

**Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission
February 13, 2019
Approved March 13, 2019**

Members Present: Maggie Gordon, Dennis Place, Barbara Forauer, John Kiedaisch, Rolf Kielman, Jeff French

Members Absent: Joe Iadanza, Marie Gardner, James Donegan

Public Present: None.

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

Maggie G. chaired the meeting, which was called to order at 7:01 PM.

Agenda changes: Alex W. mentioned an update from Jeff F. on Water/Wastewater Committee's work during Other Business or during their work plan discussion.

Public Comments for Non-Agenda Items: None.

Village Area Public Open Space Design Standards:

Maggie G. suggested finishing the discussion tonight, in order to schedule the public hearing.

Jeff F. arrived. Alex W. stated that the discussion ended at last meeting with concern over the amount of public open space created. How could scenarios play out with various future developments?

Maggie G. asked Rolf K. if he had calculated how much public open space would be existing if full buildout occurred, and he replied he did not. He did not include anything outside the Village Growth Area, nor was Hinesburg Community School, or unbuildable areas (setbacks from streams, etc.).

Alex W. replied that he had done some digging about Peter Erb's comment that 5% was a minimum recommendation of open space, and that it should be more than this; he couldn't find anything online, but queried his Planners group, and learned that most don't have a fixed number, but they do have open space plans. In terms of recommendations from national recreation and parks association, they used to recommend a certain amount of green space per 1,000 people, but now they say it needs to be determined by local desires and park types. Jeff F. said he found the number 10-15% on a smart growth website. Rolf K. mentioned that his first job was in Europe, and they had a minimum of 20%. He commented that an overall look at the map of the Village Growth Area makes it seem like there is not much public open space inside it.

Alex W. displayed a map with the existing town properties and official map elements within the Village Growth District (and bordering areas). Rolf K. commented that it is encouraging to see the elements that are outside the Growth Area.

Alex W. asked the Commission to consider what type of public open space should be provided within developments to complement the larger Official Map elements. John K. asked what we will support within those spaces; Alex W. replied that these drafts describe the usage of these spaces well. Maggie G. said we still lack destination areas (e.g., where to go with picnic lunch). Alex W. replied that we have planned them on the Official Map (lot 1, Blomstrann, Quinn properties). He asked what we want the smaller spaces within developments to do. He commented the current draft says that they can opt out (to build in an Official Map element instead). Is this what we want?

Maggie G. suggested we look at the Blackrock development. Would we be ok if all public open space went into the orange area (Official Map element), and the rest of the development had nothing else? Alex W. said their proposal is ~250 dwelling units and ~50,000 sq. ft. commercial space. This would be 1.3 acres under these standards. The current Official Map elements are 3.7 + 4.7 (linear) acres. They would need to build 1.3 acres, and set aside 8.4 acres. Alex W. asked if these can be coincident. John K. asked what total percentage of Blackrock would need to be public open space. Alex W. calculated that Blackrock (within Village Growth Area) is ~37 acres. Official Map Elements within this are 3.4, 1, 1.5 = ~6 acres. This is about 16% of the overall 37 acres. Discussion ensued about whether it would be nice to have additional small spaces scattered within the development.

Maggie G. said it is good to know that a certain amount of Official Map elements will be developed. Alex W. pointed out that Joe I. had a different view of it, that there was no guarantee that Official Map elements would be developed, if the Selectboard chose not to.

Rolf K. pointed out that if a developer put in senior housing, it would be nice to have small elements of open space near it. Alex W. said the developer did propose senior housing near the southern end of their property, and they showed garden space (not public) near it. Barbara F. said if you go through Creekside, there are no benches – it would be nice to have something there to stop and rest. Alex W. pointed out on the map the public spaces in Creekside, and noted that none of these were developed (just grass). Developer had proposed soccer field behind Creekside, but the Army Corps of Engineers said they could not (because it is converted wetland). Jeff F. asked if the area further north of there would all be non-developable of the same reason. Alex W. said not all, but it would be problematic, and is within flood hazard zone.

Maggie G. said she was looking at Blackrock proposal; Alex displayed it, and described the public well location and 5 lots that are no longer there. Maggie G. said it is fairly dense. She asked if we would like to see more small spaces in there. Alex W. pointed out robust linear public open spaces (sidewalks with trees). Jeff F. pointed out the space behind the houses to the north, which seems to be more private

space for those nearby lots. Rolf K. showed community garden, and asked if it is public open space or private? He wondered why the developer didn't put the larger buildings next to the public space.

Dennis P. pointed out that we can't even get lot 1 developed. We need to get a jump-start on these properties, to make them get developed.

Jeff F. wondered about putting parking belowground, and green space above? Rolf K. pointed out that area E on the Blackrock proposal already has parking below. Alex W. replied that he didn't know about the water table, and the possibilities there.

Rolf K. felt that Dennis P.'s instincts were good; if he could be assured that developer would locate large structures near Official Map elements it would be fine.

Jeff F. asked if the Commission could make this a design standard (that large buildings must abut large open space)? The Commission replied you could.

Dennis P. pointed out it is not a long walk; Alex W. agreed that the scale is important.

Maggie G. said we are asking for green space that has a purpose, which is helpful. We will get at least some developed into official space. Alex W. said we could go to public hearing if we are comfortable with it.

John K. asked about the standards we'd be addressing at public hearing. Alex W. replied that we'd be talking about these standards (developing small open spaces in this location or buying out to develop official map elements elsewhere). Rolf K. said it leaves a gray zone for the DRB, but if it includes 16-18% of area, he's ok with it.

All agreed to move forward to a public hearing, at same time as the one for the Official Map revisions. This public hearing will take place on March 13 (later changed to March 27).

Planning Commission 2019 Work Plan:

The Commission discussed upcoming work (architectural & streetscape design standards, density allowances & bonus revisions, etc.).

Jeff F. gave an update on the Water/Wastewater Allocation Committee's recent work, which was developed because of the town's limited amount of water, and the fact that our wastewater treatment plant will soon need an upgrade. Water is an asset to the town. Previously, it's been first-come first-serve. To manage growth, Williston uses a scoring allocation – their Selectboard designates how much water (number of homes) will be allowed each year. Then, your plan gets scored after you've gone through DRB process, to receive your allocation. When the developer comes for their water allocation

from the Selectboard, there's a minimum number they're expected to meet. If there are multiple projects for that year, they would be scored. Alex W. added that the Committee is recommending that the Development Review Board do the judging/scoring (at the front end of review process). Once a year, the DRB would take all projects that have been through conceptual level phase, and those that have scored highest will get the allocation.

Rolf K. asked about what the scoring would be based on. Jeff F. listed the criteria (and added that they are weighted differently): public infrastructure (connecting trails, sidewalks, roads, paths, transportation improvements, wastewater treatment systems that treat additional water beyond the development), job creation (if they actually have a lease for mixed use buildings, and provide living wage jobs with benefits), housing needs (senior, affordable). Dennis P. asked if one side of 116 would get more points than the other based on this. Jeff F. replied that they also have residential points, which should balance this out.

Barbara F. asked about if the developer is in the process of building and decides they will change it; Alex W. replied that the Selectboard will have claw-back provision.

John K. pointed out there will be work and staff required to review the developer's scoring sheet, etc. Alex W. replied that the Williston planner said it is in plain terms, easy to understand.

Jeff F. continued with criteria for the scoring system: stormwater treatment (points based on ranked system), village proximity and re-development (how far away you are as you walk from focal points: police station, PO, town offices, HCS), energy efficiency and renewable energy (Efficiency Vermont code plus standards), and renewable technologies.

John K. asked about the tie-in with impact fees. Alex W. said it is separate from impact fees; the only tie-in would be if the developer offers to provide a fire truck, and then perhaps the impact fee would go away for them, and they could also have increased points in Water/Wastewater scoring system.

Maggie G. asked how close they are to being finished, and how the Planning Commission will be involved). Alex W. said they will likely be close to done at the end of this month/early next month. The Selectboard will have to talk about it for a couple meetings to decide if they want to adopt it. He commented that this will go through Zoning, so then it will land in the Planning Commission's lap. Alex W. said the Commission will have to do some (hopefully minimal) work on it, and go through public hearings with it.

The hope is that, with this system, development projects will be better than they would be otherwise, and Hinesburg will get some of the things it wants.

Barbara F. commented that Vermont recently got a poor ranking (C or C-) on our water; this is a timely discussion.

Discussion ensued about other projects on the work plan. Maggie G. mentioned RR1 that kept getting pushed down the road. John K. commented on previous projects (stormwater assessment last happened in 2012, flood hazard area revision 2009 and 2011). He felt that due to changes in climate and larger developments, stormwater review should be moved up the work plan. He also asked about rural roads that need improvement; Alex W. replied that the town was required to do an assessment of roads and areas that need improvements, and that this assessment has been completed. Alex W. will get an update on this from Renae M.

Rolf K. suggested more enrichment (speakers, panel discussions).

Minutes of January 23, 2019 Meeting:

Maggie G. and John K. made amendments to the minutes.

Barbara F. **made a motion to approve the minutes as amended.** Dennis P. **seconded** the motion. The Commission **voted 6-0.**

Other Business & Correspondence:

None. The Commission discussed their next meeting, Feb. 27 (Alex W. will be absent).

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Kelly, Recording Secretary