

**RESIDENTIAL PROJECT MEETING
MEETING SUMMARY
OCTOBER 31, 2011**

Present: Judith Esmay, Jonathan Edwards, Vicki Smith, Kate Connolly, Iain Sim, Joan Garipay, Michael Hingston, Timothy McNamara

Minutes October 24, 2011

The minutes of October 24, 2011 were reviewed and amendments suggested. On a motion by Kate Connolly and a second by Joan Garipay, there was unanimous support for approving the amended minutes.

Discussion about Dimensional Controls in Zoning

There was a brief discussion about whether a structure should be permitted in the setback under certain circumstances or if the ordinance should state that structures are prohibited in order to instruct the ZBA. It was agreed that the Committee should craft a new ordinance not allowing exceptions to the rule of no structures in the setback, and in fact, the ordinance should prohibit structures in the setback in order to be clear about our intention of maintaining the 10 foot side and rear setback free of structures. The ten foot setback is required for reasons of fire safety, light and air.

Lot Size

Lot size has been used to determine density. As a whole, the various lot sizes across town reflect historic land use patterns, with 10,000 square feet being the basic building block of a pleasant neighborhood. The definition of lot, a parcel of land with a single principle use and ancillary uses, and frontage on a public street was reviewed.

What is the value of having different lot sizes over different parts of town? Smaller lot sizes are closer to downtown. Being served by municipal water and sewer enables smaller lots. On site water and septic require larger lot sizes. Smaller lots can be more affordable. Larger lot size allows for maintenance of rural character and offers opportunities for wildlife and domestic animals. Smaller lot sizes can create walkable neighborhoods but may not provide habitat for rare flora or fauna. Lot size in the developed in-town area is different than in rural area. Water, sewer and walkability are considerations. In the rural area, lot size does not work as a primary density control. This is fragmenting the landscape.

Do we need to consider our in-town lot sizes? In-town lot sizes are important to infill development plans. Lot size matters when laying out something new and minimum lot size needs to be established for a PRD or multi-family housing in general. There are in-town areas that predate zoning where lot size is non-conforming and in-town areas that comply with zoning lot size requirements. For the most part, lots in the rural area are zoning compliant. Different policies are needed for in town and rural areas.

Should lot size be our preferred way to regulate density? Most committee members thought that it should not. Density and lot size do not have to be connected. Should undevelopable land be considered in lot size calculations? This will be discussed further at another time in the context of environmental resources.

Would more density be appropriate on lots south of downtown?

Can you plan for infill without changes to lot size? One way to do that would be condominium conversion of a single family house to more than one unit. Other infill possibilities are: creation of a new lot by subdivision; developing a vacant lot; or converting an existing accessory structure to residential use, construction of an accessory structure to house a new residence or creating a unit in an existing residential unit.

What would we do to encourage infill development to maintain the 3:1 ratio of in-town to rural residents? Modifying to 4:1 or 5:1 is not acceptable because it is not stated in the Master Plan or draft in-town policies. What are we looking for when we want to encourage infill? Does increased density change the character of the neighborhood in negative ways?

Infill should mean adding density with care. Massing should be controlled to protect the quality of life in a neighborhood. The character of neighborhood changes with lots of curb cuts. Eight instead of four curb cuts on a particular street really changes the character.

Where do we have interest in new development in Hanover? Suggestions included: Rivercrest, Burton Road, part of Valley Road, Verona Road, West Wheelock Street, a large lot on Meadow Road, Sand Hill, A lot, the practice golf course and the large College field near A lot. Lots on Rip, Low, Haskins and Rayton are big enough to be subdivided, but are those neighborhoods walkable?

Maybe the types of unit will not matter. However, a rule such as no apartment buildings should be allowed in the rural area, might also be a good idea. Housing should be no more than 2.5 stories with setback related to sun angle. A sliding scale of lot size and lot coverage should be explored.

We can define an area for infill if we wish either by specifying on a map, or using a set of principles.

The Committee concluded that using lot size as primary determinant of population density does not serve us well in all locations. In town where water and sewer service is available, infill can be achieved by means other than lot size. In the rural area, functional open space can be set aside without lot size considerations. This would enhance the freedom of land use design. Lot size should differ in certain neighborhoods. More important than lot size is the need to establish rules that deal with height, lot coverage and number of units. The Committee will focus on establishing a population density but not a lot size. The population density would be set using units per acre.

Frontage

Frontage is a flexible concept. In our current zoning, frontage requirements are reduced along the turn-around portion of cul de sacs. Piano key lots and pork chop lots were discussed. Minimum frontage is important for driveway access. Frontage requirements also serve to control density. As long as lot has access, is frontage needed? Twenty feet is necessary for legal access. Flag lots can result in loss of privacy due to "back yard" development.

A change in approach was suggested. In order to expedite discussions, a draft policy should be discussed in order to arrive at a consensus policy more quickly.

Next week lot coverage(% of lot and maximum lot coverage), building bulk(volume), building footprint, the number of uses on a lot and types of designated uses will be discussed.

Carolyn Radisch and Robin Nuse would like to meet with the Committee on November 14 to discuss neighborhood character and new development.

Meeting adjourned at 4: 10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Vicki Smith, Scribe

NEXT MEETING ON MONDAY NOVEMBER 7 at 1:30 pm.