

**Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission
January 22, 2020
Approved February 12, 2020**

Members Present: Maggie Gordon, John Kiedaisch, Barbara Forauer, Rolf Kielman, Marie Gardner, Dennis Place; Dan Myhre and James Donegan entered the meeting a bit late.

Members Absent:

Public Present: None

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

Maggie G. chaired the meeting, which was called to order at 7:04 PM.

Agenda Changes: None.

Public Comments for Non-Agenda Items: None.

Architectural & Streetscape Design Standards:

Alex W. said preparing this document has been difficult to do, because of his thinking about properties in town that either meet or don't meet the standards. Alex W. said the Commission originally discussed 11 design areas, and tonight they will be discussing just two (setbacks and permeability). The others will come later.

Alex W. reviewed the setbacks section, which the Commission had suggested changing so that buildings could be closer to the road and to each other. They will consider a maximum setback instead of just a minimum. Currently, our regulations say the building should be at least 10 feet back from the right-of-way, and we don't limit how far back from the road they can be.

Dan M. entered the meeting.

Alex W. suggested a maximum setback distance of 40 feet. Maggie G. asked if it matters if buildings are currently meeting these new standards. Alex W. said it does not, but we are suggesting changing these standards in various districts. Alex W. then displayed, using Google Street View and measuring setbacks, several areas around town. Giroux Body Shop is ~45 ft., Kinney is ~15 ft., Public House is ~35 ft., and Kohn Rath is ~28 ft. from the right-of-way. Alex W. suggested 40 feet because once you get past this, it becomes difficult to keep the building involved with the street.

John K. mentioned the differences on the two sides of 116, and the areas north and south of town. They discussed the vegetation and how it feels enclosed south of Lantman's (on the east side of the road). Alex W. mentioned that this distance has to include curbing, sidewalk, on-street parking, and trees, and this can be hard to do.

Dennis P. felt the standards should be different if on 116 vs. on a side street. Barb F. asked if trees alongside road make people drive slower. Rolf K. said there is a study that shows that people drive slower when trees are present. Maggie G. said that narrower fog lines (9 ft.) also makes people drive slower.

Alex W. continued exploring Thistle Hill, where trees were planted on inside of sidewalk instead of between sidewalk and trees. The Commission discussed planting trees along sidewalks near roads.

Rolf K. mentioned developing a new district, where you can imagine the setbacks being different based on the types of buildings, roads they abut, etc. He suggested going by street type, and defining setback by street type.

James D. entered the meeting.

They discussed the types of streets (residential, commercial, class 1-3). Alex W. asked if Rolf K. envisioned that in the regulations, we'd ask a developer to pick a type of street, and the zoning administrator could apply these regulations. Rolf K. agreed. John K. said that we may not want residential buildings as close to the street as commercial buildings (due to traffic on larger roads).

Alex W. mentioned an example in Williston in which they made a mistake in the direction they have the building present itself. It is important to make sure you design for the street that matters (pedestrians, not traffic). Rolf K. mentioned a book that shows design traits that vary based on closeness to a center core. Barbara F. mentioned the turn behind Kinney Drugs to get into parking area, which is very tight. They discussed how this area is designed mostly for pedestrians.

Alex W. proposed that he, along with Rolf K. and perhaps Michael Buscher, could look at different street type sections. They discussed parking in front vs. in back of buildings, and how differences might be made between residential vs. mixed use or other types of buildings.

Barbara F. asked if the Creekside houses are all set back the same distance. Alex W. said they are for the most part.

Alex W. said our regulations say that we require a minimum setback, but that we will require a larger setback if the houses next to you are set back further from the road (not more than 50 feet from the right-of-way edge). Rolf K. said than in Burlington, you have to meet the average setback of the two houses that adjoin you in Burlington. It is important in order to preserve the historic character of town.

The Commission liked this language and would like to keep it. They discussed averaging two structures as per Rolf K.'s comment vs. the current language, and felt the current language was fine.

Alex W. asked about the area north of the village (where the new Official Map proposes a linear green on the west side of 116 and not on the east side of 116). Would they like to differentiate the two areas with different standards? Most felt they should.

Rolf K. asked Alex W. to display Rutland, where there is a linear green on one side. He described the area. The Commission discussed the width of this park. Alex W. pointed out that this park would be much longer than that in Rutland.

Alex W. described the proposed standard that an open porch, portico, etc. could extend right up to edge of the right-of-way. John K. asked if this would apply to both residential and commercial (like a restaurant)?

Dennis P. pointed out that Butler Farms was not pleasing because you see the backs of the buildings. John K. said there would have to be a secondary road, and that would be the access point to the buildings.

Alex W. said that there may be some push back to allowing these areas to be so close to the road, and the Commission should consider this.

The Commission discussed John K.'s earlier question. Rolf K. felt this would be a rare occurrence and wouldn't be a problem. Maggie G. liked the idea of inviting porches where otherwise there might not be any, while others felt they could drop this language.

Dan M. had to leave the meeting. They took a break.

Alex W. reviewed the permeability standards, stating that there must be windows that are see-through, and he displayed Peter Erb's comments regarding windows. Also, in these standards they address dimensional standards of how much area the entryway needs to occupy, as well as requiring porches and porticos for single family structures. John K. commented that it stood out to him that using a percentage of the width of a building could lead to extraordinarily wide windows; he suggested using sizes instead of percentage.

Minutes of January 8 Meeting:

Alex W. and Rolf K. made several amendments. Marie G. **made a motion to approve the minutes of January 8, 2020 as amended**, and John K. **seconded the motion**. The Commission **voted 6-0**; Dennis P. abstained.

Other Business & Correspondence:

Alex W. reminded the Commission that their next meeting is the public hearing on the water/wastewater scoring system (Feb. 12). Marie G. will be absent until March. Alex W. mentioned that they discussed the system with the DRB last night, and they had several helpful comments.

Barbara F. commented on the letter from the Conservation Commission regarding Haystack Crossing, and felt it was useful; she is supportive of what they suggested.

John K. alerted everyone to the book "Strong Towns". He plans to donate his copy to the library when he is done with it.

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Kelly, Recording Secretary