away, and a new applicant came, the new applicant would also have to meet Official Map standards. Steve G. said we haven't gotten any closer to determining what we want there. Why do we have to keep doing it again? You are crippling the system because no one else further will apply to develop lot 15.

Nathan Fry lives on Texas Hill Rd. said he appreciates everyone having this conversation. He has lived in many different locations, and a discussion like this is rare. His family moved here 5 years ago after getting off active duty military. They came for the community, connectivity. Hinesburg is a bedroom community; most people will continue to commute to work out of town regardless of what we bring in to town for commerce. In all his travels, he's never been in a community where they've said they have too much green space. He mentioned that with things changing in the future, commercial businesses will find a way to come into a community. Lots built upon already can be redeveloped; if we choose green space over commercial development, he doesn't think that shuts down commercial development in the future. Someone mentioned connecting the schools; their foreign exchange student mentioned it would be really nice if they could ride a bike down from Texas hill down to CVU, then go into town to have a public space with friends after school. He feels Commerce Park with public space in it isn't a contradiction; see his letter re: El Paso, TX. Green space alongside commercial space worked well there. In the future, 5-6 years down the road, if that's what happened down the road, public space alongside commercial, he would hesitate less about moving here given walkability, mixture of commercial, public, etc.

Peter Erb said it is important to think about what DRB actually did; they didn't say there couldn't be commercial use on lot 15. They said the commercial use on lot 15 didn't accommodate the portion of the Official Map (farmer's market). It goes through this every time; you have to accommodate the Official Map.

Maggie G. said the question at this point is making a decision on lot 15. She asked for further comments from the Commission.

Barbara F. pointed out there's not a lot for seniors in this town. It would be nice to have that option.

Maggie G. asked for feedback on James D.'s proposal to set aside parts of lot as opposed to entire lot. John K. thought it would be complex if doable to divide the parcel that would allow it to maintain its function as a wetland, as well as commerce, and traditional park activities. But he could see a way to include those activities as an option within the entire parcel, for the developer to include. There is an infinite amount of commercial space in village NW; the one requirement is that it can't be larger than 20,000 sq. ft. He proposed that mixed use could be workable, and the Commission could add commerce to lot 15 description. He is not interested in taking lot 15 off as a public facility; but he would be interested in adding commerce as one of the multiple uses of the parcel. Alex W. brought up lot 15 committee's report, and suggested making the are shown as the civic building available for commercial use, but the rest would be public facilities. Joe I. added to the interpretation; in the structures shown in both B & C, it was noted that the building could be mixed use (residential & civic). One could argue that this could be a private-public combination (dual use is already considered in this plan). Alex W. stated he would not interpret it this way; on the Official Map as it is, he would reply to a developer that there could be no commercial use on lot 15. He would recommend designating which part of the lot would be commercial vs. what would be public.

Jeff F. said that is sort of what he envisioned. Dennis P. wondered if they could get permits for this; Joe I. pointed out that the plans from the lot 15 committee avoid the wetlands. Rolf K. felt all of lot 15 should be designated as public use for reasons stated before. From a planning/proactive standpoint, he would rather adjust the zoning conditions on parcels such as those west of lot 15. He would rather be proactive to enhance commercial opportunities on the lots west of lot 15 than change what is already listed as public use for lot 15.

Marie G. asked if that were the case, would the town need to procure the lot. Rolf K. replied yes.

John K. felt it would be appropriate to develop properties along 116 as viable commercial space; there could even be connection in to park. Businesses may want to move there to take advantage of a central park. He felt they need to involve the people who own the land. Maggie G. said that is what is happening now with these meetings.

Marie G. said she didn't know how it could be resolved tonight. Joe I. said he was prepared to offer a motion.

Joe I. **made a motion to keep lot 15 on the Official Map with the definitions we've put in place over the last couple months.** Rolf K. **seconded the motion.** Joe I. felt the lot 15 committee's report offered some public-private opportunities. Dennis P. said the disagreement is where the park should be. John K. clarified that the description in the new draft is the one referred to by Joe's motion. Joe I. said yes, he views both the description and the map together as one document. The Commission **voted 6-3 to approve the motion,** with James D., Marie G., and Dennis P. dissenting.

Alex W. and Maggie G. suggested picking up the remainder of the agenda at the next meeting. The Commission put off agenda items Village Area Public Open Space Design Standards and Minutes of December 12, 2018 until next meeting.

Other Business & Correspondence:

Alex W. mentioned the Town of Shelburne's zoning revision public hearing tomorrow.

The battery storage facility wants to add lighting (for when they're working on the facility).

The Commission did not receive the Municipal Planning Grant to work on architectural design standards.

The Commission would like to see packet materials posted on the website; Alex W. will investigate.

Rolf K. **made a motion to adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 9:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Kelly, Recording Secretary