

**Town of Hinesburg  
Planning Commission  
July 10, 2019  
Approved July 24, 2019**

Members Present: Maggie Gordon, Joe Iadanza, John Kiedaisch, Barbara Forauer, Dennis Place, Dan Myhre, Marie Gardner; Rolf Kielman entered the meeting late

Members Absent: James Donegan

Public Present: Andrew Bolduc

Also Present: Alex Weinhagen (Director of Planning & Zoning), Kate Kelly (Recording Secretary)

Maggie G. chaired the meeting, which was called to order at 7:00 PM.

**Agenda Changes:** Barbara F. will have a small addition at the end.

**Public Comments for Non-Agenda Items:** None.

**Architectural and Streetscape Design Standards**

Alex W., Maggie G., Joe I., John K., and Rolf K. met in the center of Vergennes City Park at their last meeting (June 26, 2019). John K. said they walked around the village itself, then drove to other areas at the edge of the village. He noted that the outer portions of the village had larger houses and lots, not as much dense vegetation, etc. Alex W. displayed Vergennes City on the screen. Rolf K. entered the meeting. Alex W. displayed their walking path as described in the minutes of the June 26, 2019 meeting, and the areas they drove after walking.

Alex W. said he noticed the variety of building design (height, materials, rooflines, etc.). Maggie G. noted that the setback ties these buildings all together. He noted the horizontal differentiation along the streetscape: plantings, stairs, streetlights, outdoor seating (walking through something to get to the buildings). Alex W. wondered how they plowed the sidewalks that were very close to buildings. Nearly every street had on-street parking.

Maggie G. noticed in the neighborhoods behind 22A that streets were laid out in a grid. She felt this is important for a downtown area. John K. said he'd be interested to compare dimensions of downtown blocks and area behind to the size of Hinesburg. Rolf K. said those three blocks in Vergennes (Opera House to Bixby Library) are the same dimension as from Mechanicsville Rd. to Patrick Brook (~1,000 feet). This is where the most business takes place, although Alex W. noted that there was also some business on School St. John K. noted that Vergennes had a lot of large homes that have been converted

into multi-family housing. John K. thought it would be interesting to compare parcelization (lot sizes & shapes) to Hinesburg's parcels.

Rolf K. noted the drop in elevation from one end of town to the other in Vergennes. He felt the entries to stores was interesting (steps, ramps, flower plantings, etc.). Most intense commercial activity is on one side of the street; on the rest are the park, church, opera house, library. Joe I. thought it made it nice to use those businesses because they are facing the public space.

They noted that there are some very beautiful buildings in Vergennes (Strong House). Rolf K. felt that we should consider different approaches to height limitations (35 ft. currently). Maggie G. noted the variety of businesses in the center area; she remembered a speaker saying don't worry about function, just worry about form. Alex W. said Lantman's is a good example of buildings that changed function (used to be a hotel, turned into a grocery store, gas pump, businesses then apartments above).

John K. said he'd like to compare the width of main street (building front to building front) to ours. If town had some option for control over roadway, it would be nice to have diagonal parking along Route 116.

Rolf K. said the Vergennes park is smaller than lot 1, and there is a lot there: monument, info center, gazebo, etc. He brought up Barbara F.'s comment about a grid being sterile, and replied that the grid is good for organization, and mentioned that the grid breaks naturally when there is a river/hill.

John K. said there is a difference looking north (there are closed views) vs. south (there are continuing open vistas) from town. Enclosure along north side gives him a feeling that this is the public area/downtown. He felt curving streets can do that; adjusting the setbacks could allow buildings to come closer (e.g., on Commerce St.).

Maggie G. recommended discussing extending village area standards to the Commerce St. area. Alex W. said we've done a lot of that already (reducing setbacks), so if we want this to happen, we may need to incentivize or require it (form requirements that require a "build to" line). Alex W. commented that the AutoMotion lot is deep enough that you could have a building fronting 116 and still have AutoMotion (two rows of buildings), with parking between.

Joe I. noted the large building next to Park Squeeze: minor details draw your attention. He compared this to a newer building he viewed, which was a single building with nothing (big, flat). They walked past a brick colonial, with a newer 2-story wood deck. He felt architectural integrity is important. Closeness to street is a benefit. Porches help to increase sense of community. Lots of natural materials (granite, stone, brick) entryways. Importance of landscaping/vegetation: increased sense of intimacy/closeness, deadens sound. Overhead canopy, hedgerow, flowers.

Rolf K. said it was pretty consistent that streets had sidewalks on both sides, a grass/tree belt, and buildings not too far from the sidewalk.

Joe I. also pointed out the variety of residential structures (different buildings/materials/rooflines).

Maggie G. asked how we can build variety into design standards without getting “faux variety.” Rolf K. noted a neighborhood in Texas with many of the same style home. What makes the neighborhood nice is trees/landscaping over time. He felt mandating variety is not what we should be doing; instead, requiring setback, front door facing street, generous enough entry porches.

Marie G. brought up parking out front; she felt parking out front would be good (street parking) as opposed to just parking lots in the back. Alex W. said this is more of a VTrans issue. He said that Phil P. is actively having that conversation; Maggie G. suggested the Planning Commission could decide which length of road would be appropriate. Joe I. said we could put in crosswalks, parking, set speed limits, etc. Dennis P. asked about how much we would have to take over (paving, lights, etc.). Alex W. said road would get re-classified from state highway to class 1 town highway, and when that happens, our aid amount from the state goes up. A study from 2012 showed that it would not be much more expensive to the town. The Commission discussed if we’d be responsible for paving.

Dennis P. asked if there are other parks in Vergennes, and they focused their money on that central park (Joe I. mentioned it is a passive use park). They discussed the park vs. the park in Bristol. Joe I. mentioned size, vegetation, etc. Joe I. said there is a lot of density there, not a lot of options for play close by. Alex W. said we are planning for a lot more than Vergennes is. Vergennes City is 2500 people; Hinesburg town is 5000. They compared the size of the two towns.

They reviewed the take-aways from the presentations. Rolf K. brought up side yard or rear parking; there need to be alleyways that link people to fronts of buildings. Joe I. said there would not need to be an alley for every building.

They discussed their desires for various heights/stories on buildings. Should this be part of conversation? Alex W. discussed requiring a percentage of buildings to have multiple stories, or having some kind of proximity test (single vs. multiple stories).

They mentioned setbacks, build to lines, and Maggie G. suggested discussing garages: set them back and make them proportionate to windows and doors. Alex W. said we have a standard, but we may want to tweak it as it is currently a waivable standard. Joe I. suggested having a maximum length on monolithic façade.

Maggie G. asked about porch requirements, and they discussed. Alex W. displayed Finney Crossing. Rolf K. discussed the form of the unit, and the Commission discussed what they don’t like about this and

other buildings in the area. They discussed visiting an area in Shelburne. Joe I. mentioned including trees as a design standard.

Alex W. brought up the possibility of including minimum buildout of frontage. Rolf K. felt it was worth discussing. Alex W. gave two examples: Colchester has a minimum of 60%, and one area of Jericho required a minimum of 40%.

Maggie G. mentioned the pop-up park event on lot 1, which will be August 3, 4-7 PM.

Alex W. showed some images Rolf K. provided of a development in the Netherlands, and the Commission discussed. July 24 is the next Planning Commission meeting, and Alex W. will plan to bring some ideas from other towns on how these have been turned into code.

#### **Minutes of June 12 and June 26 Meetings:**

Maggie G. made a small amendment. Joe I. **made a motion to approve the minutes of June 12, 2019** as amended, and John K. **seconded the motion**. The Commission **voted 7-0**.

Alex W. noted that minutes are in Dropbox from the June 26, 2019 meeting. No changes were made; there was no quorum at the meeting, so no need to make a motion to approve.

#### **Other Business & Correspondence:**

Alex W.: town of Richmond is having a hearing on July 17, regarding a zoning revision. It is for a small area of downtown, increased density.

Barbara F. thanked everyone for participating in the community dinner.

Alex W. said that the Selectboard is reviewing the Planning Commission's proposal tomorrow (and he will give an introduction). The Selectboard did decide to move ahead with the Water/Wastewater Allocation revision; this will come soon to the Planning Commission for a change to zoning regulations. John K. requested a report on current regulations/status of water. There is allocation for the three major projects (Hinesburg Center II, Blackrock, Blomstrann) to do some of their development, but not all. A committee has been working on a wastewater plan; the full Selectboard will be briefed on it in next month or so, with the hope to go to a bond vote in March.

The meeting adjourned at 8:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Kelly, Recording Secretary