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MEMORANDUM

TO: Development Review Board

CC: Applicant

FROM: Alex Weinhagen & Peter Erb – Planning & Zoning Department

DATE: May 28, 2014

RE: Haystack Crossing Sketch Plan Review – staff comments on revised application

The Haystack Crossing subdivision sketch plan application was presented and discussed at the February 18 and March 18, 2014 Development Review Board (DRB) meetings. Staff summarized remaining issues in an April 2 memo. The Applicant submitted revised plans and a supporting narrative on May 9 to address those issues. What follows are the items listed in the April 2 memo, with staff comments. We applaud the Applicant's efforts, but we believe additional sketch plan revisions are necessary. Of all the issues listed below, we feel that issue #2 (Mix & Distribution of Uses) represents the most fundamental discrepancy between the sketch plan and the community's vision as outlined in the regulations. This issue cannot be resolved at a later stage of the review or through further analysis.

We have tried to keep our comments focused on conceptual-level issues, and we encourage the Board and the Applicant to do the same. There will be plenty of opportunity for site-level design and analysis if and when this project receives sketch plan approval. Sketch plans are conceptual by definition, and refinements (sometimes substantial) are to be expected as projects proceed to later steps of the review process after the Applicant has done more detailed work – e.g., engineering, landscaping plan, building design, association bylaws, offers of dedication for public infrastructure, etc.

1. Route 116 Access

- *Address future Route 116 access at the Riggs Road intersection. Continue reaching out to and working with the KB Real Estate LLC property owner (Brian and Kathy Busier) to demonstrate how this future access will function with regard to the Haystack Crossing sketch plan.*

ACCOMPLISHED – The Applicant has negotiated an agreement with the abutting property owner to secure an access easement to Route 116 at the Riggs Road intersection. This agreement will apparently also involve offsetting boundary line adjustments, which will enable the Applicant to construct Building C (see sheet C-100) closer to the intersection – i.e., on land that is currently part of the KB Real Estate LLC property. We spoke with Brian Busier to confirm this agreement. The Applicant is not proposing to build this Route 116 access as part of this project, but will have the ability to do so given the agreement and easement. As such, construction of this access as part of the Applicant's project should be discussed as part of any preliminary plat review, especially with regard to phasing and whether the proposed northerly Route 116 access should remain.

- *Remove the proposed northerly Route 116 access, and redesign the sketch plan accordingly.*

NOT ACCOMPLISHED – The Applicant wants to retain this access (see May 9 narrative). Regardless of preliminary positive comments from VTrans staff, this access conflicts with section 5.22.4 (Zoning). If the Board is willing to entertain this access, we recommend any sketch plan approval be contingent on the Applicant conducting a traffic study for the full project (would be necessary regardless), and cover the cost for the Town to have an independent review of the plan and the study results and recommendations. This with the understanding that the Board reserves the right to reject this access and require a redesign of this portion of the project. More data and analysis from a traffic study would facilitate a more informed decision on this issue. Such a traffic study should also address the project's build out in relation to the planned improvements by VTrans to the Route 116, CVU Road intersection (timing not fixed, but currently slated for construction in 2017), as well as planning for and contribution to improvements at the Route 116, Riggs Road intersection (e.g., possible roundabout) as discussed in the recently completed Route 116 Corridor Study.

2. Mix & Distribution of Uses

- *Changes are needed to ensure the project doesn't function as simply a residential neighborhood. It must complement and serve as an extension of the mixed use village core to the south.*

ATTEMPTED, NOT ACCOMPLISHED – The portion between the easterly north/south road and Route 116 is actually mixed use with 134 dwelling units (over 50% of dwellings) and 63,250 square feet of commercial space (100% of dedicated commercial). This small area is organized around parking lots and Route 116 frontage instead of along mixed use village streets like the existing village core to the south. One of the central problems with this sketch plan is that too much residential and commercial use is concentrated on the eastern portion near Route 116, with the vast majority of the developable area occupied by a lower density single-family neighborhood.

- *Improve the mix of uses, specifically non-residential vs. residential uses, on the interior of the project area. This is particularly important along the main north/south streets that the regulations envision functioning like a vibrant village "main street". Adding some non-residential uses along portions of the proposed central green was also discussed as a way to make this green space more of a community resource as opposed to simply a backyard resource for the dwellings arranged around it.*

ATTEMPTED, NOT ACCOMPLISHED – As noted above, the problematic east/west divide remains. The Applicant's proposal to create two "nodes" of mixed uses does not guarantee the mix of residential and non-residential uses along the two north/south "main streets". Unlike the 63,250 square feet of dedicated commercial space near/along Route 116, the Applicant indicates that these two mixed use areas could be whatever the market dictates at the time of development – including residential. This is another central problem of this sketch plan, one where the Applicant appears to have a very different vision than the community vision expressed in the requirements and intent of sections 3.1 & 3.6 of the Zoning Regulations.

Leveraging Route 116 for commercial development makes sense, but not to the scale or with the exclusivity proposed in this sketch plan. The Village NW district was NOT created to facilitate 60,000+ square feet of commercial uses in a narrow strip along Route 116. Many of Hinesburg's existing businesses and most of our 200+ home occupations do NOT require exposure along Route 116 to be successful. Expansion of these businesses would be well served by development in the interior of the project. Some examples of new businesses that could also flourish along the interior "main streets" include: optometrist, real estate office, a wide variety of professional offices, daycare center, furniture assembly & woodworking studio. Forcing most future commercial uses to

exclusively co-locate in just a few buildings with large commercial footprints is not the Hinesburg model. We recommend additional redesign to shift some of that 63,250 square feet of commercial space to dedicated lots along the two north/south main streets that form the core of the project. We think this could be easily addressed by adding a few more commercial lots and refining the two nodes proposed by the Applicant. Such lots could allow for stand-alone commercial uses as well as mixed use buildings where residential uses are only allowed on upper floors (e.g., commercial on first floor). This could be combined with a reduction in size of the large buildings along Route 116 which would help reduce the large parking areas shown on the revised plans. Economic development forecasting is difficult, but we feel nearly 60,000 square feet of largely retail commercial space along Route 116 is unlikely to be needed or occupied.

- *Relocate some of the multifamily residential uses so they are not so clustered in the southeast portion of the project, and so they are more proximate to significant green spaces.*

ATTEMPTED, NOT ACCOMPLISHED – The Applicant's narrative is correct that the multi-family dwellings have been balanced from north to south in the new plan; however, the east/west divide mentioned above and proximity to green spaces remain problematic. The central green space (both east and west portions) is an incredible asset that remains most proximate to single-family dwellings on individual lots that already have private lawn space. The eastern area is the most densely settled portion of the project with fully 60% of the overall dwelling units, almost all in multi-family and mixed-use buildings that will depend on the shared, central green areas. We continue to recommend that some of the multi-family residential uses be relocated so some are more proximate to the central green area.

3. Green Space

- *See staff report for details regarding location, size, shape, and potential uses of the proposed central green area.*

ACCOMPLISHED – The reconfiguration of the eastern portion of the central green addresses this issue. This provides a very usable 1.2 acres of land for future community facilities. While still requiring a revision to the Official Map (due to location and size), the east and west central green areas have good potential to serve the neighborhood and the larger Hinesburg community. The inclusion of community garden space in the western portion of the green is also a positive revision that could potentially be enlarged and/or shifted to the other side of this green to provide easy access from the westerly north/south "main street". The Applicant has clarified that both spaces are intended to be for public use.

- *Ensure that the green spaces are integrated with the surrounding area including Route 116, and help bolster connectivity with the existing village area to the south.*

TO BE DETERMINED – This will depend on the project's various connections to other properties, which will be partially fleshed out at later stages of the review, and more fully finalized as development on abutting properties is proposed and reviewed. The southern connection to the Hinesburg Center Phase 2 project on the Lyman property is critical, and how the Haystack Crossing project designs the streetscape and the bridge (road and sidewalk components) will be important to consider during any preliminary plat review. The connection to Route 116 is another important review element, both on the subject property and via future development on the KB Real Estate property.

4. Residential Development Density

- *Provide the information listed in the staff report. Items discussed at the March 18 meeting included total acreage in the Village NW district, base and proposed residential units, proposed*

density bonus and means to achieve this (e.g., 25% small units, all units green home certified, 25% of overall energy use via renewable energy technology). Please put all of this in writing via another project narrative.

ACCOMPLISHED – This is addressed in the Applicant's May 9 narrative. If the Applicant intends to achieve residential density bonuses via Green Home Certification, the Applicant should disclose the likely program since section 2.9.2 #2 requires them to be, "regionally-based (i.e., for northern New England) and require third party review and certification (e.g., VT Builds Greener, LEED for Homes, etc.)." Detailed information is not needed for sketch plan review, but would be required for any preliminary plat review.

- *See the "Phasing & Scope" section below for municipal capacity issues.*

See item #6 below.

5. Lot Configuration Issues

- *Better demonstrate that the conceptual lot layout will allow for the development to take advantage of passive and/or active solar energy resources pursuant to section 3.6 (Zoning Regulations) and section 5.1.12 (Subdivision Regulations). Make lot layout revisions and identify off-lot locations for active solar energy generation as needed to comply with the standards.*

PARTIALLY ACCOMPLISHED – Lot layouts were not altered; however, the sketch plan now identifies a substantial off-lot location on the western portion of the property for active solar energy generation. Retaining access to the western portion of the property has always been important to allow for continued forest management. Ensuring a viable access is further highlighted by the proposed solar array. The Village NW district envisioned design and construction with solar energy resources in mind; however, section 3.6 clearly says passive and/or active solar. The Applicant has made a compelling case that the regulations have been addressed given the large portions of the project that are designed to take advantage of passive solar resources, the newly proposed solar array, and energy efficient construction. On the other hand, the Hinesburg Energy Committee has also made a compelling case that lot layout could be revised to better position more of the project for optimal passive solar gain.

6. Phasing & Scope

- *Provide information on the projected number of school aged children for the project – i.e., at completion and a rough trajectory as the project builds out. Coordinate with Planning & Zoning staff (and the Chittenden South Supervisory Union) to assess the capacity of the Hinesburg Community School and CVU High School with regard to increased enrollment from the project.*

ACCOMPLISHED – The May 9 narrative uses standard projections to come up with an estimate of 82 school-aged children at full build out. Bob Mason at the Chittenden South Supervisory Union (CSSU) confirmed that HCS and CVU are projected to have the capacity to absorb this many new students. We are working with CSSU staff to give them more information on Hinesburg's projected overall build out over the next 10 years, so that they can factor this into their long term projections.

- *Address what impacts the project will likely have on other municipal services (e.g., water, sewer, fire protection, first response, road and sidewalk maintenance, etc.). In other words, provide additional evidence to address section 5.1.11 (Subdivision Regulations) – i.e., whether the project will place an unreasonable burden on the municipality's ability to provide services.*

ACCOMPLISHED (PHASING NEEDED) – The May 9 narrative provides information on municipal services like water, sewer, fire protection, road and sidewalk maintenance. If built out all at once, clearly this project would place an unreasonable burden on the Town's ability to provide these

services. Should the Board grant sketch plan approval, phasing should be discussed further as part of the preliminary plat review. The Director of Building and Facilities (Rocky Martin) indicated that we will be in a better position to evaluate impacts on the municipal water system later this year after further analysis and permitting of the proposed new Town wells. He also indicated the need for a breakdown of the project wastewater/sewer design flows into categories since residential and non-residential uses have very different flow allocations. As the former Town Administrator noted in his February 3 memo, this project will likely trigger the need for more Town staff and capital equipment. Although not yet outlined in the capital budget and plan, the Road Foreman indicates that another highway truck (smaller and more versatile) will be needed to plow and sand village area streets. The phasing discussion to come should include an independent assessment of the Applicant's broad economic calculations regarding road and sidewalk maintenance, and the project's corresponding contribution to the Town's Grand List.

7. **Other Issues**
   - *Explain why the project does not include a senior housing component as part of the residential build out. Better yet, incorporate senior housing into the conceptual plans.*

   ACCOMPLISHED – The revised plan includes a senior/congregate housing component in the form of a "56-unit" building (Building G). Pursuant to section 3.6.3, density limits do not apply to congregate housing. In other words, if truly congregate, this senior housing does not count toward the residential density limit. Simply creating age-restricted apartments (e.g., independent senior living) is NOT congregate housing. Per section 10.1 (Zoning), congregate housing has, "… significant facilities and services specifically designed to meet the physical or social needs of older or handicapped persons." The Applicant should clarify how the proposed senior housing will conform to the congregate housing definition. If it is not congregate housing, apartment units elsewhere in the project can easily be reduced to conform residential density limits.

Additional Issues (not covered in April 2 memo):

8. **Access to Western Forest Land & Solar Array** – As noted in issue #5 (lot configuration), a viable access to the western portion of the property is necessary. Minor adjustments to lot configuration may be necessary to ensure access from the proposed roads - e.g., access via Town recreation field access/parking, or along the proposed northerly trail. This will be partially ironed out as part of the final review of the 2-lot subdivision (being reviewed separately) to create a lot for the Town recreation fields.

9. **Alley Roads** – The "alley" roads to create rear access for certain homes are an interesting design element, and are critical for several homes that front on the western portion of the central green. These roads do pose some challenges. Some create intersection offsets that do not comply with the 200' intersection offset requirement in section 6.1.6 (Subdivision Regulations). One in the northwestern portion of the project intersects with the main road at a corner that will likely create sight distance issues. The Board must feel comfortable issuing waivers to make these alley roads possible – perhaps based on the design features these roads allow, and an evidence of low traffic volume and slow speeds. Even with such waivers, at any preliminary plat review, the Applicant will need to address necessary sight distances and access for municipal fire department vehicles. Although further evaluation will be necessary, we feel comfortable that the project can make most of these alley roads safe and functional. We do feel that one of these is problematic enough to require more substantive redesign – i.e., the short east/west alley road between the two main streets, behind the nine townhouse units that are north of the eastern community park. This alley road intersects with the two north/south main streets only 130' south of what will be two very significant intersections.

10. **Route 116 Streetscape & Fill** – The sketch plan shows large buildings and associated rear parking lots along the Route 116 frontage. At the March 18 meeting, the project engineer (David Marshall, Civil Engineering Associates) indicated that the project will do only limited cutting and filling, and will strive to conform the engineering of the roads, buildings, and parking lots to the existing topography as much as possible. Both the Board and the Applicant need to keep this in mind, so that the sketch plan is not dependent on huge amounts of fill to create level platforms for the large buildings and parking areas shown.

11. **Town Recreation Field Subdivision Connection** – We believe all parties are aware, but we feel it important to emphasize that the subdivision to create a lot for the Town recreation fields is on a faster timetable than this larger Black Rock Construction project. We anticipate the Town will apply for final subdivision site plan approval for these recreational fields in the coming months. Minor lot line adjustments to the Black Rock Construction sketch plan could be necessary as a result of the other review.