



VILLIAGE STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO DRB

DECEMBER 21, 2014

To: Hinesburg DRB Staff

RE: **Hinesburg LLC Phase 2 sketch plan**

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.

With that however; here are our latest findings on the latest Hinesburg Center LLC Phase 2 Plan:

This sketch Plan, while sticking "to the letter of the regulations" is missing a vital part of the regulations which is "To fit in with the overall sense of place with the town". Phase 1 has received much feedback from the residents about being too dense and that the design sense of place" is not matching that of Hinesburg or a Vermont Village. Therefore to use the design of Phase 1 as the "benchmark" for continuing that design into Phase 2 would be a mistake. This current plan is lacking greenspace and has buildings literally encased in parking lots. Our Town vision is not for an urban center, but a small



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town Vermont Village. Our technical concerns against the regulations matches those as put forth to staff in the document: [hinesburgcenter-2-sketch-report-121114](#)

We feel the town needs to engage with the developer to help stress the importance of developing something that keeps in step with our vision of a “Vermont village” and not an urban streetscape as (many residents have expressed) has been built in Phase 1.

Finally, there has been ongoing debate as to storm water ponds and other ‘Infrastructure” being dropped into the Agriculture districts in order to support the densities being proposed in the various PUD plans put in front of the Board (Hinesburg LLC Phase 2 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. Review of this project put on hold until such time, the new Town Plan regulations are implemented.
2. We concur with the findings provided to staff by Alex and Peter on Dec 11 2014 titled: [hinesburgcenter-2-sketch-report-121114](#) , specifically on lack of useful greenspace for some of the multi-unit buildings. (Building surrounded by parking lot)
3. Not allow supporting infrastructure to fall into the agriculture district area (i.e. storm ponds and solar fields)

Respectfully,
Hinesburg Village Steering Committee