

Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
January 27, 2021

Approved February 10, 2021

Members Present: James Donegan, Barbara Forauer, Marie Gardner, Maggie Gordon, John Kiedaisch, Rolf Kielman, Dennis Place, Denver Wilson.

Members Absent: Dan Myhre.

Also: Alex Weinhausen (Director of Planning & Zoning); Amy Coonradt (Recording Secretary).

Maggie G. called the meeting to order at approximately 7:04 PM.

Meeting Procedures:

Alex W. explained the meeting was being held remotely via Zoom due to the COVID-19 state of emergency and the closure of the Town Office. He reviewed remote meeting protocols.

Agenda Changes:

None at this time.

Public Comments for Non-Agenda Items:

None at this time.

Architectural & Streetscape Design Standards *(continued from 12/9/20 and 1/13/21 meetings)*

- a. Review photo examples and discuss how to include/reference in regulations

Alex W. asked for input on the best way to present the photo examples along with the design standards. He said that they could be attached to the zoning regulations as an appendix or contained in a separate, standalone document that is incorporated into the regulations by reference. He said the latter provided for flexibility to amend or revise the examples over time. Other members of the Planning Commission concurred. Alex W. suggested that the zoning regulations link to the most current version of the photo examples on the regulation page of the website.

The Planning Commission reviewed and discussed the photo examples. Alex W. first showed a photo of the top of Church Street in Burlington, to illustrate an example of a street termination. Rolf K. said that the example helps people think about vistas and views at street terminations and how those really help the look of a community. Alex W. then showed a photo of Lantman's as one is coming from Charlotte Road. He said that it is better to have the building there at the terminus than to have something like the parking lot to the right of the building as the view at the end of a street. Alex W. then showed a photo of Main Street in Burlington, looking west to Lake Champlain. Rolf K. said that the photo shows the terminus of Main Street, which is the train station, and also gives a view of the lake and the geography beyond it.

Alex W. then showed some sketches made by Rolf K. Maggie G. said that the sketches help the group think about and show what they want and what they don't want as design elements. Rolf K. said that these sketches could also be three-dimensional, not necessarily two dimensions.

Alex W. asked if board members are comfortable with the design standard, now that the photo examples give a better sense of what the standard is driving at. John K. replied that yes, it is a good standard to include. Denver W. noted that the standard helps developers be mindful of what is at the end of intersections and to give consideration to how streets terminate. Barbara F. said that the language as written will encourage developers to think outside the box and about good design. Dennis P. suggested not using photo examples of buildings that wouldn't be allowed to be built in Hinesburg and that wouldn't meet the standards in the future. John K. suggested getting another example or two of on-street parking. Alex W. agreed and said that additional on-street parking examples would be helpful, and suggested finding examples other than of parallel parking. Barbara F. added that more photo examples of landscape and sidewalk design would be good. Alex W. and Rolf K. will neaten up sketch and select appropriate photos.

b. Discuss/review revisions to written standards

Alex W. said he made revisions to the design standards document based on discussions at last meeting, and walked the board through some of the more notable ones. He said that one change that wasn't discussed was related to site-level design standards, and clarifies that front yard parking limitations do not apply to parking in driveways for single-family or two-family dwellings. Rolf K. and John K. agreed that it is a good clarification.

Alex W. then walked through the edits around frontage and setback requirements. Denver W. had previously had a question about how to measure setbacks for accessory structures and what constitutes frontage, and suggested that they consider reducing the minimum frontage buildout to 50% for single-family or two-family dwellings so as not to penalize smaller homes. John K. pointed out that many of the accessory structures, like barns, are not attached and that they don't need to be part of the calculation for frontage requirements. Alex W. will clarify language, and he said it would be prudent to take measurements of existing lots in the Village to ensure that current frontage buildouts are consistent with what the design standards are suggesting, as well as see whether 50% or 60% makes the most sense for a minimum. Maggie G suggested using Google Maps to do that. John K. volunteered to take those measurements with Google Maps and report back at the Planning Commission's next meeting..

Barbara F. spoke about utility box placement in front yards of certain neighborhoods and whether it would be too demanding to require utility box placement close to the primary façade but behind the front yard setback. Alex W. replied that current language says that this type of utility equipment shall be minimized and not placed in front of primary building façades, but acknowledged that utility companies sometimes aren't able to place them exactly where people want them. John K. cited examples of utility boxes being screened by trees, specifically pertaining to the medical building in town. Alex W. said that the language as written clearly speaks to that intent without being too proscriptive. Rolf K. agreed that the language as written is good.

Alex W. noted changes in the building standards section about windows, saying that he added language to require a regular pattern of real windows on all stories. John K. asked whether adding "transparent glazing" to the description would be appropriate. Alex W. replied that sometimes opaque windows are part of the design, like for bathrooms, or storage rooms. He added that restaurants and retail are handled differently. Rolf K. had noted that 30% of structure as windows might be too high, that he conducted some investigating and has come back with examples. He noted an example on Route 116 where Twice Is Nice is held, with residential units on the upper floors. He said that the building has around 30% fenestration, which seems a bit high, and that 25% may be more appropriate for a

minimum. He noted an example of the Parkside Café building. Alex W. noted the differences between buildings in terms of their use and the proportion of fenestration, saying that retail and restaurants will have higher proportions of fenestration on the first floor than offices or residences would. He suggested taking measurements of existing buildings, such as single family homes, restaurants, and retail, to see what the town currently has in terms of minimum fenestration levels, and whether the requirement should be adjusted. John K. asked if the standards should be specific about how the windows are distributed on the façade. Alex W. replied that the design standards specify a regular pattern of windows on all stories. Rolf K. will take measurements of some buildings in the town and report back to the group.

Alex W. noted changes around the building height requirements section of the design standards, clarifying that one-story homes in the Village growth area are prohibited and that there needs to be an upper floor that is functional or could be made functional.

John K. suggested striking the word “properly” from Section 5.22.3.10(b), as the language is subjective. Others agreed.

c. Plan to wrap up at February 10 meeting

Alex W. said that the Planning Commission should anticipate discussing when to schedule a public hearing at their next meeting, as well as be prepared to walk through PlaceSense’s revised illustrations.

Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2021: Maggie G. moved to approve the minutes as amended. Denver W. seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.

Barbara F. clarified her comments on dormers from the December 9th, 2020 discussion, expressing her support for houses with dormers, particularly those with dormers facing a nice view.

Other Business & Correspondence:

- a. Legal review – Contractor Yard regulation revisions: Alex W. noted that the Town’s counsel is still conducting a legal review and that he should have an update at the next meeting.
- b. Agenda item requests for February 10 meeting: John K. asked for an update on work plan progress. Alex W. walked through a handful of active projects that could be revisited, once the contractor yard regulation revisions legal review is conducted and the standards are wrapped up and a public hearing is held. He said that the energy chapter of the Town Plan review is currently with the Selectboard for consideration. He said that the Planning Commission will need to revisit water and wastewater allocation system revisions, noting that a public hearing had been held on this topic previously but that the project stalled when it ran into issues about how this allocation system will work for businesses. He also listed future projects, such as implementation of the energy chapter and making progress on climate change issues, cannabis establishments, river corridor regulations and zoning revisions, and rural residential 1 district zoning.

Maggie G. adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Coonradt, Recording Secretary