

PLANNING BOARD
SEPTEMBER 11, 2012 at 7:30 PM
TOWN HALL, 41 SOUTH MAIN STREET

In attendance:

Members: Nancy Carter (Selectmen's Representative), Kate Connolly, Judith Esmay (Chair), Joan Garipay, Jim Hornig, Michael Mayor

Alternates: Bill Dietrich, Mike Hingston, Iain Sim

Staff: Vicki Smith, Jonathan Edwards

Others: See Attendance Sheet

1. **MINUTES:** The minutes of the September 4th site visit were approved.

2. **RESIDENTIAL ZONING PROJECT DISCUSSION: WORK TO BE DONE, SCHEDULE, PLANNING BOARD ROLE, OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC INPUT**

ESMAY explained that over 3 yrs ago, the Board recognized that the Zoning Ordinance has become a product of a lot of band-aid fixing, is less and less accessible, and has a considerable number of internal inconsistencies. The Residential Project Committee (RPC) was formed to look at the residential zones and identify neighborhood character. The more the RPC looked at it, the more they realized an overhaul of the whole Ordinance is needed. Meetings, held 3 yrs ago at the Ray School, were intended to launch this project by asking the public for input of what they value about Hanover. The RPC met weekly and toured neighborhoods throughout Hanover. They are now ready to hire a consultant to undertake the work of drafting the Ordinance.

A draft contract, between the Town and Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB), was reviewed. Edwards said that VHB is a large planning, urban design, and engineering firm based in Watertown, MA, with offices around the country. They are well-known and well respected for over 25 yrs. CONNOLLY noted their involvement in the design of Hanover's Main St some years ago. Edwards said one of their specialties is working up zoning in order to express design & land use visions. One of VHB's partners, Bob Ballou, lives on Dresden Rd in Hanover and was the Co-Chair of the Lyme Rd Village Center Taskforce.

Edwards went over the draft schedule, beginning September 18th and completing February 20th. Included are 4 public hearings and 2 meetings specifically to present and seek input from the public. He advised of the Residential Project—Policy Development—Final Compendium, a 59-page document that outlines the content basis on which the Board expects the consultants to proceed. Links to the following can be found at:

http://hanovernh.virtualtownhall.net/Pages/HanoverNH_BComm/planning/res

- [Request for Proposals, Consultant Services, Residential Zoning Project](#)
- [Residential Project—Policy Development—Final Compendium, May 14, 2012.](#)

- In-Town Neighborhoods map, May 14, 2012.
- Rural Neighborhoods map, May 14, 2012.
- Minutes of Residential Project Committee meetings.

Copies of the policy compendium will also be made available at both libraries and Town Hall.

The project is broken down into 3 Tasks:

- 1) Information gathering to include - a kick-off meeting on September 18th, the consultants' review of materials produced by the RPC and Board, a public hearing seeking public input, and submission of a memorandum report summarizing the findings;
 - A tour of residential neighborhoods for VHB to become geographically familiar with the area.
 - The 1st public hearing is to inform the public of what motivated the Board to embark on this project, what the goals are and how they benefit the community, and to obtain public input.
- 2) Working sessions, where much of the work will be done. These will be open to the public. A second public hearing, specifically to obtain public input, will also occur.
- 3) Final presentation to the Board, changes necessary, a public hearing, and a formal public hearing.

ESMAY said the purpose of the current meeting is to review the process and schedule outlined in the contract. Substantive discussion issues will be held at a later date.

Public Questions / Comments:

- Jeff Balch, of Hanover Center Rd, questioned the need to hire consultants given the amount of time the Board & RPC have spent on this.
 - Edwards said the policy compendium needs to be translated into legally operational language. The value the consultants bring to Hanover is that they've had experience in other places with various techniques of doing that.
- Bernie Waugh, of Pinneo Hill Rd & ZBA member, urged the Board to remain open on the number of warrant articles needed to propose this to Town Meeting. He said, if proposed in one article, anyone opposing any little item will oppose the entire article. He expressed concern that the contract does not appear to mention conservation of open space being a principle.
 - Edwards said open space is mentioned a lot in the policy compendium, including how it is beneficial, and how it needs to be integrated into the neighborhoods and become more accessible from neighborhoods.
 - Waugh said the Board cannot realistically expect every voter to read the 59-page compendium.
- Waugh said the final wording needs to be vetted in the public just as much as the original concepts. He said, to a certain degree, there is a natural distrust of professionals. Their work must be reviewed.
- Anne Morris, of King Rd, asked how the public is to know that the policy compendium exists or that the Board is conducting this overhaul. She said this could be unsuccessful because of process.

- Ruth Lappin, of 80 Lyme Rd & ZBA member, asked how many neighborhoods the Board envisions. She asked how the character of the neighborhood in the rural areas of town was determined when the group of residents from the rural areas was unable to determine the character.
 - Smith said it was split up and looked at in terms of future land use policy. The split is explained in the policy compendium.
- Lappin asked if the overhaul will be form-based.
 - Edwards said that is one of the types that would be useful but cannot be used entirely.
- Lappin said she would caution against developing something that will pit neighborhood against neighborhood.
- Lappin said the West End Neighborhood is an overlay district. What do you do about uses? Will each neighborhood have separate uses?
 - ESMAY said not separate uses, but separate dimensional requirement, for example.
 - CONNOLLY said there is one use for the zones being addressed, and that is residential. Any other uses that will be introduced will be a source of discussion.
- Lappin asked if all of the little neighborhoods will be overlay districts.
 - Edwards said there may be a set of master districts with common characteristics in groups and individual characteristics in some subsets.
- Lappin said it is unknown whether the West End Neighborhood overlay district will work. It has not been tested.
 - SIM said the West End Neighborhood was originally proposed as a complete amendment. The proponents found that the way to get what they were looking for in a timely fashion would be best achieved with an overlay district. That should not necessarily be considered the road map for what will be done for this whole project.
- Lise Richardson, of Dogford Rd, said we all ought to protect and preserve what we have even though sometimes it's hard. She suggested advertising on the event page or in the Letter to the Editor section of the paper.
- Lappin asked whether the work of a previous rural group is incorporated into the current project.
 - Smith said that group's work was focused more on environmental concerns. This one addresses residential issues.
 - Edwards said the last portion of the policy compendium pursues many of the goals that were part of the original rural work. It's a different way of achieving some of the same goals in a process that will become more comprehensive.
 - Waugh said residential issues and environmental issues go hand-in-hand and cannot be separated from each other.
- Harold Frost, of Hanover Center Rd, said Centerra North should not be put off as suggested in the policy compendium.

Board Questions/Comments:

- It was questioned whether neighborhood representatives should join the project to advocate for their neighborhoods and/or get the word out to the public and the public's input back to the Board.

- The Board bears the responsibility of managing the Zoning Ordinance. This is an opportunity to reach out to a group of truly experienced individuals that have been sought out and chosen to pursue the project.
- An observation of the public input sessions held 3 yrs ago is that people like the neighborhoods they are in. What they don't like are some of the rules & regulations that don't make sense for their neighborhoods. This is an effort to value those neighborhoods, preserve them, keep what people like, and make the regulations easier for people to understand and live with.
- It was questioned whether the Board is full of hope that residents will bring no other issues to the Board over the next 4-5 months.
 - ESMAY said the Board cannot stop residents from submitting applications. The goal is to designate one meeting a month to address incoming applications.
- A suggestion was made to publish a substantial newspaper ad explaining, in simple terms, why the Board is doing this and what they hope to achieve.
 - The ad should include the dates of the public work sessions and public input sessions.
- The policy compendium should be reduced and be easier to understand.
- The Board needs to improve communication relative to documents available.
- Expectations need to be established relative to the sharing of documents and allowing time to review them before a scheduled meeting to discuss them.
- Work session meetings will involve the Board & consultants; the public is welcome to attend, but participation will be limited.
- Work sessions will be held on Mondays @ 1:30 PM.
- The Board will be tolerant of its members that have obligations outside of the Planning Board and have to miss meetings.
- January's public input session will have to be publicized in a much improved way than will be the case for the September/October session.
- How to treat the annual zoning review process should also be considered.
- Due to budget constraints, the consultants should not be used too much early on. Their task of writing the document will be quite extensive.

Staff Questions/Comments:

- Smith said the Board should consider the level of effort they should expect to put into this, how to deal with information flows to the consultant and the public, and to be always receptive and able to get information from the public.
 - It was questioned whether the website is the best forum to get the word out.

A copy of the RSA regarding the zoning ordinance was distributed. ESMAY asked the Board to review it prior to the next meeting.

An email notification list will be established to alert people when working sessions and public input sessions will be held. This notification will be in addition to the required

public hearing notice. **[To be added to the list, please contact Jonathan Edwards at 640-3212 or Jonathan.Edwards@HanoverNH.org.]**

ESMAY read paragraphs 14-19 of the ZBA decision in Case #Z2012-28 regarding 6 Downing Rd which notes the importance of the Zoning Ordinance and the role of the Zoning Administrator to enforce its standards.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

A recent Valley News article about the Pasture Rd application was discussed. HORNIG said he was surprised there was no mention of the Master Plan or Planning Board recommendation to the Selectboard. ESMAY said the Master Plan was mentioned at the Selectboard meeting held 9/10 by Monte Clinton, a former Planning Board member.

4. ADJOURN: The meeting adjourned at 9:59 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Rivard