

Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
June 28, 2023
Approved July 12, 2023

Members Present: Lenore Budd, Nicholas Chlumecky (via Zoom), James Donegan, Barbara Forauer (via Zoom), Denver Wilson

Members Absent: Dan Baldwin, John Kiedaisch, Alison Lesure

Staff: Alex Weinhausen (Director of Planning & Zoning)

Public Present (In person): Meg Handler, John Little, Michael Palmer

Public Present (via Zoom): Margaret McNurlan

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

1. Agenda Changes:

None.

2. Public Comment for Non-agenda Items:

None.

3. Minutes from June 14, 2023 meeting:

Denver W. **made a motion, seconded by** Lenore B., **to approve the minutes from the 6/14/23 meeting with the proposed changes. The motion passed 5-0.**

4. Public Hearing – Proposed Revisions to the Zoning & Subdivision Regulations

Alex W. explained that the public hearing for the proposed zoning and subdivision regulation changes began at the June 14th Planning Commission meeting, and was continued to the June 28th meeting for additional public comments and feedback.

a. New public comments and questions:

- Michael Palmer – Explained that he didn't receive the notice from the Town (dated 6/7/23) regarding the proposed changes until June 15th, and missed the first public hearing meeting. He added that he owns 39-acres in the Northeast corner on the west side of Richmond Road (with additional acreage in Richmond). He said he didn't know why rezoning needed to happen now, and added the land has been in his family for a hundred years or so. He asked how he could access the public comments that were submitted. He said the land is in the State's current-use program, and asked how the rezoning might impact that. Alex W. confirmed the zoning changes would not impact his ability to participate in the state program and the forest management plan they have currently. Michael asked for more notice from the town going forward if there are additional changes proposed, as he doesn't live in Hinesburg full-time. The Commission provided rationale for why these changes are being proposed, and how the proposed changes could impact his land (i.e., subdivision potential). Alex W. explained that property taxes are not based on development potential, and the Commission doesn't affect assessment and taxation, only land-use.
- Andrea Morgante – Strongly supports the recommendations made by the Hinesburg Conservation Committee, and urged collaboration between the two commissions (Planning & Conservation). Andrea suggested the "donut hole" on Buck Hill Road is unnecessary. She

reiterated the importance of connectivity and suggested that the conservation design standards be applied to Res-4. She reminded the Commission of the issues along Pond Road and Mt. Pritchard, specifically the impact to the water quality of Lake Iroquois. James D. reminded Andrea that the conservation design standards will be applied to the Res-4 district. Alex W. provided an explanation of why the “donut hole” was proposed.

- Meg Handler – Urged the Town and its commissions to start thinking beyond individual landowners (and their wants/needs) and to think more about the collective needs of future generations and wildlife who will also live on this land. She read an excerpt from a book called “Our Better Nature”, that highlighted the decline/extinction of many species. She noted a sense of urgency in prioritizing the natural world (that humans are part of), and said she would like to advocate for the folks and animals who aren’t here yet or aren’t able to advocate for themselves yet. Meg reiterated the importance of maintaining forest blocks, connectivity, and water access. Denver W. responded to Meg’s comments, and suggested the proposed zoning changes are a compromise between the natural world and individual’s land rights.
- John Little – Asked a specific question regarding Table 1, and Alex W. provided an explanation of the different numbers included on the table. John also suggested that setbacks could be tied to lot size, so that smaller lots have smaller setbacks.

b. Recognition of new comments received:

- Alex W. noted additional comments were received after the June 14th public hearing from the following: Dean & Pat Laforce, Scott Johansen, Jennifer Decker, Leah Crevedi & Phil Pouech, Diana & Chris Borie.

c. Discussion of revisions based on feedback:

There was general discussion about how to review the feedback the Commission received. The Public hearing comments were reviewed in order, and the staff recommendations were discussed for each. See (https://www.dropbox.com/sh/cgyuva5pi7vk5yd/AACgux49EDUnJwG-yqPHq_q4a/2023/062823/rr1_zoning_revisions/revision_recommendations_alex_062723.pdf?dl=0) for details of each comment. Some of the substantive recommendations/feedback discussed were possibly reducing Res-3 district to match Town water and sewer service area; putting the eastern end of the Res-3 district in the Res-4 district (to retain the mapped wildlife corridor); retain the Res-4 donut hole area as proposed. The Commission decided to continue this discussion to the next meeting on July 12th.

5. Other Business

- a. News, announcements, correspondence, etc.
 - i. Discussion about the impacts of S100 on the proposed zoning changes and bylaw modernization project, and when the new law goes into effect.
 - ii. Public hearing will remain open to the July 12th meeting.
 - iii. Vacancy on Planning Commission.

Denver W. **adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:15 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,
Danielle Peterson, Planning & Zoning Administrative Assistant