

Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
February 28, 2024
Approved March 13, 2024

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

Members Absent: Becky Alford, Nicholas Chlumecky, James Donegan

Staff: Alex Weinhagen (Director of Planning & Zoning)

Public Present via Zoom: Margaret McNurlan (via Zoom)

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

1. Agenda Changes: None.

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

3. Minutes from January 24, 2024 and February 14, 2024 meetings:

Lenore B. **made a motion, seconded by Alison L., to approve the minutes from the 1/24/24 meeting as written. The motion passed 6-0.**

Lenore B. **made a motion, seconded by Denver W., to approve the minutes from the 2/14/24 meeting as written. The motion passed 5-0, with John L. abstaining.**

4. Bylaw Modernization for Housing – Zoning Revisions:

a. Residential density allowance:

Alex W. reminded the Commissioners that he made some minor tweaks to the draft, based on feedback from the last meeting. The changes in the draft have been highlighted, per a previous suggestion. Alex noted that the Commissioners reached a consensus that the residential density allowance should be uniform across the Village Growth Area (VGA) at six unit per acre. Alex said he added language to recognize the state required density bonus for affordable housing projects.

b. Indoor/outdoor & public/commercial recreation uses:

Alex W. reviewed the Allowed Uses table and noted that in the Non-residential section were categories for indoor/outdoor and public/commercial recreation and noted that Alison L. had asked what the difference was. Alex W. suggested those two uses be combined and replaced with a single use called outdoor recreational facilities and make it a conditional use in most of the VGA with two district exceptions. Alex W. noted that he deleted some accessory uses and home occupations because the table is for principal uses and those would be covered under the accessory use section.

c. Dependencies with RR1 regulation revisions:

Alex W. explained that there could be additional changes to this draft depending on whether the Selectboard (SB) decides to adopt the RR1 revisions the PC has proposed. Alex will let the

Commissioners know when the Selectboard schedules a meeting to discuss the proposal so they can attend if they would like.

Margaret M. asked if the County Forester would be giving feedback about the RR1 proposal and Alex W. said he would try to get his input prior to the Selectboard meeting.

d. Q&A on overall revised draft:

John K. asked a question about what the impact to the Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) provisions would be and Alex reminded the Commissioners that they changed the percentage to 15% (for projects proposing 10 units or more). John K. asked a question about a proposed change to the setback requirements in the VGA for small accessory structures (i.e., shed) and whether having no side or rear setback requirement if a privacy fence is used made sense. John K. added that he couldn't find the definition of a privacy fence. There was a discussion about whether this made sense in the VGA and the Commissioners generally agreed they were comfortable with this change. Alex W. said he will add definitions for at-grade structure and privacy fence to help provide clarification.

John K. noted that the entire section 5.2 which included illustrations of streetscapes and building design elements was highlighted in the draft and wondered if it was going elsewhere or just being deleted. Alex W. explained the section was moved and consolidated into section 3.1.

Alison L. said she could send Alex what the common legal definition of a privacy fence is if that would be helpful and Alex said it would be.

5. Town Plan Update:

a. Town committee engagements updates:

Lenore B. shared that she spoke to the Town Common Committee and they asked that she write up the goals and action items so that it can be included in the new Town Plan. She also spoke with the Trails Committee and they talked about resiliency, flooding, drainage and general maintenance of the trails and she expects some of those themes to be common topics during the Town Plan update process.

Alex W. met with the Economic Development Committee and said they had already decided they wanted to work on a new economic development plan for the Town and will probably take the lead on the actual chapter for the plan update. Alex added that he asked they provide their feedback by their last meeting in June. When asked Alex said he didn't have a preference for how each committee provided their feedback and that the volunteers shouldn't feel pressure to format the information at all.

John K. shared his discussion with the Conservation Commission and their concerns some of which were protecting forest blocks and wildlife crossings, and working directly with the DRB regarding applications and conservation issues.

Denver W. said he intends to reach out to the Selectboard and attend one of their meetings to talk about their thoughts.

Barbara F. plans to meet with the Affordable Housing Committee in March to review their chapter and get some feedback, as they have already received the chapter from the previous Town Plan.

Alison L. will be meeting with the Town Forest Committee on 3/14/24 and she sent them the material to read ahead of time. She anticipates that meeting being quite busy so may need to return in April but hasn't confirmed that yet. She noted that she has not heard back from the Cemetery Commission and will reach out again.

Alex W. suggested John L. work with the Recreation Commission to get their feedback.

b. Review community survey results:

Alex W. said the survey review would probably happen over several meetings because there was a lot to go through. He shared that there were 523 responses compared to the previous survey 10 years ago with 432 responses. He noted not every respondent answered each question.

Alex reviewed the substantive responses to each question, and noted some interesting results for the questions that asked if Hinesburg was headed in a position direction (a majority of respondents were unsure) and if Hinesburg is prepared to face the top selected challenges over the next 10 years (a very small percentage said yes). Alex said this information could speak to confidence in town government of uncertainty of state affairs in VT or the US. John L. added that sentiment was interesting because in a later question most people responded that they were planning on staying in Hinesburg and Alex said that might speak to larger societal issues more than issues within Hinesburg. There was some discussion about how where a person lived in town could impact their responses to certain questions, and the wide range of opinions that were shared in the individual comments. The review of the survey results will continue at the next PC meeting.

c. Town meeting tabling:

Alex W. reminded the Commissioners that they had talked about having a table set-up at Town Meeting (prior to the start of the meeting) to share some of the results from the survey and to remind folks the Town Plan is being updated. Alex also offered to prepare materials for the table, such as a poster version of some survey results to serve as a conversation starter.

Alex said his plan is to release the survey results on the Town website ahead of Town Meeting unless there was objection from any of the Commissioners. John K. asked if all of the comments received would be shared as well as the results, and Alex said that he wanted to be transparent with the results. Some of the Commissioners noted that there were comments (some unpleasant) directed at specific Town Officials, and wondered if it was appropriate to share those. Alex said

that he read every comment to ensure there were no hateful or profane comments, and there weren't any, so he felt sharing all of the comments was acceptable. Alex said they could wait to release the individual comments after grouping them based on topic to making reading them easier, but he doesn't want to hide any of the information collected.

d. Community Forums – scheduling and topics:

Based on some feedback at the last meeting, the community forums will be pushed back slightly. There wasn't enough time during this meeting to discuss more in depth, so will be continued to the next PC meeting.

6. Other Business:

a. Planning news and announcements:

Lenore B. suggested that folks listen to the Selectboard's meeting from February 21st regarding the allocation of ARPA funds to a Habitat for Humanity project.

b. Agenda items for the March 13, 2024 meeting:

- Finish reviewing the survey results and discuss potential community forum topics.

Denver W. **adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:12 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,
Danielle Peterson
Planning and Zoning Administrative Assistant