

Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
May 12, 2021

Approved – June 9, 2021

Members Present: James Donegan, Barbara Forauer, Nina Friscia, Marie Gardner, John Kiedaisch, Rolf Kielman, Denver Wilson.

Members Absent: none.

Also: Alex Weinhagen (Director of Planning & Zoning); Lenore Budd (Planning & Zoning Administrative Assistant); Amy Coonradt (Recording Secretary)

Members of the Public: Kate Kelly.

Rolf K. called the meeting to order at approximately 7:01 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. Welcome Nina Friscia (newly-appointed Commissioner):

The Planning Commission welcomed Nina Friscia as its newest commissioner.

3. Agenda Changes:

None at this time.

4. Public Comments for Non-Agenda Items:

None at this time.

5. Zoning Regulation Revisions – Home Occupation Contractor Yards and Home Occupation Vehicle Repair Services

a. Review final draft with changes from 4/28 discussion

Alex W. briefly reviewed the modifications made for zoning regulation revisions related to home occupation contractor yards based on feedback received and past discussion. He noted the removal of a sentence in section 5.3.1 and language modification in section 5.3.2 to include the repair and maintenance of equipment. Barbara F. suggested that the additional language be split into two sentences. Alex W. noted the simplified language in section 5.3.3 around road classes, the removal of reference to attractive fencing in 5.4.3, the clarification in section 5.3.5 that requirements for total number of vehicles apply to all vehicles, the additional detail around the processing of materials in section 5.3.8, and the adjustment to the hours of operation in section to be 6:00 am to 9:00 pm instead of 7:00 am to 10:00 pm and that on-site work is not permitted outside of these hours but vehicles are allowed to arrive and depart from the property outside of that range. He additionally noted modified language in section 5.3.10 around storage of fuels and other hazardous materials to limit quantities of all types of hazardous materials (not just fuel). He noted that he hadn't received definition language from an engineer's perspective of what constitutes a stabilized surface in section 5.3.11, but believes the language as proposed is sufficient. He finally noted revised definitions for terms related to home occupation contractor yard and vehicle repair services in section 10.1.

Alex W. then briefly reviewed modifications made for zoning regulation revisions related to home occupation vehicle repair services based on feedback received and past discussion. He noted that #2 now states that vehicle repair work must be conducted indoors, but that it allows for brief outdoor repairs such as for flat tires as well as simple visual inspections. He noted that #3 increases the limit on the number of vehicles to 10, with provisions that the Development Review Board (DRB) can reduce that number if there are limitations due to small lot size, parking, screening, etc. He noted modifications in #6 that clarified that screening requirements do not include screening across driveways. Lenore B. suggested removing the word “residential”. Nina F. asked about the indoor requirements in #2 and whether the doors to home occupation repair services buildings need to be shut or can remain open. Alex W. said that the requirement speaks to the intent, which is to try and limit noise, and Barbara F. noted that closed doors in summertime could make buildings extremely hot.

- b. Consider a motion to forward proposal to the Selectboard

John K. made a motion, and Marie G. seconded, to submit the current draft of the Zoning Regulation revisions for Home Occupation Contractor Yard and Vehicle Repair Services to the Selectboard for their review. The motion passed 7-0.

6. Rural Residential 1 District – Overview

a. Review RR1 zoning district – development density, natural resources, current regulations
Alex W. provided an overview of the Rural Residential 1 Zoning District, utilizing visuals to display aerial photos, maps, and overlays for residential dwellings, road infrastructure, water and sewer service areas, topography, steep and moderately steep slopes, streams and wetlands, special wildlife habitats, and soils. He noted that the district encompasses an area from the intersection of North Road and Route 116 the area around the lakes, and Richmond Road. He noted that the zone does not include the buffer around the lakes (which is included in the Shoreline District). He noted that it is the most densely settled district in Hinesburg due to development along Richmond Road.

Alex W. then displayed an aerial photo showing what the district looks like from the sky, calling attention to the Mt. Pritchard area in the northern portion of the zone, which is forested and does not contain significant development. He noted the Pond Brook Road area, which leads to development along the lakes, and development along Richmond Road. He noted that the south has more contiguous forest near Lavigne Hill Road, but that it is more settled than the Mt. Pritchard area.

Alex W. then displayed the residential dwellings within the zone, showing the densely populated Richmond Road area and the sparsely populated Mt. Pritchard area. He overlaid the parcel map on top of the dwellings map. He noted that where there is more development there is also more fragmentation of ownership and smaller parcels. He also showed the road infrastructure in the district, which show how the area is penetrated in terms of development and infrastructure.

Alex W. then showed the water and sewer service area and the portion of which that is located in the Rural Residential 1 District. He noted that the majority of the district in the north and south are not serviced by municipal water or sewer. He noted that the water line extends beyond the service area, with the assistance of a water storage tank to service the mobile homes in the area. He noted that no new water connections are being made along the water line that is outside of the service area.

He showed the topography of the district. He noted that the Mt. Pritchard area is very different and higher elevation in terms of topography and has steeper drops than other parts of the district. He also

noted Piette Meadow Road, which is mostly on a flat plateau. He overlaid the steep slopes layer onto the topography map, which highlights the slopes that are greater than 25% grade and the moderately steep slopes that are 15-25% grade. He noted that regulations for rural areas of town require development to avoid the steepest slopes and to minimize development's impact on the moderately steep slopes.

Alex W. showed the streams and wetlands within the district that have been mapped by the State or Town. He noted the drainage coming out of the lakes, saying that Lake Iroquois has a large watershed, which discharges into Patrick Brook and then through the Village.

Alex W. noted special wildlife habitats in the district, such as deer wintering areas in the Mt. Pritchard area, noting that those areas have a particular kind of vegetative cover that provides a thermal blanket for deer and decreases snow depths, and is typically made up of hemlock, spruce, fir and certain types of pine trees. He noted that these areas are taken into consideration in the Act 250 approval process at the state level. He noted also the rare species areas, some of which are near Lake Iroquois.

He showed the soils in the district that are good for growing crops, as mapped by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the 1960s. He said that the Town wants to preserve as much agricultural soil as possible. He said that much of the soil preservation work is in the Agricultural Zoning District, but that some of these soils are in the Rural Residential 1 District. He noted that some of the agricultural soils on the map are only good if they meet certain conditions, such as if they are drained (though draining isn't that great for the environment).

Alex W. showed additional wildlife habitat mapping, which shows areas that are considered core wildlife habitat by the Town and generally include forested areas where home sites have been extracted as well as a buffer between forested and developable areas. He said that most of this habitat is in the Mt. Pritchard area. The map also showed wildlife corridors and linkages.

b. Review Town Plan recommendations, prior Planning Commission discussion (from 2013-14)
Rolf K. asked why the districts were delineated the way that they have been in the first place and why certain parts of districts haven't been incorporated into other districts. He also noted that the water and sewer lines seem like they end arbitrarily. John K. agreed that these are good framing questions. Alex W. said that the Planning Commission has previously discussed 3 areas within the RR1 district and how they function separately, but that they never worked on draft language or a proposal. He also said that he can research the history of the formation of the districts but that it should not matter too much, as there has been enough time and planning done over the last 30 years that the Planning Commission can work with its current configuration. He noted that in 2013 the Town adopted sweeping changes for the Agricultural District and the Rural Residential 2 District that were controversial. He said that at that time, the Planning Commission made an effort to provide clarity on how much development would be possible in those districts based on parcels and attempted to give landowners as much flexibility as possible while still limiting development. He noted that it would be difficult for the RR1 District to adopt a common density.

Denver W. outlined feedback from the Conservation Commission, noting some shared concerns such as around animal habitats, slope steepness and fragmentation of habitat areas. Marie G. noted that issues like runoff are important to keep in mind. Alex W. said that there were a number of discussions in 2013 about updates to the RR1 and Shoreline districts with recognition that areas upslope of Pond Road have the potential to cause substantial erosion and sediment deposition. Kate K. added that the area to the

east of Lake Iroquois is only partly in Hinesburg but is part of a larger forest block that's in Richmond and also needs to be looked at as a whole.

Marie G. asked if the zoning could be changed and whether the Town could potentially create RR1A and RR1B. Alex W. replied that it would be possible and previous Planning Commissions were looking at approaching revisions that way. Denver W. asked if there are considerations for altering the Village District, like taking some amount of area from RR1 and merging it with the Village. Alex W. said that that hasn't been contemplated to date and that the Village growth area and water and sewer service area were calibrated in 2009 not to expand too far in the growth area zone, which would strain capacity.

Barbara F. asked about the forest connectivity and whether it has been mapped. Kate K. said that the Conservation Commission had a consultant begin to look at the mapping and to update some of those forest blocks. She added that the next phase of the consultant's work will be conducting site visits into the areas and mapping them in further detail.

Rolf K. expressed interest in seeing the regulation requirements across the Agricultural, Village, and Rural Residential 1-2 Districts, such as lot size, zoning, and density. He asked whether some of the regulations could be aligned for areas with similar physical characteristics. He said it would also be important to understand the physical characteristics of the entire zone, noting that for example, the portion along Richmond Road is almost its own Village, and the same holds true for some of the other clusters like the mobile home parks. Alex W. said he could provide comparisons for table density. He mentioned that the dimensional standards for all districts are in a table within the Town Plan. The table doesn't mention development potential, however, and Alex W. said that he could summarize that across districts. Rolf K. asked about next steps. Alex W. said that at the next meeting, the Planning Commission could talk about either the river corridors discussion or continue discussing the RR1. Rolf K. suggested maybe conducting site visits to some parts of the zone that highlight the particular physical characteristics within it.

7. Minutes of April 28 Meeting

Barbara F. **made a motion, and John K. seconded, to approve the minutes as amended. The motion passed 7-0.**

The minutes were amended as follows:

- Remove Jonathan S. from absent attendees.
- Replace "contracts" with "contractors" in Item #4, paragraph #2, in sentence beginning with "Denver W. said".
- Replace "neighborhood" with "neighborhoods" in Item #4, paragraph #3 in sentence beginning "John K noted that feedback was received".

7. Other Business & Correspondence

- a. Agenda item requests for May 26 meeting

The Planning Commission discussed conducting site visits in the Rural Residential Zoning District at its May 26th meeting. Rolf K. also suggested devoting a portion of meetings to small informative videos or presentations on informative topics related to planning.

Rolf K. spoke about his experience with the Vestry project application at the DRB, noting difficulty with parking. He suggested exploring a strategy of shared parking in the Town for uses at different times, and

that the Town should think creatively about how to address shared parking in a thoughtful way. Lenore B. also noted that trailhead parking is a challenge.

Rolf K. **adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:45 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Coonradt, Recording Secretary