

Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
February 24, 2021

Approved – March 10, 2021

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

Members Absent: None.

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

Members of the Public: Nina Friscia.

Rolf K. called the meeting to order at approximately 7:03 PM.

1. 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.

2. Agenda Changes:

None at this time.

3. Public Comments for Non-Agenda Items:

None at this time.

4. Minutes of February 10, 2021 Meeting:

John K. **moved to approve the minutes as written.** Denver W. **seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.**

5. Architectural & Streetscape Design Standards *(continued from 12/9/20, 1/13/21, 1/27/21, and 2/10/21 meetings)*

- a. Review combined document for public outreach

The Planning Commission briefly discussed the latest revised version of the design standards.

John K. asked about the illustrations showing street cross-sections. He asked about whether dimensions for right-of-way, parking, and traffic could be included in the illustrations, since there are none currently. Alex W. replied that the illustrations are meant to illustrate the maximum front yard setback standards and the examples of street types mentioned in that section. He said that dimensional standards don't currently exist, but that dimensions for travel lane width and street parking could be easily included. Maggie G. cautioned against including numbers that aren't linked to a set of specifications, since there are no public works standards in Hinesburg. Alex W. said he would draft a small section to describe dimensional standards with reference to the illustrations as a placeholder, and suggested creating a more detailed section later on in the drafting and approval process.

Barbara F. asked about some of the features and elements within the street cross section illustrations, and Alex W. replied that the illustrations are meant to show a typical street and multiple options and configurations for a greenbelt and tree-planting locations. Barbara F. asked which of the illustrations makes the most sense for a Vermont winter. Alex W. replied that greenbelts are needed proximate to streets for snow storage, and that tree canopies in those greenbelts can provide shade for both the street and the sidewalk. He noted that developers have said that in high-traffic areas where on-street parking is well-utilized, it's safer and more convenient for people to be able to exit their car and not have to navigate a snow bank to access the sidewalk. He noted that the illustrations are not prescriptive and that elements of each could be combined in different manners.

Barbara F. asked about the sign in the mixed-use illustration. Alex W. said that the sign meets current regulations, since it is not in the right-of-way. Barbara F. said that it looks too close to the pedestrian on the sidewalk. Alex W. said that he would research whether there were sign setbacks in the Hinesburg regulations.

Barbara F. suggested rewording the second sentence in Section 5.22.3(10)(b). Rolf K. suggested it be modified to read: "Rather than placing buildings, sidewalks, driveways, etc, directly on the Route 116 frontage (traditional village design), development shall be set back to allow for landscaping, pedestrian and multi-use paths that are separated from Route 116."

b. Schedule for community outreach and possible public hearing

The Planning Commission discussed next steps. Alex W. suggested asking Mitch Cypes and the Development Review Board to review the draft standards and provide comments. He also asked John K. and Rolf K. if there are other architects they would recommend to review the draft standards prior to a public hearing. He additionally suggested reaching out to a few developers. He asked Planning Commission members whether targeted subject matter expert review should occur prior to public comment, or whether they should reach out to these stakeholders and the public simultaneously. Planning Commissioners agreed that the draft standards should be sent to stakeholders/subject matter experts and the public at the same time.

The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the draft standards on April 28.

6. Contractor Yard Regulation Revisions:

a. Review comments from Town Council and revised draft

Alex W. noted that he provided the Planning Commission with the regulation revisions including comments from the Town counsel as well as an email from the Town counsel regarding several specific changes. He said that one of these changes would be less prescriptive than the draft regulations, and that it suggests eliminating some of the process set forth in the regulations regarding neighbor approval and support and instead relying on private agreements. Maggie G. agreed with the counsel's suggestion, saying that the Town shouldn't become involved in private disputes on private roads/land. Marie G. concurred. Alex W. asked Dennis P. about this issue and whether it comes up at the Development Review Board frequently. Dennis P. said that it has come up and that the Board's position is that neighbors should work out disputes without Town involvement. Rolf K. agreed.

b. Schedule for community outreach and possible public hearing

Alex W. said that he would like to do more outreach to specific private contractors and their neighbors prior to a public hearing, but asked the Planning Commission about conducting general public outreach.

Maggie G. said advertising the hearing and soliciting feedback through that avenue makes the most sense. She pointed out that the contractors who are grandfathered in don't have incentives to provide feedback since this will not impact them. Barbara F. suggested direct outreach as well as Front Porch Forum and the Town website.

John K. asked about existing contractor yards and whether they would be required to comply with these regulations if they were to expand. Alex W. replied that no, any expansion of a pre-existing non-conforming use should be handled through the section of the regulations that pertains to pre-existing non-conforming uses and that this specific set of changes is designed for new uses.

The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on contractor yard regulation revisions on March 24.

7. Work Plan for Upcoming Projects (continued from 1/27/21 meeting)

Alex W. noted that there has been some discussion about next projects to work on after the design standards revisions and contractor yard regulation revisions are completed. He said he would like to spend time in the fall to take up the issue of cannabis and marijuana retail sales, once the State's Cannabis Control Board has fleshed out a set of rules.

John K. asked if Alex W. could conduct a prioritization of the substantive projects for the Planning Commission to consider. Alex W. replied that he would be able to highlight the more substantive items currently on the work plan list.

Maggie G. suggested taking up work on two items from the work plan. She said that the first deals with the river corridors and stream setbacks in the Village, and the second pertains to reviewing and potentially updating the Rural Residential 1 District zoning. Regarding river corridors and stream setbacks, she asked if it would be straightforward to align the Hinesburg regulations around river corridors with State regulations. Alex W. replied that it would be straightforward if the Planning Commission is amenable to what the State is recommending in terms of river corridor setbacks and flood hazard zones. He said that Hinesburg has stream setbacks for both sides of each downhill flow of water. He said that the Village area also has additional regulations for setbacks. He noted that the Town currently uses an older map for fluvial erosion hazard zones, detailing where a stream or river could move depending on numerous factors, and that it should be replaced.

Barbara F. agreed that the Planning Commission should focus on those two work plan items, and suggesting working collaboratively with the Conservation Commission on the first. Rolf K. suggested letting the Conservation Commission know about these endeavors and beginning to schedule meetings. He also suggested that the Planning Commission become more familiar with the regulations around the water paths in the community and the rural zoning district, as they begin to work on these topics. Denver W. said he would be interested in attending a future Conservation Committee meeting.

Alex W. suggested asking a representative from the State Agency of Natural Resources to speak to the Planning Commission about how the state is planning around river corridors and how that has evolved over the years.

Barbara F. discussed developing a historic design district in Hinesburg, and asked whether the Steering Committee would be an appropriate body to work on that. Alex W. suggested discussing the topic further offline.

8. Other Business & Correspondence:

- a. Agenda item requests for March 10 meeting

Planning Commission members thanked Maggie G. and Dennis P. for their service and years on the Commission.

Rolf K. adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Coonradt, Recording Secretary