

**Town of Hinesburg**  
**Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**October 27, 2021**

*Approved November 10, 2021*

**Members Present:** Lenore Budd, James Donegan, Barbara Forauer, Rolf Kielman, Denver Wilson (via Zoom).

**Members Absent:** Nina Friscia, Marie Gardner, John Kiedaisch.

**Also:** Alex Weinhagen (Director of Planning & Zoning); Amy Coonradt (Recording Secretary)

**Members of the Public:** Maggie Gordon, Kate Kelly (via Zoom).

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

**1. Agenda Changes**

None.

**2. Public Comment for Non-agenda Items**

None.

**3. Minutes of October 13 Meeting**

Denver W. **made a motion, and** Lenore B. **seconded, to approve the minutes of October 13 as presented. The motion passed 5-0.**

**4. RR1 District Zoning Revisions**

- a. Review resource mapping – primary and secondary resource areas

Alex W. said that the Planning Commission had previously discussed the conservation design standards, how they apply to the more rural districts, and what the resource areas were. He noted that the resource areas were divided between primary and secondary resource areas and also that design and development should not occur in the primary resource areas and should be minimized in the secondary resource areas. He added that there is, however, a provision to cross a primary resource area for access, if there is no other option. He finally noted that he has put together some live mapping to show where those resource areas are located in the Rural Residential 1 (RR1) Zoning District.

Alex W. displayed a map of the primary resource areas in the RR1 zoning district. He showed the steep slope (>25%) area of the map, which is a primary resource. He layered the moderately steep slopes (15-25%) on top of the steep slopes, noting that the moderate slopes are a secondary resource. He noted that often, the 15% slopes don't seem as steep in person than they appear on the map. He then showed the deer wintering areas on top of the slopes, noting that they are a secondary resource. Lenore B. asked whether the Town has flexibility to define its deer wintering areas. Alex W. replied that it's a State resource and that the Town can decide if deer wintering areas are a priority resource. He then showed the core wildlife habitat, noting overlap in the Mount Pritchard area and the area east of Lake Iroquois between the core wildlife habitat and the deer wintering areas. He then overlaid the wildlife corridors, showing that there are only two of them in the RR1 district. Barbara F. observed that there are no corridors connecting to the Mount Pritchard area. Alex W. noted that there is a regional conservation partnership with other surrounding towns that are interested in looking at their natural areas, and they could potentially identify corridors in the Mount Pritchard area. Rolf K. spoke about underpasses for

wildlife use that are used to link wetlands to other types of forested areas and funnel critters through safe areas. He also noted manhole covers in the underpasses. Kate Kelly noted that those underpasses have manholes to allow water into them. She also noted that the Conservation Committee is working to update the resource mapping, which could potentially make them more accurate. Alex W. then displayed the prime agricultural soils, noting that though the regulations specify that impacts to these soils should be minimal, they are already somewhat broken up by previous development.

Alex W. showed all primary and secondary resource areas in RR1, noting that there are some areas where the combined coverage of primary and secondary resources covers the entirety of the land (such as the area east of Lake Iroquois and the Mount Pritchard area). Rolf K. said that even the primary resource areas in RR1 aren't technically restricting development, and Alex confirmed this, saying that the environmental standards don't apply to RR1 currently. He said that they could be applied to the RR1 district, either in a similar fashion to how they're applied in other districts, or they could be applied in ways that make the most sense for the RR1 district. He said that for example, agricultural soils might not be a resource around which the Town wants to restrict development in RR1 (as opposed to in the Agricultural Zoning Districts).

Rolf K. asked the Planning Commission for their thoughts on the primary and secondary resource area locations. He asked whether the concept of protecting zones in this manner aligns with the methods being used in other parts of Town. He said that he would like to try and simplify some of the regulations. Rolf K. also asked if the RR1 district (or any district) needs to be contiguous. Alex W. replied that no, they can be broken up, which is an approach that was taken with the Commercial Zoning district. Denver W. said that he would support a simple approach and solution. He said that applying the conservation design standards to the RR1 district would make sense and would have minimal impact, as landowners aren't looking to develop their property in primary resource areas. Alex W. said that certain landowners have cited concern about what the density allowance implications would be if RR1 were to look more like RR2. Denver W. added that some of the parts of RR1 will be self-constrained by the terrain.

Rolf K. said that the conservation design standards should apply to at least the areas of RR1 where there is a concentration of primary resources, if not to all of the district. He suggested taking a small parcel of land as a case study and applying the conservation design standards and the zoning regulations to it and see how it is affected. Alex W. said that having a lot-by-lot analysis as an example is a useful exercise for landowners to see how the regulations would apply to actual properties.

James D. recommended that the Planning Commission should apply the conservation design standards to the RR1 district and make core wildlife habitat a primary resource. Rolf K. said that making the core wildlife habitat a primary resource could render certain areas in the district untouchable (such as large swaths of the Mount Pritchard area). He said the expansion of what is considered a primary resource could be expanded to other districts, and could also have implications for other districts. Alex W. wondered if there are certain areas that shouldn't see development at all. He noted that other municipalities have areas that pertain to non-residential resource-based uses (forestry, sugaring, etc), but that Hinesburg currently does not.

Rolf K. said that they understand enough about the RR1 district's characteristics and there would be real value in getting feedback from residents. Alex W. spoke about the communication he had discussed at prior meetings that he would like to send out to property-owners to alert them to the potential zoning changes and solicit feedback. Denver W. said that defining the RR1 zoning and the RR2 zoning in the

communication would be helpful, so property-owners can determine what could be changing and how it could affect them.

## **5. Grant Application – Municipal Bylaw Modernization Program**

a. Zoning for Great Neighborhoods – making minor changes to increase housing supply  
Alex W. said that at the last meeting there was not a majority vote to move forward with the municipal planning grant or a municipal neighborhood designation. He said he discussed the programs with the Town Manager and that they will let the grant go for this year. He noted that the Municipal Bylaw Modernization Program, however, is a one-time offer and that he has a revised proposal for the Planning Commission's consideration that only includes the Great Neighborhoods component. He said that it could help tune up archaic zoning standards that aren't suited to the infill development that Hinesburg is looking for, through minor changes that can improve the ability to redevelop property. He said the program would entail hiring a consultant (such as someone from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission) who would review the Town's zoning regulations and provide recommendations for zoning changes. James D. asked if the process would be similar to other zoning change processes. Alex W. replied that yes, the Planning Commission would spearhead the work with the consultant, hold public hearings, and then send any recommendations up to the Selectboard for final approval. Rolf K. asked about the size of the grant. Alex W. replied that it would likely be a \$10,000-\$15,000-sized project. He added that the match amounts required of the Town are already in the budget.

**Denver W. made a motion, and Lenore B. seconded, to support this grant application. The motion passed 5-0.**

b. Neighborhood Development Area designation – more information on benefits  
Alex W. said that regarding the Neighborhood Development Area designation topic, Kelly's Field is pursuing an expansion project and they would like to pursue this designation. He said that this designation would waive certain permitting fees and review. He said that the developers estimated their total permits and fees to be about \$300,000 for the project, and if they had that designation, they would not need an Act 250 permit (which would save around \$30,000) and their State water and wastewater permit fees would be reduced by around \$800.

## **6. Planning Project Review, Workplan**

Lenore B. said that affordable housing and energy are the two areas that the Planning Commission (and the Town) should prioritize. She said that the new energy chapter in the Town Plan calls out actions that the Planning Commission should take with regards to that topic. She suggested spending time at a future meeting reviewing the energy chapter and its priorities and goals. Alex W. noted that a new position at the CCRPC was hired to help towns in the county implement actions from their energy chapters.

## **7. Other Business & Correspondence**

a. Northern New England Planning Conference Notes – Barbara & Alex  
Alex W. noted that he and Barbara F. attended the Northern New England Planning Conference. Barbara F. spoke about the keynote speaker's topics, which include the digitalization of life, and the ramifications of people working from home, such as the closing of office buildings. She said they also discussed accessory apartments, Airbnbs, and short-term rental agreements, as well as topics like the loss of biodiversity and impact on trail systems. Alex W. spoke about a session he attended on qualitative data analysis, and another session on the housing crisis and Covid migration.

b. Agenda items for the November 10 meeting  
No discussion at this time.

Rolf K. **adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:03 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Amy Coonradt, Recording Secretary