



## VILLIAGE STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO DRB

JANUARY 4, 2015

Attn: Hinesburg DRB Staff

### RE: **Revised Haystack Crossing Sketch plan from Dec 2 2014**

In the last 3 years Hinesburg town planners and residents have seen the design and build out of some very large projects in the Village. Hinesburg LLC Phase 1, Hannaford and now Haystack Crossing, Hinesburg LLC Phase 2 and shortly NRG's proposed build out of their site.

Over this time the Village Steering Committee has reviewed and submitted feedback based on "Smart Growth" design principles with an eye toward livability, walkability, sense of place (in terms of scale and design) while keeping one eye on ensuring economic vitality.

To date, each of these projects have been fraught with ambiguous regulations discussions, no clear understanding of what the true "vision" for the Hinesburg Village Core is, and no 'working plan' of what the town and residents envision that all committees, boards and commissions can work from. As such, many of these projects resulted in less-than expected results (Hinesburg LLC Phase 1 build out problems, to legal issues with Hannaford). We also have the ongoing issues of water and sewer supply as well as the ability for police, fire and our schools to absorb the influx of development that have to be sorted out.

As you know, the Planning Commission is reviewing and updating our Town Plan to try and address some the issues and concerns that have been encountered to date. The Village Steering Committee therefore requests we put a moratorium on reviewing all large PUD project reviews (20+ housing units) put in front of the DRB until the new Town Plan and regulations are updated and you can base your findings on these new regulations. If a moratorium is not possible, we should review our options to use interim regulations (or some other method) to allow us some measure to re-review against the new regulations when they come online. The plans before us will have a large (either or good or bad) economic and quality of life impacts for the residents of Hinesburg for generations to come; that holding until we have updated regulatory guidance, is worth it.

We understand this may not be in the prevue of the DRB to decide on, but wanted to vocalize our general concerns. Also, this is a general point and not necessarily specific to this particular plan.

### **With that however; here are our latest findings on the latest Haystack Crossing Sketch Plan:**

The VSC looks for every opportunity to remove "boxed" parking lots where feasible. In previous meetings, we championed the use of 'access roads' that paralleled route 116 to accomplish this goal and allow for more vitality to be seen from 116 while looking for parking needs to be met.



# VILLIAGE STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO DRB

JANUARY 4, 2015

We do like the mix of residential and commercial along 116 in the latest revision, however would encourage a revision of the northern **commercial** parking lot to leverage access road concept in order to enhance the sight line from 116 and soften the northern parking lot. We'd also encourage creative design on the interior of the plan as well to limit the number, size and scope of "box parking".

Below is a conceptual rendering of the 'boxed: parking lot vs. linear lane parking.





## VILLIAGE STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO DRB

JANUARY 4, 2015

Second, our current Official Map calls for the creation of the “west side road” which we do see accommodated in the submitted plan. We noticed per the submitted Narrative from Blackrock and subsequent staff discussions at public meetings, the concerns around the flexible ‘option’ to allow building 14 to become residential only if economic conditions dictate. We agree this is a difficult position as we want to maximize mixed commercial/residential but also do not want to have vacant commercial space either. Is it possible to have a condition for building 14 that the first floor commercial space can be utilized as residential if economic needs require, but must be constructed in such a way to easily revert to commercial use when economic trends allow? We feel more discussion on this topic is needed.

Further, we’d like to see Building 14 (Potential mixed use building) and Building 18 (Senior Housing) be broken down into multiple buildings (or at least be designed creatively to appear as such) and not have such a large footprint relative to the other buildings in the plan. These larger buildings do not seem to fit in with the rest of the development along the “west side road”. We feel this better aligns with a more consistent Village design as per regulation 5.22 (5).

Finally, there has been ongoing debate as to storm water ponds and other “Infrastructure” being dropped into the adjoining Agriculture zone in order to support the densities being proposed in the various PUD plans put in front of the Board (Haystack included). The Village Steering Committee recommends that this practice not be allowed. Supporting infrastructure should be retained within the district it is supporting (even if that means lessening density) otherwise we’ll end up with our abutting Agriculture districts being a patchwork of storm ponds and solar farms.

In conclusion, the Village Steering Committee recommends the following changes to the current Sketch Plan:

1. Return the access parking strip that runs between the eastern commercial and route 116 as we recommend in the earlier plan
2. Further discussion is needed as to Building 14’s label as “Potential” mixed use. Mixed Use is the key driver of this area and want to see that maintained. However, we also want to avoid vacant commercial space.



## VILLIAGE STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO DRB

JANUARY 4, 2015

3. Break down larger footprint buildings 14 and 18 to be visually consistent with the size, scope and pattern along the west side road as per 5.22 (5)
4. Not allow supporting infrastructure to fall into the agriculture district area (i.e. storm ponds and solar fields).

Respectfully,

Hinesburg Village Steering Committee