

Town of Hinesburg
Development Review Board Meeting Minutes
October 3, 2023
Approved October 17, 2023

Members Present: Dennis Place, Dick Jordan (via Zoom), Jonathan Slason, Ted Bloomhardt, John Lyman, Jeff Daugherty (Alternate), Branden Martin (via Zoom after minutes), and Mike Webb (via Zoom after Parkinson).

Members Absent: None

DRB Staff: Mitchel Cypes, Development Review Coordinator

Applicants Present: Peter Parkinson, Amy Demetrowitz, Chris Cook, Bill Maclay, Julia Ginorio, Tyler Labrie and Bart Frisbie.

Public Present: Ross Stirewalt, Jim Donovan (via Zoom), Scott Stirewalt, Carl Bohlen (via Zoom), David Blittersdorf, Kate Kelly (via Zoom), Javier Garcia, Merrily Lovell (via Zoom), David Nagel (via Zoom), Margaret McNurlan (via Zoom) and Dale Wernhoff (via Zoom).

Dennis P. **called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 PM.**

1. Agenda Changes: None

2. Review minutes of the September 5, 2023 meeting: John L. **made a motion, and** Jon. S **seconded, to approve the September 5, 2023 minutes as amended. The motion passed 6-0.**

3. Peter Parkinson - Sketch Plan - 05-01-13.110: *For a two-lot subdivision to create a 4-acre buildable lot from a 66.3-acre property located at 83 Maple Tree Lane, on the north side of Pond Road in the Rural Residential 1 Zoning District.*

The Applicant, Peter Parkinson, said he would like to subdivide his parents land (a 66.3-acre property), and create a 4-acre lot for himself. Ted B. confirmed that a driveway exists to serve the houses already built, and Peter P. confirmed that was the case. Jon S. asked if there would be any other major changes to the area uphill from the proposed new lot (#4), if the Applicant does build, and Peter P. confirmed there would not be. When Ted B. asked what the driveway elevation was, Peter couldn't provide an exact number, but said he could drive a small car up without any issue. Peter asked if he could receive a waiver for requiring a full survey, and just provide a survey for the new lot, and the Board agreed that was acceptable. Dick J. confirmed the Applicant's intent to keep the building envelope in the designated area (as shown on the map viewed at the meeting), and Peter confirmed his intent. Mitch C. shared that the proposed new lot (#4) used to be a gravel pit and had been pretty much leveled off. Mitch C. also reiterated the need for additional information (slope grades and elevation of access) in the next step of the review process. There was some discussion about the nature of the soil, and the expectation that there will be infiltration of stormwater, as well as whether any of the steep slopes were ledge.

Dennis P. opened the hearing to the Public. Hearing none.

Dennis P. **made a motion, and** Ted B. **seconded, to close the public hearing and direct staff to write conditions of approval.** The motion passed 7-0.

4. Windy Ridge (Champlain Housing Trust & Maclay Architects) - Sketch Plan - 16-20-56.800: *For a 77-unit subdivision by utilizing a 10.0-acre property and a 32.0-acre property, located between Riggs Road and CVU Road on the east side of VT Route 116 in the Village Northeast Zoning District.*

Amy D., Chief Operating Officer of Champlain Housing Trust (CHT), explained that Jan Blomstrann offered to donate this land to CHT with the conditions that the development included affordable housing and alternative energy. Amy D. noted that CHT will incorporate roof top solar as much as possible, and that CHT has been in conversations with VGS (formerly VT Gas) about the possibility of a community geothermal system on site. Amy D. explained that CHT will be the master developer of the site, and in collaboration with Habitat for Humanity (HH), will build the affordable homes for sale; Sterling Construction will build the market-rate homes for sale; and Evernorth (EN) will develop affordable rental housing. Amy D. explained one of the project goals is to create a mixed income neighborhood, that will include options for ownership and renting. She further explained in addition to the market-rate homes, there will be shared equity homes which will be perpetually affordable (targeted at folks below 100% of the median income and will remain affordable at every subsequent sale). There will also be a mixed income rental component, developed in partnership between CHT and EN (a non-profit tax credit syndication partner), that will primarily serve households below 60% of the median income, with the potential to convert to shared equity ownership in the future.

Amy D. said that because of the nature of the project (having a number of partners involved), the concept of phasing is interesting as they could theoretically have a number of construction projects happening at the same time – unlike with a single developer following construction financing and speculation according to demand. She added they could be constrained by their own ability to build, in addition to the Town's ability/infrastructure build-out, and they are aware there may be constraints on school capacity, but there are on-going conversations regarding these issues happening. Amy D. noted this is the plan for a full build-out. As this is the beginning stage of the review process, she noted the importance of getting this plan in front of the community and the Development Review Board (DRB), and acknowledged there are a number of components that are likely to change. She noted the biggest issue they would like feedback on is the through-road between the two discreet areas of development, as this will be very costly to build.

Bill Maclay (Maclay Architects, Founding Principal), reviewed the topography of the site; the steep slopes and a ridge going east/west, dividing the land into south-facing and north-facing slopes, which is the basis for the master plan. He noted there is a lot of beautiful land, but much of it is not developable because of wetlands and steep slopes. He acknowledged that as a sketch plan there are aspects of the project that are still undecided (i.e., units & bedrooms), but the basic layout with two greens on both sides of the ridge that create clustered housing, that make it feel like a New England village, is at the heart of what the development concept is.

There was discussion regarding the portion of the project slated for the area to the west of NRG (South Meadow Neighborhood), along Riggs Road. It was acknowledged that new plans were provided to Staff about a ½-hour before the meeting started and that these new plans were then provided to the DRB and placed on the Town website. The plans show a configuration with townhouses, which is still being decided upon. Chris Cook, Project Manager from Maclay Architects, described the vision for the area, which included some units having walk-out basements, some having garages underneath the home, and some may have on-grade parking – depending on the slopes, which she added are a bit deceiving. She added that the concept is to keep some green space open that connects to the units, so there are “yards”. Jon S. asked about the number of parking spaces per unit, and if they could describe the community center in more detail. Amy D. explained the community room as a space (for a meeting or party) for the residents of that portion of the site (which are all envisioned to be rental units except

for 8 condos that will be for sale). Julia G., from Engineering Ventures, described the breakdown of the parking spaces depicted on the drawing, which is subject to change depending on whether there are units with garage parking included or not.

There was discussion regarding the other portions of the project (North Meadow Neighborhood & North Road Neighborhood, as described on the sketch plan drawings), including the possible configurations and parking options; the building height in relation to fire protection; the connection between the “South Meadow” and “North Meadow” neighborhoods – it was acknowledged that what is shown on the plans currently are placeholders, rather than actual plans.

The sidewalks through a portion of the project (North Road Neighborhood) are elevated and across the road from the homes. Dick J. said he felt having the sidewalks in front of the houses, as opposed to across the street, made more sense to him. Ted B. reminded Dick J. that it was an 8-foot-wide rec path, and not just a sidewalk. John L. said that adding a cut every so often from the road to the sidewalk, that could help designate where people should cross.

The child-care center was discussed, and Amy D. noted that they have started conversations and will give it every effort then can to make it happen.

Dennis P. expressed concern about having dead-end roads, and stressed the importance to connect them. There were other Board Members that shared this concern and interest in seeing them connected. Part of this discussion also touched on emergency vehicle access, and the options for ensuring accessibility.

Jon S. asked about the dimensions and length of the road. Julia G. said the road would be designed to meet the town standard (and low-impact development), and noted the plans show 20-foot-wide roadway with an 8-foot multiuse path, and about 1500 feet of road length between Riggs Rd. to CVU Rd. It was noted the street widths in Creekside are 24-foot wide, with street parking informally allowed. Mitch C. said roads are built narrower than in the past for traffic calming. John L. commented that narrow roads present issues for delivery trucks riding over curbs and on grass. Dennis P. asked about whether the road was fully connected between the North Meadow and South Meadow neighborhoods, whether the traffic would be problematic. Julia G. noted the section of road that is not connected on the plans is the most expensive portion of the road to construction, but probably a desired outcome to have the roads connected. Jon S. said he would prefer the road to be connected, and Dick J. agreed with the importance of connectivity between the neighborhoods, and for emergency access.

The intersection at Riggs Road and Rt. 116 was discussed, and how it could potentially be a joint project between Windy Ridge and Haystack Crossing. The Applicant was encouraged to coordinate with the developers of Haystack. Mitch C. said that he had corresponded with Chris Clow of V-Trans, who said the Applicant would need an 1111 permit from V-Trans.

Mitch C. noted there is a Windy Ridge Road in Monkton that has a Hinesburg mailing address.

During the lot layout discussion, Mitch C. mentioned that it might be worth also requesting a waiver for side yard setback and Bill M. said that was their intent. Julia G. noted it might be best to show a building envelope on the plans, rather than a specific home design, as that will depend on who is constructing the home (HH or Sterling Construction).

There was discussion about wetlands and stream setbacks and buffers, and where on the property would be impacted. The project will need a state wetland impact permit for a portion of the roadway. Mitch C. shared a comment from the Hinesburg Conservation Commission (CC) regarding the village stream setbacks and said it would be good to add to the project maps. Jon S. added the village stream setback is 75-feet, so the project should be mindful of that. John L. asked what happens to the wetland stream when it gets closer to Rt. 116, and Julia G. noted that the Wetland Biologist confirmed that when the stream interacts with the trapezoid of the road, it's no longer considered a wetland. There is a culvert under Rt. 116, and Julia G. confirmed there was water flowing thru it. Mitch C. said the Board might want to do a site visit, and check out where the stream starts and ends.

Amy D. said they are looking to put together funding requests for the rental side by late winter or early spring of next year. She said the goal is to be built out within five years, but hopefully sooner. Ted B. said two large factors they will need to work through will be schools and their capability to accommodate these residents, and water availability. Jon S. added that the school impact study they saw for Haystack only highlighted census data averages, which seem unlikely for the population this project is likely to serve, so having some comparable would be helpful for this review – specifically how many students per household are typically occupying the units.

Dennis P. noted that the DRB did not review all the Staff comments and opened the hearing to the Public. He requested that the comments be limited to the items discussed at this meeting.

Ross Stirewalt, an adjacent property owner at 182 CVU Road, voiced several concerns about the project, specifically allowing construction so close to streams and wetland buffers.

Jim Donovan, adjacent property owner, asked about the three lots at the top of the hill behind NRG Systems and Mitch confirmed they are not part of this development plan. He also suggested the project try to keep as much of the forest area in one block as possible. The Applicant confirmed that these lots have been conserved.

Scott Stirewalt, suggested there are portions of this project that can accomplish the development the Town wants, but there are sections that impact wetlands and shouldn't be developed in. He also believes the through-road (from CVU Rd. to Riggs Rd.) will be used as a short-cut, especially since making a left hand turn at the stoplight can be hard.

Carl Bohlen, on behalf of the Affordable Housing Committee, supports this project to bring more affordable housing to Hinesburg. He mentioned the Housing Needs Assessment and bringing this number of perpetually affordable units to the town will be a huge benefit to the residents.

David Blittersdorf, abutting landowner/former founder of NRG, came to support the project. He said he believes the amount of parking spaces in this design is excessive and he would like to see a maximum standard for parking of half a space per unit (fossil fuel, carbon emissions, etc.). He would like to see double the density allowed for housing, instead of parking. He believes Hinesburg can be a much more walkable community.

Kate Kelly, on behalf of the Hinesburg Conservation Commission, asked for specific information regarding the wetland delineations for the project. She noted that even though the State defines a wetland as class 3, and not jurisdictional for them, that doesn't mean it doesn't still do important things for the environment. She said she would prefer to not have curbs, which limits the movement

of small animals.

Dennis P. **made a motion**, and John L. **seconded, to continue to the public hearing to October 17th**. The motion passed 7-0.

5. Extension Request:

- **Alison & John Powers – Sketch Plan – 16-20-14.100:** A six-month extension request for a 2-lot subdivision of a property located at 125 Place Road East. Approval was issued on 4/18/2023 and will expire on 10/18/2023 - 1st request. Dennis P. **made a motion**, and Jon S. **seconded, to approve the six-month extension request**. The motion passed 7-0.

6. News/Announcements/Correspondence

- Mitch C. shared that a minor amendment for the wastewater treatment facility occurred that does not affect the capacity.
- The only hearing scheduled on the next DRB meeting agenda is Windy Ridge.

7. Decision Deliberation:

- **Austin Properties LLC – Sketch Plan – 20-50-10.100:** To increase the number of residential units on a multifamily residential property from 24-units to 26-units on a 4.97-acre property located on Village Heights Road, which is on the east side of Mechanicsville Road in the Village Zoning District. *Public hearing closed on September 5, 2023.* **Motion by Ted B. to approve the Haystack Sketch Plan decision as written. Second by Jon L. Passed 7-0.** Branden abstaining.
- **Ken Martin - Conditional Use Home Occupation - 17-21-03.000:** For a business providing bus transportation services (and the on-site parking of business vehicles), located at 64 Major Street in the Shoreline Zoning District. *Public hearing closed on September 5, 2023.* Dennis P. **made a motion**, and John L. **seconded, to approve the conditional use home occupation decision as amended.** Motion passed 7-0, with Ted B. abstaining.

Dennis P. adjourned the meeting at 9:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Danielle Peterson
Hinesburg Planning & Zoning Administrative Assistant