

**PLANNING BOARD
OCTOBER 1, 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

Alternates: Bill Dietrich, Mike Hingston, Iain Sim

Staff: Vicki Smith, Jonathan Edwards, Judy Brotman

Others: See Attendance Sheet

1. MEET WITH ZONING CONSULTANT, RALPH WILLMER FROM VANASSE HANGEN BRUSTLIN, INC. TO DISCUSS THE BOARD'S CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS AND THE SCHEDULE FOR THE CONSULTANT'S WORK. THOUGH NOT A PUBLIC HEARING, THE PUBLIC IS ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND AND LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS ZONING PROJECT.

ESMAY said the Board has been considering residential land use and zoning for over 3 yrs. The Town's current Zoning Ordinance is 36 yrs old and has internal contradictions and loopholes resulting from annual amendments. The Residential Project Committee (RPC), comprised of 3 staff members and 5 Board members, met virtually weekly over those 3 yrs and conducted site visits throughout town. The results of their pondering are stated in: [Residential Project—Policy Development—Final Compendium](http://hanovernh.org/Pages/HanoverNH_BComm/Planning/ResProj-PolicyDev.pdf), available on the Town's website at: http://hanovernh.org/Pages/HanoverNH_BComm/Planning/ResProj-PolicyDev.pdf.

The Town hired Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) to draft language to revise the Ordinance. In accord with VHB's contract, the purpose of the current meeting is to lay out the goals for the project and the project schedule. ESMAY said public comment is not invited at this time. There will be a very big kickoff meeting Saturday, October 13th, from 9:30 AM – 1:30 PM at the Ray School Music Room.

VHB members in attendance were introduced as:

1. Ralph Willmer, Senior Planner & Project Manager, who will be involved in all aspects of the project.
2. Bob Ballou, Planner & Urban Designer, and Hanover resident.
3. Gordon Leedy, Landscape Architect & Planner; the principal in charge of this project.

Leedy said the project scope involves:

- (1) an initial public forum, to hear the residents' concerns and ideas
- (2) working sessions, involving the Board & VHB, to discuss drafts of technical zoning language
- (3) a 2nd public forum to present a draft document to the community to see if it meets their approval

Leedy said additional discussions can be arranged if needed. It is probably ambitious to think this will be ready for Town Meeting 2013. If more time is needed, VHB is prepared to stick with the process to gain some type of consensus on a way to proceed. Leedy said changes are often perceived as a threat to the status quo and to the potential image & character of the community. His concern is trying to build momentum through the process, while at the same time conducting orderly, well considered discussions of real issues. VHB's goals are to address issues related to day-to-day application processing, the town's changing demographics, and the needs of the town, in a way that does not impact the character of the community.

Willmer said VHB envisions having a lot of back & forth with the Board and the public, and wants to make the process as open as possible.

Board Comments/Questions:

- The VHB contract is for a limited amount of time and expense. Drafting the actual text will take a lot of time. Is there any assurance the work will be finished?
 - Willmer said VHB is under obligation to provide the Town with a product; so they will provide that product.
 - Leedy said the real issue is getting to the root of what the Ordinance will say. That's why we need public input. Various segments of the community may have very disparate needs and opinions.
- The Board would like VHB to help reach out to the public and obtain input. This matters a great deal to the Board and is key to this project.
- What are VHB's expectations of the Board?
 - Willmer said he hopes the Board can play an active role in the public forums and engage residents in the process.
- The following project format was suggested:
 - (1) 1st public workshop
 - (2) compile results of the forum
 - (3) discussions between the Board & VHB
 - (4) VHB & staff compile an issues memorandum, leading to a 1st draft
 - (5) 2nd public forum to present the draft to the public
 - (6) a series of discussions between the Board & VHB, leading to 2nd draft
 - (7) a series of small meetings with the public, scattered around town
 - (8) Board & VHB regroup to share what was learned
 - (9) staff revises the 2nd draft
 - (10) further discussion between the Board & VHB, leading to a 3rd draft
 - (11) present the 3rd draft to the public at a public hearing
 - (12) hold a 2nd public hearing and see if it's ready to go to Town Meeting
 - The smaller meetings scattered around town should be after the 1st draft.
 - Why would staff draft the final document instead of VHB?
 - There's a limited budget. Allowing staff to tweak things will free up VHB's time for more critical matters.
 - Willmer said the goal is to find a balance, working as a team, having staff undertake some portions of the project work.
- The project may not be as big as the Board envisions. The current Ordinance requires simplification of unintended consequences and to be made easier to understand.

- Willmer agreed; some issues wind up becoming bigger than they need to be. The challenge is making sure people understand the changes and are comfortable with them.
- Leedy also agreed, stating that the project will involve some tinkering, recodification, and language changes to clarify the Ordinance's intent and what it actually provides for.
- Does the compendium give VHB enough of an idea where the Board is going? How does it compare to information provided by other communities for similar projects.
 - Willmer said he has not seen a more thorough discussion of the issues than presented from Hanover.
- The strength of the process is to get a document to people, and particular language, so the conversations have a focus.
- A finished document should be provided to the residents in advance of its presentation to them.
- It's important to get residents of different areas involved and vested in the process, who can then communicate it to their fellow citizens.

Preparations for the October 13th Public Forum:

Presentation materials, including the Power Point presentation and questions that will be posed by VHB, will be provided in advance of the forum.

Willmer proposed the following format:

- (1) an overview, summarizing the RPC's work and VHB's understanding of the issues
- (2) break-out into smaller group sessions, separated by geography
 - a consultant & at least one Board member will be assigned to each group
 - facilitators will then be chosen amongst the groups
- (3) reunite & hear reports from the smaller groups of their concerns, goals, etc.
- (4) some type of visual preference survey, using a program that enables electronic responses through the use of clickers
- (5) a break for refreshments

VHB's goals for the 1st public forum are:

- (1) to make sure everyone who wanted to, had a good, fair opportunity to say something
- (2) to obtain good responses and full discussions of questions asked
- (3) to obtain good notes of the responses
- (4) for VHB to walk away with an understanding of the public's goals, objectives, & priorities

Ballou said the nature of this format is always productive, as it provides many different ways for people to provide input, including those that are not comfortable speaking at public venues. Willmer said VHB does not want people to leave with lingering questions about technical terms. The mutual goal is that everyone understands the concepts and revisions.

Board Comments/Questions:

- A suggestion was made to videotape the forum and other meetings.
- Proper logistics must be provided (audio systems that work, tables, etc.).
- Multiple sign-in stations are needed (staff will provide forms & pens).
- Another room may be chosen to better suit VHB's plan to break-out into groups.

- Use of microphones was requested.
- Transaction ads (or larger) will be published well in advance of the forum, and will include mention of the information available.
- The Town will cover the food, help identify facilitators, assign board members to each break-out group, and provide a town map for each group.
- VHB will supply the Power Point display, clickers, larger town map & pushpins.
- A table & chairs will be needed at the front door.
- The option to create a blog was discussed. Willmer said it would be more useful to create a web page where people can record comments or ask questions. The Board decided not to create a blog due to the time required to manage & monitor it.

VHB was excused from the meeting.

Wrap Up:

Smith announced that a link was created, from the Town's website home page, to this project. Weekly postings will be added to include public comments and meeting date announcements. There is also an email list for meeting notification purposes. [To be added to the list, please contact Smith at Vicki.Smith@HanoverNH.org.]

The Board reviewed an op-ed article, authored by HORNIG, to be published in the Valley News.

The Board agreed to change the project title to: Hanover Residential Zoning Project.

A FAQ sheet should be created & posted on the website.

The Board should inquire with VHB whether there are standards for the break-out groups (# of people per group, # of groups). Groups larger than 12-15 people will not work.

The Board agreed to meet Tuesday, October 9th at 7:30 PM, in the Boardroom at Town Hall, to finalize issues for the October 13th forum. All are welcome to attend.

The Board should seek members of the public to act as facilitators at the forum. Potential candidates will be discussed at the October 9th meeting. [If interested in volunteering, please contact Edwards at Jonathan.Edwards@HanoverNH.org.]

2. OTHER BUSINESS: None

3. ADJOURN: The meeting adjourned at 9:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Rivard