

**Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission
March 11, 2020**

Approved April 8, 2020

Members Present: Maggie Gordon, Marie Gardner, James Donegan, Denver Wilson, John Kiedaisch, Rolf Kielman

Members Absent: Dennis Place, Barbara Forauer, Dan Myhre

Public Present: None.

Also Present: Alex Weinhagen (Director of Planning & Zoning) & Laura Sau (Recording Secretary)

Maggie G. chaired the meeting, which was called to order at 7:02 PM.

Agenda Changes: None.

Public Comments for Non-Agenda Items: None.

Village Area Architectural & Streetscape Design Standards:

Alex W: Draft 3 -3/9/20 - Includes added changes and new language for Design Standard items discussed at previous meetings

- i. Setbacks
- ii. Permeability
- iii. Rear & Side Yard Parking (no changes proposed)
- iv. Street Grid

--- Continuation of Design Standards discussion ---

5. Architectural Variety

Alex W.- Has spent the past two weeks updating language starting on this Standard on page 3 of Design Standards draft in progress. Rolf K. provided language for Standard 6. Building Height Relief

a. Building Form

- i. *Concern:* James D.- Solar Orientation -- Energy Committee input?
Worried about options of capitalizing on orientating buildings for solar gain or solar panels on roof.
 - Alex W.- Energy Committee is concerned about the layout of Haystack Crossing at the latest project review meeting

- Tension of variety of architectural style and building orientation vs. cookie cutter design tension
 - Agreed that current language doesn't speak to solar. Other language in regulations do speak to solar, but primarily in reference to lot orientation, not buildings specifically.
- ii. *Concern:* John K- Appropriateness of featuring it (solar techniques) in this section about Orientation, as opposed to Energy section or something else
 - Alex W- Agrees energy choices are significant town-wide, whereas, the rest of these standards are specific to the density (or envisioned density) of the Village.
 - John K- Should apply to all buildings in town-- within 20 degrees of facing South will do, doesn't have to be exact.
 - Not just solar, but also light and warmth coming in from Southern Exposure. Long axis of building going East to west just makes more sense.
- iii. *Concern:* Denver W.- An existing home has an entire front yard filled with solar panels instead of on roof line.
 - Restricting visibility to house is an eyesore. Do we want to regulate that?
 - *Clarification:* Alex W.- Prohibited from regulating renewable energy installations which are connected to the grid -- very few people are actually off-grid
 - Regulated by public utility, not town zoning-- State Regulations
 - Can adopt screening provisions for solar if also adopted to similar commercial uses
 - Public Utility Commissions can consider town screening in large application, but doesn't typically get looked at in smaller applications
- iv. Maggie G.- Town plan on Energy Goals - "...design standards to preserve the southern exposure of buildings for passive and active solar gain, balance this with other design factors especially in the Village growth area where compact development is more common and street trees are necessary .."
 - Alex W- Tension of attractiveness of Architectural Variety vs things that might shade like street trees
- v. Maggie G- Is part of Black Rock's design a solar field? (Haystack Crossing)
 - Alex W- Southern area around the new well that they gave to the town.
 - Houses can't be built around the well, so otherwise it's useless space
 - Maggie G- Is that a way of balancing tension, solar field for houses that don't have passive solar access
 - John K.- passive solar is a part of their first phase
 - Maggie G.- Do we want to include that as part of the Design Standards?
 - John K.- Has that idea been discussed with the Energy Committee to be a part of Design Standards?
 - Alex W- depends if standards are specifically design or also solar
- vi. Rolf K- Reminds the Commision to look around and see if pre-existing buildings which make the town's identity, would fit into the description of standards being created.

- vii. Alex W- Wants to discuss granting DRB waiver power of standard's guidelines if there's a good reason and the solution doesn't violate the intent of standards
 - Maggie G.- Typically a street is developed one house at a time, problem is when developers come in with 80 houses and 3 designs
 - Alex W.- Partially also modern day subdivisions, plotting out lots which dictate building orientation
- viii. *Proposal:* John K.- Orientation of lot layouts should precede street layouts in Subdivision plans
- ix. *Clarification on Bullets:* Alex W- Standards which will replicate the concept of organic growth over time, a language attempting to avoid the set pattern of a developer.
- x. There was discussion of how to define the spectrum of Principal Road Frontage to private road and how to label each road within that range. This definition includes the allowance of different structural features such as Row Houses, within those categories. Rolf K. expressed concern of a mandatory percentage of orientation would exclude some houses from passive and active solar design.
- xi. One concern was to not prohibit contemporary modern design, such as NRG, which introduces a different variety of design and energy efficiency into town. Alex W. proposed zoning districts to not lose innovation. Denver W. agreed that these would inspire architectural creativity and diversity. James D. proposed that building form diversity was based on a percentage.
- xii. *Clarification:* Alex W- Wants to avoid Standards that are too vague, because then the applicant doesn't know what's allowed. Also some other communities have very specific Design Standards. There will be images of examples in the Design Standards. A grant has been received to put out a request for qualifications, evaluation and selection of a Consultant. Commission board members expressed an interest in the hiring be done by a combination of Commission members and Town Hall Staff.
- xiii. *Proposal:* Rolf K.- For second bullet point to be removed.
 - Rolf sketched examples of about 10 houses, each with the same orientation of the gable, but different forms.
 - The Commission members agreed that there was sufficient variation

b. Corporate branding

- i. Board members agreed on language

c. Building Material

- i. There was mixed emotions in the discussion about specifying building materials in the Design Standards due to affordability, aesthetics, distaste for vinyl, longevity of different materials, the innovation of new materials, and new trends in materials that arise.
- ii. *Proposal:* Instead of a list restricting materials, that there would be a list encouraging the use of certain materials, such as natural building materials.
- iii. *Proposal:* Denver W.- If building form is the same, what if exception is made through building material or location of porch

d. Building Height

- i. *Proposal:* Building height of a minimum of **1.5 stories or more.**
- ii. *Concerns:* Tight budget builds (single lot vs. multi-lot), the aging population, density, and aesthetics vs. maxing-out use of non-residential buildings.
- iii. *Clarification:* The Corporate Branding section doesn't always cover this topic, for example, the the Kinney Drugs building doesn't follow typical company design. Examples were given of nearby libraries and companies which are all 1 story, such as the Charlotte Library, Aubuchon Plaza and the Jiffy Mart.
- iv. Marie G: 1.5 Stories looks good and doesn't cost more.
- v. *Proposal:* Alex W.- Separation of definition depending on street use- Industrial vs. Residential. The Village is primarily 1.5 stories
- vi. There was a discussion of the definition of 1.5 stories. Building height vs. height of usable interior space. Not needing a physical floor surface to define the +.5 story.
- vii. *Clarification:* Alex W.- Maximum building height is 35', if bonus is permitted, 45', for a max total of 4 stories

e. Roof Line and Pitch

- i. Alex W.- Flat roof is only allowed if emulating existing -- ex. Twice Is Nice building (language to define)
- ii. *Concern:* Maggie G.- Don't want a flat roof on one story (Proposing language referencing both a cornice and parapet with a flat roof because it wouldn't work with a single story)
- iii. *Clarifications:* Alex W.- Shed roofs are allowed. If a shed roof building also has a covered porch, the porch roof could be less steep. The list of specific building materials is no longer being included in the Design Standards, this also pertains to roof materials. This standard only pertains to the Village area. Any future gas stations would have to abide if there was a written standard.

6. Building Height Relief

- i. Alex W.- Edit needed in draft: Bonus height outline is in Section 2.5
- ii. Rolf K. stated that the proposed 8' is arbitrary, but the Commission members like it because it implies a minimum usable area
- iii. *Concern:* Alex W.- Would a step back make it more difficult or easier for fire protection, until we have the aerial truck, we shouldn't really have 3+ stories
 - There was a back and forth discussion about fire protection concerning current or future resources of Hinesburg, relying on current resources of nearby towns until substantial amount of height exists in Hinesburg, and DRB discussions of projects currently in review, such as Haystack Crossing. There were concerns of Standards being written for the present, or future Hinesburg. It was also mentioned that everyone has been paying an impact fee for the past 12 years towards the funding of the new truck. Should standards be based on local fire protection capabilities or structures designed to meet the State Building Code fire safety regulations.

Minutes of February 26 Meeting:

1. *Concern:* Maggie G.- If only 3 board members voting attended last meeting, is that enough to approve the previous minutes?
 - a. *Clarification:* Alex W.- If board members present weren't in attendance last meeting, you don't have to abstain.

No changes were made to minutes.

Denver W. **made a motion to approve the minutes of February 26, 2020 as amended**, and John K. **seconded the motion**. The Commission **voted 6-0**.

Other Business & Correspondence:

1. Election of officers
 - Chairperson: Marie G. **made a motion to appoint Maggie G. as Chairperson**, and John K. **seconded the motion**. The Commission **voted 6-0**.
 - Vice Chairperson: Maggie G. **made a motion to appoint Rolf K as Vice Chairperson**, and Marie G. **seconded the motion**. The Commission **voted 6-0**.
2. Updates on other Planning Commission projects
 - Contractor yard regulations-
 - Alex W- Subcommittee met again, Alex is in progress of re-drafting. Most contractor's in town are grand-fathered around this new regulation.
 - Allocation System-
 - Alex W- Meeting recently, met with committee, hasn't happened yet, underway
 - Energy Plan-
 - Alex W- Regional Planning Commission staff member: revision to town plan, Hinesburg would qualify for enhanced designation status. Any project in front of utility, would have to pay more attention to town plan.
 1. supposed to due regard, but not have to follow. if we update energy plan, commission would have to give substantial deference to town recommendation which is legally higher
 - Not ready to look at, but Planning commission will review and pass on to Selectboard
3. Updates on Related Projects:
 - Natural resource inventory-
 - Alex W.- Conservation Commission met on Monday. Inventory data which we already use and don't, will be open online for anyone to reference, with interactive map layers. Expected to be ready late summer.
 - Town Common Design Charette-
 - Tuesday, April 14th, 6-8pm --Design your own park, pop-up park event
 1. Alex W. & Maggie G. applied for and received a \$900 grant for the event to provide food and interactive scale models.

2. The conceptual plan will be prepared in May, in hopes of the Selectboard spending, the allotted \$2,500 for that lot, on commencing manifestation of the park before end of fiscal year.
4. Notice - Town of Charlotte - March 19th regulation revision hearing
 - Change to parking requirement-- Received parking requirements petition so the town is forced to have meeting. It is a repeal of a portion of regulations in the service area, parking lots in front of buildings.
5. John K. Requested an update of the Richmond Rd triangle.
 - Alex W.- each year the Selectboard has a project
 - There was a survey done for a potential side walk along Richmond Rd. The Triangle is the proposed terminus of the sidewalk, so it is suggested to start the development there. The town is considering safety concerns. The Regional Planning Commission is involved. A consultant has been hired, a local community hearing has occurred with various public input.
 - The consultant is currently developing alternatives.
 - The Project Team is meeting on March 20th, and a following public meeting will be held. The consultant will write a report following the additional public input.
 - The Project Team is composed of Alex W. and Mike. The project addresses full traffic of pedestrians and vehicles, with local residents in consideration.
 - A landscape architect is a part of the Consultant Team, so a small park is being considered. There was general community outreach on Front Porch Forum, as well as specifically the houses close by. The next public meeting is expected to occur in April.
6. John K.- Senate talking of negating act 250 in Village areas-- which will limit the public participation
 - There was some discussion about whether this would limit public participation or take out the redundancy of going through 2 steps instead of the proposed 1 step. John K. urged people to reach out now because it applies to the whole state.
 - Alex: could apply to center village if we apply
 - H9926 Act 250 reform bill - Legislature
 - S237 - Senate (Not as comprehensive and is being voted on now)

Next Meeting: March 25, 2020

The meeting adjourned at 9:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Sau, Recording Secretary