

Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
March 13, 2024

Approved on March 27, 2024

Members Present: Becky Alford (via Zoom), Nicholas Chlumecky (via Zoom), Barbara Forauer, Lenore Budd, John Kiedaisch (via Zoom), Alison Lesure, John Little, Denver Wilson

Members Absent: James Donegan

Staff: Alex Weinhausen (Director of Planning & Zoning)

Public Present via Zoom: Jim Jarvis, Margaret McNurlan, Jennifer Decker

Denver W. **called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 PM**

1. Agenda Changes: None.

2. Public Comments for non-agenda Items: None.

3. Minutes from February 28, 2024 meeting:

Denver W. **made a motion, seconded by Lenore B., to approve the minutes as amended from the 2/28/24 meeting as written. The motion passed 6-0.**

4. Zoning Administrator Nominations:

a. Per 24 V.S.A. § 4448 – Pursuant to State Statute, the Zoning Administrator (ZA) is nominated by the Planning Commission and appointed by the Selectboard.

b. Consider nominating Jim Jarvis (current ZA) for another three-year term as ZA:

The current ZA, Jim Jarvis, is completing his first term and was appointed by the Selectboard in April 2021. Alex W. said Jim has done a great job in this role (as explained in a memo available on the Town Website) and recommended that the Planning Commission (PC) nominate him for a second term so the Selectboard (SB) can appoint him at one of their upcoming meetings.

John K. asked Jim how his first term as ZA was and Jim said that his experience has been a positive one overall. He explained there have been some contentious circumstances over the years, but that's the nature of the work. He said the learning curve was steep in the beginning, but he has settled into the role and would be happy to serve a second term in the position.

Denver W. **made a motion, seconded by Alison L., to nominate Jim Jarvis as Zoning Administrator for another term. The motion passed 8-0.**

c. Consider nominating Alex Weinhausen (current Acting ZA) to remain Acting ZA:

Alex W. explained that he has served as Acting ZA for a long time, which means in the event the ZA is absent, on leave, or the position is vacant, Alex is able to fill in. Alex W. said he has tried not to step in as the Acting ZA if Jim is out of the office unexpectedly or briefly, and would only do so in the event of an urgent zoning need, long-term absence or job vacancy. Alex added that the Planning & Zoning office is very collaborative, and works well together.

Denver W. **made a motion, seconded by John L., to nominate Alex W. to be Acting ZA. The**

motion passed 8-0.

5. Community Vision Survey Results:

a. Review & discuss community survey results:

The Commissioners resumed their review and discussion of the community survey results (they left off at question #20).

Alex shared that the majority of the survey respondents live in the RR1 zoning district and that over half of the survey respondents have lived in Hinesburg for over 20 years, which corresponds to census data (household tenure). Alex noted that Front Porch Forum is the most used resource for people to find out what's happening in town. Alex said that 30% of respondents were in the 65+ age range and very few respondents in the 24 and under age range, which is not actually indicative of the actual population. Alex shared that two-person households were the majority of survey respondents, which corresponds to census data (although there is a fairly large margin of error in census data). He said the vast majority of respondents own their property. It was noted that a quarter of respondents did not answer the household income question. There was also some discussion that the median household income increased substantially between the 2010 and 2020 censuses.

Several Commissioners requested to see the data filtered by different categories (i.e., age, location, etc.) and there was subsequent discussion about observations and impressions.

Lenore B. asked to see a comparison of where respondents live and how they answered the question about the creation of more housing in their own neighborhood (question #8). The responses suggest that the people living in the Village Growth Area (VGA) are more supportive of housing creation in their neighborhood than those living outside of the VGA.

Jennifer D. shared some of her observations of the survey results. She said she was struck that the survey was mostly filled out by people who make six figures; that 64% of respondents think Hinesburg is either not headed in a positive direction or they are unsure; and 94% of respondents think Hinesburg is unprepared for challenges in the coming years. She said that protecting natural resources seems like an important value of the town.

It was noted the top 3 challenges facing Hinesburg in the coming years will be controlling property taxes, managing growth and development, and tied for 3rd place was providing adequate and affordable housing and controlling traffic.

Alex shared that he is trying to engage Hinesburg Community School (HCS) and Champlain Valley Union High School (CVU) students in this discussion and reached out to both schools.

John K. asked for the results related to conservation and land-use be filtered by age and there was additional discussion on how that information was potentially skewed based on the age of the

respondents.

There was additional discussion about the survey results (see Media Factory recording), the Commissioners impressions, and further implications of the data.

Margaret M. said that getting input from the focus groups would probably be a more valuable way to get data, rather than thinking of additional survey questions.

Alex said the Commissioners should continue to think about how to reach folks that didn't complete the survey. Becky A. commented that the Hinesburg Resource Community Center (HCRC) could be an untapped resource for reaching folks who may not have filled out the survey. John K. wondered if visiting the Mobile Home Parks (MHP) in town could be a better way to engage residents in this discussion. Alex said he is hoping to host neighborhood meetings when the weather is warmer, to reach folks who haven't participated in the survey to add to the data that has already been collected.

Denver W. suggested this discussion continue to another meeting and Alex W. said reviewing the individual comments is an important step that needs to happen.

6. Town Plan Update:

a. Community Forums – scheduling and topics:

Alex said that community forums are valuable and help to create a sense of ownership among the community. Lenore B. wondered whether a topic of interest could be the nuts and bolts of municipal finance and how it impacts taxes. Alex said the forums will most likely be scheduled in May and the beginning of June. The topics need to be finalized at the next PC meeting so the forums can be advertised.

b. Town meeting tabling - how did it go:

Denver shared some thoughts about his experience at town meeting, and noted that several people shared concerns about rush hour traffic, managing growth, and the need for ball courts (i.e., pickle ball).

c. Town committee meetings:

John L. met with the Recreation Committee. Denver spoke to Phil Pouech about the Town Plan. Becky A. met with the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (DEIB) committee.

7. Other Business:

a. Planning news and announcements:

Alex W. shared Act 250 decisions are still pending on Hinesburg Center 2 and Haystack. The SB is meeting on 4/3/24 to discuss the RR1 Revisions and it would be helpful to have some PC Commissioners attend.

There was discussion about the sale of and potential development of the Automotion Lot (Quonset Hut) and Lot 15.

The Town is doing a crosswalk study to improve the crosswalk at the top of Silver Street and to create a new crosswalk at the Mechanicsville/Rt. 116 intersection. The recommendation was

made to install a rapid flashing beacon at the school crosswalk which will happen once funding is available.

b. Agenda items for the March 27, 2024 meeting:

- Continue review of the community survey results and review individual comments received.
- Finalize community forum topics.

Denver W. **adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:25 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,
Danielle Peterson
Planning and Zoning Administrative Assistant