

**Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission
May 22, 2019
Approved June 12, 2019**

Members Present: Maggie Gordon, Marie Gardner, James Donegan, John Kiedaisch, Barbara Forauer, Dennis Place, Rolf Kielman entered the meeting a few minutes late

Members Absent: Joe Iadanza

Public Present: Jeff French, Richard Watts

Also Present: Alex Weinhagen (Director of Planning & Zoning), Kate Kelly (Recording Secretary), Renae Marshall (Town Administrator), and speakers Faith Ingulsrud and Julie Campoli

Maggie G. chaired the meeting, which was called to order at 7:01 PM.

Agenda Changes: None.

Public Comments for Non-Agenda Items: None.

Presentations & Discussion – Architectural & Streetscape Design:

Alex W. said the goal for tonight was to introduce the Planning Commission's new project (architectural & streetscape design standards). The speakers tonight will discuss what's possible and get everyone on the same page. Faith Ingulsrud, former Hinesburg Town Planner, works for VT Dept. of Housing & Community Development; she co-manages the Municipal Planning Grant program and the Neighborhood Designation program. Julie Campoli owns Terra Firma Urban Design, has written several books, and was connected with Hinesburg in the early '90s (growth center pilot project).

Faith Ingulsrud said that Richard Amore asked her to speak to the Commission. She will present information about streetscapes. She asked the Planning Commission to think about a place they like, and what is it about that place. She mentioned that when she worked for Hinesburg, she loved the sense of community here, which had little to do with the form of the structures here.

Faith I. showed some images of streets in various Vermont towns, and discussed how streets are used for commerce, community, and celebration. To make streets useful for these purposes, you want to plan, build, and can reclaim streets. She showed examples of each of these categories (planning, building, and reclaiming). One example was in St. Albans. Rolf K. asked how St. Albans' redevelopment was funded; Faith I., Alex W., and others replied they had a TIF district and private funding among other

sources. She mentioned using temporary striping, umbrellas, and creating a small park from a parking space as examples of reclaiming.

Faith I. asked what makes a great street: pedestrian experience, build buildings to the sidewalk (lot line), ground floor permeability, and incorporate nature. Alex W. asked what is meant by permeability: Faith I. replied it is windows, but also that you can slip in in different places, and Julie C. added that there is human presence inside that you can see.

Faith I. will send the Design Tool Kit to Alex W. via email to distribute. She mentioned that in two weeks, they'll be holding the annual Downtown and Historic Preservation Conference (June 5, in Montpelier).

Faith I. showed an image that demonstrated what made a place/street great, with 10+ things that could be done in that place. She showed images of her neighborhood, and remarked on what she liked so much about it. For residential neighborhoods, she felt it would be more like 5+ things instead of 10.

Julie C. mentioned the difference in views between a resident's view of their neighborhood and an outsider's view. She suggested going around town with a camera, to try to get good shots of the things you really like. Alex W. said that new development is often seen as an outsider sees it, and it takes time for people to get used to it; how can we accelerate this level of comfort? Faith I. suggested holding events on those streets, to bring community into that space. Maggie G. said that is happening in some ways (e.g. Creekside closes off streets at Halloween).

Rolf K. said there is much to love in these communities; but when we re-create those places it becomes difficult. How do we make adjunct portions of town feel like the rest (historic) part of town? Alex W. pointed out that adjunct areas of Hinesburg will not be on the Main St. (whereas many of Faith I.'s examples were of the main street in a town). Rolf K. suggested a field trip to other similar towns (St. Albans? Middlebury? Bristol?). John K. suggested reaching out to explore designs in other places including outside the U.S. Dennis P. wondered about other areas that have a town that is expanding the village area; Jericho was suggested. Jeff French, as a member of the public, mentioned a particular development in Williston that has all the same houses, because it is cost-effective. How do you get over that hump? Julie C. replied it is easier now than it used to be because there is a market for it. The Commission discussed other developments that have smaller houses, and their costs.

Julie C. presented on the stumbling points and the problem of parking. Vermont village design essentials include movement & speed, edges, front & back, parking & density. She described considering how most people will move. She urged the Commission to make the priority be pedestrian movement. She addressed the question of what keeps you walking from one area to the next: comfort, stimulation (permeability), and beauty.

She mentioned that Hinesburg design regulations state: "full and safe pedestrian access." She said safe is good, but only a starting place; it should be seduction that makes you want to keep walking. She

showed examples of edges, curves in road, things that draw you in. She talked about the minimal distance between houses around a green. Edges can be created with trees as well. In Hinesburg, she likes the edge where our buildings are taller in traditional village area. Julie C. showed images of ideas for making these edges.

Julie C. mentioned considering front and back (what's in front, what's behind?): you want to have the front of buildings all along the road, and service items (like parking) in the back. In neighborhoods, shorter front yards (15') lead to conversations between landowner and the person walking down the street. John K. mentioned a neighborhood in Burlington. Julie C. showed one of the Hinesburg proposed developments, and demonstrated where the fronts and backs of buildings are. She mentioned that you should tie together the developments, and think about walking and how strong the edges are.

As far as buildings, consider having some interesting edges on buildings, the size of lights and signs, tree canopy, opening into windows. Alex W. asked, and Julie C. answered, a question about street trees, and how they can be built to have roots that can grow under sidewalk (green infrastructure).

Julie C. stated that Hinesburg Design Regulations state: "logical and efficient traffic flow." She said you have to be comfortable with traffic becoming backed up sometimes. She showed the Jericho Market with the sea of asphalt around it. She showed the Bristol Bakery, and felt there was no need to have a right turn lane there. Richard Watts, who bikes and walks around town, mentioned the lack of sidewalk near Giroux's. Julie C. suggested at Bristol Bakery that the sidewalk shouldn't be right up against the car parking (there should be a greenbelt between the sidewalk and where cars are parked). Rolf K. pointed out that they could have moved the sidewalk closer to the houses to put the greenbelt and lanterns closer to the road. Julie C. mentioned that the street she lives on is only 26 ft. wide with parking on both sides, and people drive very slowly; if you want people to drive slowly, make your streets narrower. In places in Vermont where people want to be, there is traffic congestion: become comfortable with this.

Density: cars take up so much space, that much area is paved over. She commented that many (35% in Burlington) of parking spaces are empty, and showed Hinesburg's unused parking spots, and that it is wrong to require developers to build a minimum number of parking spaces (build to a maximum amount or those used at a particular time of day).

Julie C. discussed that we need to define what it is that we value in standards, explain it, and illustrate with photos, diagrams, then regulate it (must include diagrams). She suggested getting out and walking from one end of the village to the other.

Jeff F. commented about the Bristol Bakery/Parkside Café, and how the added outside space has made it much better, and there are often people out there.

Richard Watts commented that he and his wife had been driving into town to walk with their dog, and mentioned the alley way next to pub. He would like the Commission to consider sidewalk near Giroux's; if we could narrow it a little it would be helpful. Alex W. asked Richard W. about on-street parking for bikers, and if this is a conflict; Richard W. replied it is scary. Julie C. asked about the speed limit on 116; the Commission replied it is 40 mph north from Patrick Brook to Shelburne Falls Rd.

James D. brought up the proposed linear park along 116 on the Official Map, and the Commission discussed the park. Julie C. said if cars are moving over 30 mph it generates a lot of noise. Alex W. wondered if people passing through from the bakery to the library would walk along 116, or if they would choose interior streets. Julie C. replied they probably would stick to interior streets. She asked about where the heart of the village is. She recommended not using curving paths, if it is for transportation. She also mentioned necking down the intersections; don't disconnect east and west side of towns by keeping speed going fast. Alex W. said this is about maintaining a travel corridor that is different, and maintaining a view out over town as enter from the north. The Commission discussed the slopes, etc. coming into town.

Jeff F. talked about traffic concerns vs. prioritizing the people in town. Maggie G. said it feels like a lot of the decisions about the non-organic growth that is coming are out of our hands, because they will all go in at once by a developer. Alex W. replied that this is also an opportunity. The Commission discussed where the "new" core area would be (instead of continuing to develop the 116 frontage going north), and if it makes sense to have retail/commercial space west of town instead of along 116. Julie C. felt it made sense to concentrate Hinesburg's retail space into one area. The Commission discussed why they added mixed use. Julie C. said it is viable to have a secondary road with retail/residential, just make sure it has an obvious and continuous edge.

Rolf K. believed Village NW retail won't be viable for 100 years+; the focus should be below Patrick Brook. Alex W. replied that our standards could be written to encourage growth along 116. Rolf K. said given the ideas for Village NW (apartment, senior housing), the mixed use may be a nursery school or a maker space. Julie C. said that in these areas like Village NW, you may want to have only small store that would serve that neighborhood, as it would otherwise drain away from the village center. Faith I. commented that we don't have enough retail demand in VT to squander it outside the village center. Get the form first, don't worry about the use first.

Jeff F. asked what Julie C. would do here in Hinesburg. She said it makes sense to keep commercial and retail concentrated in the historic part of village; don't let parking dominate, use every scrap of land as carefully as you can. You'll have a short distance to walk, which is good. Make sure there's a clear walking connection from housing density to the south, and make sure it connects to a clear edge on other side (south). She'd like to see the uses mixed up more with the project across 116, as far as parking, and a connection across commercial zones. Faith I. brought up the concept of building denser nodes every ¼ mile (this is often used to repair sprawl, as they are doing on Route 7 in South Burlington). Alex W. replied that there are several nodes already (Ballard's, Bristol Bakery, etc.). John K.

asked why we haven't identified other options in the area of the Riggs property. The Commission discussed.

Minutes of May 8 and April 24 Meeting:

Maggie G. postponed minutes approval until next meeting.

Other Business & Correspondence: None.

The meeting adjourned at 9:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Kelly, Recording Secretary