

**Town of Hinesburg**  
**Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**April 26, 2023**  
*Approved May 10, 2023*

**Members Present:** Lenore Budd, Barbara Forauer, John Kiedaisch, Denver Wilson

**Members Absent:** Dan Baldwin, Nicholas Chlumecky, James Donegan, Marie Gardner, Alison Lesure

**Also:** Mitch Cypes (Development Review Coordinator)

**Public Present (In person):** Rod Francis & Brandy Saxton (PlaceSense Consultants)

**Public Present (via Zoom):** Maggie Gordon

Denver W. called the meeting to order at approximately 7:04 PM.

**1. Agenda Changes:**

None.

**2. Public Comment for Non-agenda Items:**

None.

**3. Minutes of April 12, 2023 meeting:**

The minutes were reviewed with several edits suggested, however, there wasn't a quorum to approve.

**4. Regulation Modernization Discussion:**

There was discussion about the difference between the changes being proposed by *PlaceSense* and the potential (required) changes that may result from pending State legislation and how to best present this information to the town. Rod F. noted the changes being proposed are designed to enable more housing to be built, with more variety to choose from (i.e., size, price-point, etc.).

Rod F. said that Hinesburg's current regulations define density in terms of base and bonus. He said that a developer can propose a project and simply seek to build to the base density, or they can deliver on key design or policy issues (energy efficiency, perpetually affordable housing units, etc.), and earn bonuses to increase the density allowed. He added that no zoning district can meet the state target (5 dwelling units per acre) with the base density allowances as they are written today. There are a few zoning districts (Village, Village NW and Village NE) that exceed the target of 5 dwelling units per acre, but only if density bonuses are utilized. A map of the village zoning district was shown with different configurations of development potential in varying districts, to compare massing and arrangements of structures.

Brandy S. highlighted the proposed changes include elimination of the base density approach and removal of density bonuses, and increasing the allowable starting density to 5 dwelling units per acre. She noted a recommendation to have a sliding scale of density that is derived from the minimum lot size. As a result of the pending state legislation, anywhere a single dwelling unit is allowed, a duplex can be built, doubling the density. Brandy S. said that looking forward, there aren't many large pieces of land left in the Village, so the town will see smaller scale projects (in-fill), that could be more prevalent in the coming years.

There was some discussion about properties around the village, and how they could be impacted by the proposed regulation changes versus the existing regulations. Rod F. added that over time, by law (the

pending state regulations), the town will have to allow 5 dwelling units per acre and if that is the only thing that happens, the differentiation between the village and other residential districts will slowly disappear (i.e., notion that the Village should be more densely settled). Lenore B. confirmed that the increase to 5 dwelling units per acre is only in areas of sewer, and that *PlaceSense* is recommending a higher allowable density in the village, to encourage development to radiate out from the center of town. Rod F. responded to a comment made by Barbara F. that just because someone is allowed to do something, doesn't mean they will. Rod F. added that he has seen in a large number of towns throughout Vermont, the current market trend is to buy adjacent parcels of land and consolidate them.

Barbara F. asked about the capacity of the sewer and water systems. Rod F. said that the legislation is requiring towns to increase density, without considering whether a town can actually support the increase in development. He also noted that there is more government funding available for these types of projects than there has been in years, but it's likely not enough.

Smaller amendment changes being proposed:

- It is required that the purpose statement include an objective of trying to achieve equal treatment of housing and fair housing, including manufactured and multi-unit homes.
- Add Emergency Shelters as special use (need a site plan).
- A two-unit dwelling (duplex) is allowed anywhere a single dwelling unit is allowed.
- Density bonuses in the village growth area are removed.
- Three and four dwelling units are allowed in the Rural Residential 1, Rural Residential 2 and Agricultural districts.
- Removed Planned Unit Development (PUD) as a type of use because it is a form of development.
- Parking spaces change if the state legislation passes.
- ADU review process can't be cumbersome, and should be approved by zoning permit.
- Change language pertaining to mobile home parks, and how to modify the zoning requirements to reflect constraints of property, space, etc. Cannot discriminate against manufactured homes.
- Update definitions is an ongoing part of the project.

#### **5. Other Business: News, announcements, correspondence, etc.**

- Invitation to the Water Quality and Bat seminar forwarded from Kate Kelly.
- Wildlife presentation by Sue Morse.
- VT Land Trust is looking for volunteers to help plant trees along Lewis Creek (off Baldwin Road).

Denver W. **adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:05 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Danielle Peterson, Planning & Zoning Administrative Assistant