

## SUBDIVISION & PUD SKETCH PLAN

<b>Owner:</b> Haystack Crossing, LLC. C/O Joseph Bissonette 12721 Route 116, Hinesburg VT 05461	<b>Applicant:</b> Blackrock Construction LLC. Benjamin Avery, 302 Mountain View Drive Suite 300, Colchester VT 05446
<b>Surveyor/Engineer:</b> Civil Engineering Associates, David Marshall T.J. Boyle Associates, Michael Buscher	<b>Property Tax Parcel:</b> 16-20-56.500 Approximately 84 acres

### **BACKGROUND**

Blackrock Construction is requesting Sketch Plan approval for development on lot # 4, parcel number 16-20-65.500, an 84 acre parcel created by a subdivision approval granted to Wayne and Barbara Bissonette, now Haystack Crossing LLC, on April 5, 2011. It is generally located south of Shelburne Falls Road and West of Route 116 recorded on Map slide # 191 A & B. That approval also created three other lots, lot #2 on the corner of 116 and Shelburne Falls Road which is also owned by Haystack Crossing LLC, lot #1 where Hinesburg Family Health is located, and lot #3 on the west, owned by B. Cairns Property LLC. Two roads were also created, which are a part of this lot #4, connecting it to the Shelburne Falls Road, one the “West side road – Haystack road”, and another Alfalfa Lane a limited access, right in and right out, road.

This project is proposed to consist of 79 single family homes, 40 townhouse-duplex units, 126 multi-family units and four commercial structures, one containing some of the living units upstairs. The project is proposed to be accessed via five roads. Beyond the two mentioned above, a third access on the official map and the major one for this subdivision is a proposed road opposite Riggs Rd. through the KB Real Estate LLC property. The fourth will be “the West side road” also on the official map, which will cross Patrick Brook, connect these two Village Districts and provide the alternate internal neighborhood corridor generally parallel to 116. A fifth access is also proposed at the brow of the Route 116 hill, between Riggs road and the Route 116, CVU intersection. The main roads and associated sidewalks are proposed to eventually be taken over by the Town.

All of the development proposed in this project will be served by town water and wastewater, and cannot be approved until water sufficient for the various uses can be supplied by the Town. No new connections are being allowed by the State until the municipal system’s water supply issues can be remedied.

The area proposed for development within the 84 acre parcel is bounded on the East by Route 116 and the former Riggs farmstead, now owned by KB Real Estate LLC (Brian & Kathy Busier), on the north and west by the buffer area and flood plain limits of two small mapped streams and on the south by the buffer area and or mapped floodplains for Patrick Brook.

Natural features are well identified and the entire proposed development area consists of mapped Agricultural Soils interspersed with several small wetland areas. The existence of the AG soils was recognized when this district was created and is not an issue. Outside of the area proposed for development are the aforementioned stream buffer areas and approximately 28 acres of woodland to the west of the proposed recreational fields. This western 28 acres of woodland is covered by a large flood plain – clay plain forest and steep ledges in the North West corner.

VELCO transmission lines and possibly the future gas pipeline will occupy the western seven acres of this area.

The Hinesburg Official Map shows that a variety of future public infrastructure is planned for the subject parcel given the important role it plays in the VG-NW district and the overall Village Growth Area. These elements include:

- a. A through road south from Shelburne Falls Road to Farmall Drive (West Side Road), including a connection to Route 116 opposite Riggs Road.
- b. Sidewalks along the aforementioned new roads as well as along the Route 116 frontage.
- c. Two different trails – one along a portion of the southern boundary line, and one providing access from here to the north.
- d. A community facilities area (approximately 2-3 acres) – possible uses mentioned on Official Map; Selectboard conversation during Official Map adoption centered on developed park/recreation facilities.

An application to revise to the April 5, 2011 subdivision approval was made on November 13, 2012 and to create an approximately ten acre lot, #5, in the western portion of this parcel, to be gifted to the Town for recreational fields. This application received sketch plan approval as a Planned Unit Development on December 18, 2012 and preliminary plat approval on April 16, 2013. This applicant and the Town are currently working to revise the configuration of that lot and a final plat application is expected soon.

The two concurrent reviews creates some logistical issues, i.e. two sets of plans being reviewed in the same time frame and the work in the Stream Buffer is on lot #4, not on the rec field parcel. Another complication is that access to this rec field lot may be necessary before final approval is granted for the larger project. The final location of roads within this larger development must meet the needs of not only the recreational field but the larger development as well, and their final configuration cannot be established until at least the preliminary plat has been approved.

Beyond the Town recreation field project, this proposal also has ramifications for the Hinesburg Center Phase Two project. It will be important for all parties (DRB, Black Rock, Hinesburg Center LLC) to ensure that the common access between these two large development projects is logically integrated.

It is very important in a review of a project of this scale, to prioritize the review process, first insuring that the application, as proposed, has no major flaws which require basic revision of the sketch plan. As well there are a myriad of other issues which must be addressed, some in sketch, and some during any preliminary application, and they can be addressed at later meetings.

**Major issues for discussion:**

**1) Road Layout**

- a) **Route 116 Access** - The access proposed at the brow of the Route 116 hill should be eliminated. This proposed access is in direct conflict with section 5.22.4 (Northern Gateway Area Design Guidelines) of the zoning which states that (1) the through function and capacity of this section of Route 116 (shall be retained) by limiting access points to a small number of key 4-way intersections reflected on the Town's Official Map, and currently envisioned at Commerce Street, Riggs Road, and Shelburne Falls Road. This is further supported by the purpose statement of the Village NW district and section 6.1.12 Access Plan from the subdivision regulations which state: A highway access plan for the tract of land to be subdivided shall provide for the minimum size and fewest number of safe points of access to any public highway ...”.

Planning for joint access to Route 116 (opposite Riggs Road) with the owners of the KB Real Estate LLC (Brian & Kathy Busier) parcel is very important. The Applicant has made efforts on this front, and staff recommends that they continue, in order to work out a shared access arrangement that complies with the Official Map while serving the interests of all three parties – e.g., Black Rock, KB Real Estate LLC, and the Town.

- b) **Additional Roadway Room** - Road design/review will happen later during preliminary plat review; however, the lot layout should anticipate more room for the roadway at key intersections in order to allow for innovative and efficient design. Four-way stops will work at some intersections, but the main through road intersections should consider roundabouts to keep traffic flowing, reduce speeds, and bolster pedestrian safety. Other potential roadway elements will also influence the lot layout, including on-street parking where appropriate, areas for public transit stops, sidewalks, snow removal, and bike lanes along the primary north/south road.
- c) **Connectivity to the south (Section 6.1.11, Subdivision)** – The road connection to the south across Patrick Brook is a critical connection between the Village and Village Northwest districts. Details will need to be worked out later, during preliminary plat review, but it will be important that the applicant the owner and or developer of the property immediately to the south to expedite the construction of this necessary connecting road.

**2) Mix & Distribution of Uses**

- a) **Concentration of Commercial Uses** – Concentrating all the commercial uses in just four buildings limits the ability to create a truly mixed-use extension of the existing village area pursuant to the growth area and Village NW district purpose statements (see sections 3.1 & 3.6, Zoning). Emphasizing commercial uses near the Route 116 corridor makes sense, so that retail businesses that need exposure can thrive. Retail uses that could do very well in the proposed buildings might include: barber shop or hair salon, UPS store, farm and garden supply, florist, fitness center, furniture store, year-round farmers market.

However, not all commercial uses are retail in nature, and some businesses will be better suited to their own stand-alone buildings on their own lots. When the Village Growth Area zoning was developed (2005-2009), business owners related the need for more opportunity as they expanded and started new. Many of Hinesburg's existing businesses actually fit this category, as do some that had to leave Hinesburg for lack of suitable space. Examples of previous and possible new businesses in this category include: Olivia's Croutons (left Hinesburg), Industrial Services Inc. (left Hinesburg), All Earth Renewables (left Hinesburg), Ben's Sandwich Shop (expansion someday), furniture assembly & woodworking studio, architect/engineering offices, graphic design professional office, daycare center, real estate office, optometrist. Add to this list any one of many Hinesburg home occupations that becomes successful enough to need their own space in a commercially zoned area. Markets drive development, but subdivision lot layout defines what is possible, and a project of this magnitude should include some flexible lots that are sized to allow the possibility of stand-alone commercial uses.

b) **Segregation of Uses**

- i) Commercial uses are concentrated on eastern side and should be better integrated into other areas in the overall project.
- ii) Multifamily residential uses are clustered and not spread throughout development.
- iii) Multifamily residential uses are most in need of green space amenities and are distant from them – they need access to them more than the single family lots.
- iv) The parking area in the SE corner of the project will probably never connect to the future road which will cross the Busier property since it would destroy a small, but usable lot that will be created on that property by the new road. This effectively isolates the commercial uses there and relocation may be desirable and could help integrate the uses better.
- v) There may not be sufficient parking available in the rec field complex to accommodate anticipated use – especially for large events. The proposed on-street parking along “Recreation Field Road” will help on this front, but more may be needed. Additional area near the recreation fields for grassed “overflow” parking could be one solution. Another could be to locate a non-residential use (e.g., offices) on the western side of the project that includes additional shared parking – i.e., less segregation of uses and shared parking efficiency.

3) **Green Space** - More green space is needed. The zoning regulations encourage build out to the maximum density (sections 2.4.2 & 4.5.6 #4), in the Village Growth Area by taking advantage of the substantial density bonuses described in section 2.9 & 5.21. They go on, however, to state (4.5.7) that provisions shall also be made for the preservation of greenspace and or the creation of suitable community facilities. Additional areas (purpose Village Area Design Standards section 5.22) should be provided for people to gather and interact such as community garden space and recreation areas.

- a) **Central Green & Official Map** - The proposed “central green” could be an attractive design element, but that's all it will be if configured as shown – i.e., as a long narrow rectangle approximately 130' wide. In order to accommodate the community facility element shown on the Official Map, this green space area needs to be reconfigured –

either wider or a different shape. The future community facility envisioned for this area was a sizable park, and might also include municipal buildings and facilities someday. As such, the space reserved needs to be of a suitable size and shape. For reference, the Town land where the police station, fire station, and future Town green are located is approximately 300' wide by 550' long (about 3.5 acres). Beyond the size/shape issue, the proposed central green is in a different location than that shown on the Official Map. This may require a minor revision to the Official Map.

- b) **Single-Family Dwelling Lot Size** - The individual lot sizes are approximately 25% larger than the Creekside development. If that smaller size is viable then slightly smaller lots could be proposed and the number of single family units could remain approximately the same, but with more shared greenspace for the rest of the development.
  - c) **Stormwater Detention Area** - Valuable greenspace is consumed by large development wide stormwater treatment areas and individual lot treatment (e.g., Low Impact Design practices) should be utilized as much as possible to reduce the area consumed by large stormwater collection/detention infrastructure.
  - d) **Community Gardens** – Per section 3.1 (Zoning), area for future community gardens should be incorporated in the sketch layout. This may be possible in flood plain areas outside of the stream buffers.
- 4) **Residential Development Density** - The applicant appears to be proposing the maximum possible residential density for this development; however no calculations were provided to clarify this. The lot layout will in part reflect the numbers of units possible and more information is needed to establish that the proposed density can realistically be obtained. The Applicant should provide the following information:
- Total acreage in the Village NW district portion of the property (using the existing zoning district lines with no offsets/adjustments).
  - Acreage within stream setback areas for the Village NW district portion of the property. These are “take out” areas for residential density calculation.
  - Residential density bonus requested – e.g., 50%, 75%, 120%.
  - Proposed avenue by which the required residential density bonus will likely be achieved pursuant to sections 2.9 and 5.21. Detailed information is not needed for the sketch plan review (this should come as part of the preliminary plat review), but some indication is needed of how the bonuses will be achieved.

## 5) Lot Configuration Issues

- a) **Solar Gain** - The proposed lot layout should be revisited to orient and configure as many lots as possible to contain structures that are able to take advantage of solar gain. This would entail wider East to West dimensions than now proposed. Per subdivision section 5.1.12 (Energy Conservation), the applicant must demonstrate to the DRB's satisfaction that overall project is sited and designed to take maximum advantage of solar gain. Taking “maximum advantage” of solar gain may be difficult given village area densities, street trees, and other design elements. If the DRB determines this standard has not been

met, the project should employ the substitutes noted – e.g., Green Home Certification or use of renewable energy technology. In this case, making room for off-lot, community net-metered solar energy generation is strongly recommended.

- b) **Recreation Field Component** – The recreation field approvals being pursued by the Town and the Bissonette family will deal with the specifics of that element. With that said, it should be noted that this proposed sketch plan does provide less space for the recreation area than shown in the preliminary plat review in 2013. The playground that was intended to keep youngsters on the rec field premises is proposed to be located across the street that serves the field making access more dangerous for children. There is also less space around and between the fields, and less room on the north side to ensure access for management of the western 28 acres of woodland. Providing room for such access to the remaining woodland is a requirement pursuant to section 6.12.3 of the Subdivision Regulations.
- 6) **Phasing & Scope** - Lot #4 is both the remainder of the original subdivision and as well it is a large portion of the Village NW district. Final approval of this project will effectively define a large portion of the area available for development the Village Growth Area – especially mixed use and non-residential development. It is a huge undertaking for a small town and review should be very thorough, so that we are assured that this development provides the business opportunities, job creation and economic development, housing, greenspaces and other amenities our regulations call for, in a design that isn't "anyplace USA". A large project such as this, very dependent on markets and other unknown factors could take many years to build out. While this may allow the town to adjust and bring the necessary services on line, the gateway to the town could become a massive construction site for years to come and phasing of the construction would help mitigate this. While any final decisions about phasing will occur after any sketch decision, ideally the sketch plan will anticipate phasing. As much as possible, the phases would be designed and constructed almost as "stand alone" components of the larger design, each reasonably complete in their own right, with appropriate mixes of residential units, commercial possibilities and greenspace so as this development progresses, it remains coherent, livable, and attractive for its residents and the larger town, from its inception to completion.

As noted by the Town Administrator (see 2/3/2014 letter), this project, along with other forthcoming and previously approved developments will trigger the need for additional Town staff and capital equipment. Phasing of this project will be an important conversation as the review moves forward to ensure that necessary infrastructure and municipal resources are available. Pay particular attention to section 4.8 of the Zoning Regulations. Staff is currently working with both the Chittenden South Supervisory Union and the applicant to assess impacts on projected school enrollment.

## 7) Stormwater

- a) **Adjacent Property Stormwater** - Stormwater flow from the adjacent KB Real Estate LLC lot and Route 116 itself currently sheet flows across this Haystack property to Patrick Brook. Stormwater plans submitted during the preliminary plat review must account for this, and sketch plan layout must accommodate this.

- b) **Stream/Flood Hazard** - The stream along the northwestern property line (emanating from Ballards Corner with headwaters near CVU high school) was channelized and diverted many years ago from its natural course, and has been held in place by occasional dredging and/or berming to drain the farmland. Our regulations do not allow for this manipulation to continue once the area is developed. The stream will slowly begin to establish a more meandering less incised watercourse within the buffer areas. While the stream will “naturalize” within the buffer area, west of the Village NW, Agricultural district line, it clearly is not within its historic location, which is vaguely visible on aerial photos, basically coursing southerly through the eastern area of the proposed recreational fields. A wastewater pump station is proposed at the low point of the land, in the proximity of this old water course. Recent extreme flood events, coupled with the eventual naturalization of this stream appear to make a “blowout” into the previous course possible. Either hydrological and hydromorphological studies should be conducted that confirm this is not a concern or the sketch lot layout has to take this possibility into consideration.
- c) **Low Impact Design** - As noted above, Low Impact Development practices should be incorporated to maximize on-lot infiltration and reduce overall stormwater volumes and the need for very large detention areas. The small wetland areas could be incorporated into the overall stormwater and green space planning.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Erb and Alex Weinhagen,  
cc: Applicant