

**Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission
February 26, 2020
Approved March 11, 2020**

Members Present: Maggie Gordon, Barbara Forauer, Dennis Place, Denver Wilson, and Rolf Kielman

Members Absent: Dan Myhre, John Kiedaisch, Marie Gardner, James Donegan

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 7:03 PM.

Agenda Changes: None.

Public Comments for Non-Agenda Items: None.

Architectural & Streetscape Design Standards:

Alex W. reminded the Commission that they are working on reviewing 11 standards, and they discussed at prior meetings 1) setbacks and 2) permeability (began discussing at a prior meeting) including front facades. They should also touch base tonight on 3) rear and side yard parking and 4) street grid. They had discussed previously how long of a blank wall they wanted to see on a building, and how 20 feet may actually be too large.

Barbara F. said they've discussed Kinney Drug & Parkside Café and how their windows are all covered with stuff (hot water machine), and Kinney Drug windows are too high to be permeable. Alex W. said the new language speaks to this, but doesn't speak to how many windows must apply to this standard. He asked if having equipment up against windows at Parkside is a problem that we don't want to emulate, or is it ok (does every window have to be see-through?). Barbara F. said she found it objectionable, but she doesn't know if the average person going in and out would notice. Alex W. reviewed that we are revising this standard in order to make the streetscape inviting and able to see in; because of the covered porch and larger windows to the left, he felt it is permeable (through doors and most windows). Dennis P. felt we can't tell people what they can put in front of their windows. The Commission discussed how the language would be reviewed by the Zoning Administrator, and Alex W. felt it would be read as meaning every window. They discussed that this language should be amended to read first floor. Maggie G. said Kinney is more objectionable to her (with white paper over windows), and they discussed how this sort of retail use limits windows (due to displays, etc.); Rolf K. mentioned

that aisles could run the other way so as to allow windows at the end of each aisle. He felt that perhaps illustrations with some qualitative language (% glass, etc.) would cover what is needed here. They discussed that these types of details would be covered in design standard 5.

Denver W. said that if we had this information when Kinney was designed, it would have been easy for the developer to design a more pleasing structure. He described his sketch and estimate that a minimum of 40% of a road-facing front façade shall have a window or entryway.

Dennis P. said there should also be a height guideline for windows (they shouldn't be too high to see in). Maggie G. said this is the appeal of Parkside Café. Alex W. said he agrees with Rolf K., that Kinney's on Shelburne Rd. has display windows that you look at, or they could organize their aisles so that you can look in. Denver W. said it may warrant a line of text about windows no higher than x feet, etc. Alex W. said other communities weren't this specific, and perhaps a qualitative statement (that views should be at the height of pedestrian). Denver W. suggested language "shall be permeable" or "inviting". Rolf K. suggested a statement that when sitting inside or standing outside, you shall be able to see through. He felt a percentage wouldn't be bad to strive for. He felt windows used for display purposes would be ok. He described the wall in the meeting room, and they calculated the percentage of area covered by windows, which was about 30%. Denver W. said his suggestion (40%) was a linear frontage percentage (not area). They discussed how windows could be spaced (many smaller windows vs. larger windows with larger gaps between them) given these percentages. Dennis P. mentioned that other priorities like energy efficiency should be taken into consideration; Rolf K. said it matters which direction the windows face (triple pane windows facing south actually lead to a net heat gain).

Alex W. suggested discussing entryways, where the standard would apply to non-residential, mixed use, and multi-family residential structures. These structures shall have a prominent entryway facing the street, open porch, portico, patio/terrace, gallery, arcade, or storefront design, with guidelines for how deep these are, and how far they must extend along the façade. The Commission discussed if stipulating what types of entryways, and what percentage of the façade, is something they'd like to do. Barbara F. said it may depend on what it's being used for (open seating, etc.). Dennis P. asked about Lantman's – Alex W. confirmed they wouldn't meet standards now. The Commission also discussed National Bank of Middlebury. Denver W. felt 40% might be too much.

Rolf K. sent Alex W. some photos from Boulder that used storefront design, where there wasn't a lot of doorway variation in depth/canopy. Denver W. felt the updated standards would force the building to be moved back to make space for the canopy. Alex W. pointed out that the examples Rolf K. sent are in a pedestrian area, like Church St. in Burlington, and our area will not be that; we want articulation in the building. Rolf K. recommended discarding the 40% figure, and using illustrations instead.

Barbara F. mentioned awnings and asked if these would be considered under this standard. Alex W. said it would be problematic to try to meet the standard with just an awning (no storefront, etc.).

Maggie G. mentioned that she felt that porches/porticos etc. of less than 6 feet depth are unusable.

Porches/entryways: single-family and two-family residential structures shall have an open porch or portico facing the street. Alex W. displayed porches on homes on Farmall Drive. Maggie G. felt they were too narrow. Denver W. asked about rural Vermont/classic Hinesburg homes. Alex W. displayed the historic part of town along 116, and which houses have porches. Many do, but some are on the side of the building. They felt porches would be good to mandate, but a front/side or wrap-around feature could work. Rolf K. pointed out some historic houses in village that don't have a porch, so some flexibility would be good. Denver W. suggested a 6-foot minimum depth for a porch, or if there is not a porch, a prominent entryway. Dennis P. asked why it matters if a porch is 6 feet deep. Maggie G. said it is so people will sit on them and greet their neighbors, and if narrower than 6 feet, they are unusable. Denver W. mentioned that in the 1900s no one would have built a porch they didn't intend to use; Dennis P. replied that back then Route 116 was a dirt road with model Ts, not 45 mph. Alex W. mentioned that these standards would apply to interior roads (not 116) with less traffic. The Committee suggested changes to allow porch flexibility to face side yards or street.

Garage setbacks: Alex W. described the current regulation of garage setback from front of structure by 10 feet. He mentioned that the Thistle Hill development received waivers, and had mitigating architectural features. Farmall Drive houses did not get a waiver. Alex W. added that he edited the language to deal with parking underground/raised ranch. The Commission viewed examples of these homes (Thistle Hill and Farmall Drive). Dennis P. mentioned that you could add an apartment above the garage without the setback (would be harder with the garage set back 10 feet). Maggie G. said she preferred Thistle Hill. Barbara F. mentioned that there is more impervious surface with the setback. Alex W. said this was in the regulations originally because we want the human side of the building to present itself to the street instead of the garage side. Rolf K. suggested adding a word "significantly" in the statement about above-grade attached garages that are below the first floor elevation of the principal structure. Dennis P. asked if it matters if the garage door didn't face the street (side access garage), ie., does the façade of the garage need to be set back 10 feet if there's no door facing the street (and there are windows in it). They felt this was permissible, to only require the setback if the garage door faces the street. Alex W. will revise the language.

3) Rear and side parking: Alex W. said they had reviewed previously that the current regulations are sufficient, with no need for new standards. The Commission agreed.

4) Street grid: we want a grid of streets, and to cap/close off views at the end of certain streets. There should be no dead-end streets. Rolf K. explained his concern that dead-end streets create enclaves instead of communities that link up. He mentioned the parking lot between Kinney and Parkside, and how phase 2 of Hinesburg Center continued the parking lot the west; a building should have been placed there to terminate the view so you don't see a long football field of parking. Rolf K. mentioned you may not always want to do this (e.g., if it's your house at the end of a street), but if it's a community building or open play space/structure that would be great. Alex W. pointed out that this standard only

applies to streetscapes, not parking lots. The Commission discussed how this would apply to various areas for future development, and difficulties with topography in Hinesburg. Dennis P. felt cul-de-sacs bring neighborhoods together (kids playing, etc.). Denver W. said a U-shaped pattern would be a grid, but wouldn't route traffic through there.

Alex W. pointed out that we will lose some views off 116 towards the LaPlatte with the new buildings; our current regulations say that we want to re-gain some of those views from the internal streets, so they will look out towards the LaPlatte. Maggie G. brought up parking areas; Alex W. said we now have a guideline in our regulations as to how much is necessary, and the DRB is to decide if what the Applicant proposes is adequate. There are standards for having trees, etc. in parking lots. Alex W. said we've over-built parking in the US in general. Rolf K. will attempt to re-write the wording in this section.

Alex W. said there will be revised versions of these sections at next meeting, but they will next discuss other sections (#5 and forward).

Minutes of February 12 Meeting:

Kate K. noted she changed the date on the minutes to correctly reflect the meeting date. Denver W. **made a motion to approve the minutes of February 12, 2020 as amended**, and Dennis P. **seconded the motion**. The Commission **voted 5-0**.

Other Business & Correspondence:

Rolf K. said several members were present when he presented ideas about the Giroux property. He was on a jury where young architects were competing for a prize; one design project for these students was this area in Hinesburg. The first prize was designed by a young couple here in Hinesburg (was quite different from what Rolf K. suggested, and wouldn't conform much to what they've been talking about tonight). He felt it would be interesting to have several of those groups present their ideas; Alex W. suggested holding it at the library. Barbara F. displayed a newspaper article along the same lines.

Alex W. mentioned that they had been discussing the Haystack Crossing and three-story buildings; Al Barber asked if when they get the aerial truck in a few years, wouldn't that enable taller buildings that could achieve what the PC has been talking about (more density, with less impervious surface). That will be a discussion for another day, but some felt going higher was not a good solution to keep Hinesburg rural.

Kate K. mentioned the Conservation Commission's upcoming meeting to review a draft of the Natural Resources Inventory, on March 9, 6-8 PM on the 3rd floor. The meeting adjourned at 8:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Kelly, Recording Secretary