

PLANNING BOARD
February 10, 2013 at 4:00 PM
Mayer Room, Howe Library

In attendance:

Members: Kate Connolly, Judith Esmay (Chair), Joan Garipay, Iain Sim

Staff: Vicki Smith

Others: Sam Westelman, Jane Barrett, Bill Spengemann, John Gilbert, Barbara Prince, Peter Murzda, Wayne Young, Rick and Lisa Johnson, Marilyn and Bryant Denk, Arif Toor, Winnie and John Stearns, Charlie and Charlotte Faulkner, Rebecca Kazal, Ethan Winter

Neighborhood Planning Party- Hovey/Ledyard/Buell Neighborhood

Judith Esmay explained the purposes of the gathering with the main purpose being to give residents the opportunity to talk about concerns and desires for their neighborhood. Judith read the seven core principles of the Master Plan and asked that the neighbors reflect on the veracity and relevance of the core principles. Responses are reported by core principle:

1. *Protect and preserve our natural resources.*

-The neighborhood has suffered a significant reduction in the number of trees. With the removal of trees at 12 Ledyard Lane, the protective visual and auditory buffer between the downtown and the neighborhood has been eliminated.

-Mature trees and landscaping make our neighborhood special.

-Do not remove trees and landscaping to accommodate growth or changes in the road or pedestrian system.

2. *Respect, protect and strengthen the distinctive qualities of the urban and rural parts of Hanover.*

-Each house with its different orientation to the street makes our neighborhood special.

-Enforcement of existing ordinances should be our focus instead of changing the ordinances. This would keep zoning districts in good shape. Don't change the Master Plan, just enforce the existing ordinances.

-Once business was allowed in the "SR" district, the problems started.

3. *Actively manage future growth.*

-As the Town grows and changes, keep our neighborhood the way it is.

4. *Encourage affordable and diverse housing and development where served by existing municipal infrastructure.*

-There is a lot of confusion about what is allowable with regard to second dwelling units and accessory dwelling units. Can an additional dwelling be created in a house?

5. *Expand opportunities for, and accessibility to, outdoor recreation.*

6. Reduce excessive reliance on automobile transportation and its adverse impacts.

- There is a traffic problem with extreme speeding and no sidewalk. My children cannot walk safely to school and cannot play in the street.
- Much can be done to lessen traffic and traffic speed on our roads. However, removable plastic speed bumps did not work!
- The answer may lie in making traffic one way on Hovey/Buell so that drop off traffic in the morning could not access the High School via Hovey/Buell.
- To reduce traffic, the roads must be modified with sidewalks added for safety.
- Construction of a sidewalk would result in the loss of beautiful street trees and lawns. This would impact the neighborhood in a negative way and might result in increased traffic speeds. Look what sidewalks have done to Currier Place: encouraged speed.
- We should look at options to widening the paved area along our roads.
- Our street is not a safe road due to cut through traffic.
- When turning from Hovey to Lebanon Street west, there is no way to see traffic coming from the west. Visibility is a big issue. A parking space or two should be sacrificed for safety.

7. Preserve a healthy balance between community and campus so that neither dominates nor has an adverse impact on the other.

- The High School is an issue. The neighborhood is a drop off cut through. Parents use Hovey/Buell as an access to the school. If the direction of Hovey Buell could be made one way, traffic from parent drop off would be reduced. At parade times, this detour should not be used. Too many people learn about this “back way” to the school during parade times.
- What is going to happen at Sargent Block?

Judith Esmay then asked the group: **What is your neighborhood and how do you define it?**

Responses included:

- Hovey, Buell, Ledyard, Dorrance and Currier
- All properties with driveways that access Ledyard, Hovey and Buell
- The neighborhood is defined by the traffic. Ledyard, Hovey and Buell are local and low traffic. Currier and Dorrance carry a lot of traffic and thus are different.
- My house has privacy AND an in-town location. The lots are reasonably sized.

In response to the question, **How would you describe your neighborhood?**, residents offered the following:

- Dorrance Place has become more urban with the development of South Block.
- The rest of the neighborhood has a different feel, much like that of Granger Circle.
- With sidewalks, the traffic on Currier Place moves with more speed. All of a sudden, the character of the traffic is like that of Main Street, fast and through.
- The traffic corridor through Currier Place protects Hovey/Ledyard/Buell from that traffic.
- Currier Place is the margin that protects the core Hovey/Ledyard/Buell neighborhood from the traffic and bustle of downtown.

-We do not want to change our neighborhood by including edge areas like Currier that are different. Acknowledging Currier as part of our neighborhood threatens the more quiet areas with acceptance of the traffic, mix of uses and urban impact as part of our neighborhood character.

-Accessory dwelling units are a concern. One per structure may be ok, but how many should be allowed?

-There is a difference between how many units can be squeezed on the lot and who lives in those units.

-Renters are NOT invested in the neighborhood. They speed. They do not develop neighborly relationships with longer term residents.

-Would an apartment in a house for just one graduate student be ok in order to help older residents pay their taxes?

Judith Esmay read a letter from 1995 that described the neighborhood at that time(attached to these minutes). She asked: **What is the character of your neighborhood?**

-The traffic issue has diminished the sense of community.

-The traffic speed and volume problem does not describe Hovey and Buell.

-The downtown and Black Center developments have put increased pressure on our neighborhood.

-Over 40 years, people's work schedules and commitments have become more intense, so that people have less time to be neighborly.

-A better sign is needed on Buell Street regarding through traffic. It should state that walkers and bicyclists are welcome, rather than "no through traffic." We want to encourage bikers and walkers and continue to be a walking community.

-Buell is a dangerous road for pedestrians. Please make Buell safe for pedestrians.

-Cars with Vermont license plates speed to the High School at 7:45 AM, taking over the streets our children should be able to use to walk to school.

-Experiment with making Hovey and Buell one way from Lebanon Street.

-Change the drop off pattern at the High School so our neighborhood is not used for drop offs. In the morning, use South Street to the Howe Library as a drop off location and then the library parking lot on South Street for reversing direction.

-I would describe as neighborhood as one with large lots, single family homes, natural beauty, and winding narrow roads.

-Hovey/Ledyard/Buell should not be used for cut-through traffic.

-Part of the character is knowing all the other neighbors and living in an area both within easy walking distance to downtown and hosting a variety of wildlife.

Judith then asked: **What do you appreciate in your neighborhood?**

-All of our neighbors share a common back yard that provides great habitat for wildlife. We see deer, bear and moose. Our back yards are a wildlife corridor.

-Open space in private backyards and also behind the High School.

-Open space at the south end of Buell

-Quick access to nature

-The rural feel

-The transition from Route 10 to a rural large lot area

-We have privacy at our house.

- Large yards and mature vegetation is important to the character of our neighborhood.
- Great pedestrian access
- Pedestrian access could be improved by formalizing the walk along the bleachers at the High School as a route to Lebanon Street.
- Variety of architecture

Judith asked residents to identify **Concerns:**

- I have concerns about the height and size of a building on a lot. This is especially true for a new house on Currier.
- Fear that open space in the neighborhood will disappear.
- Buildings that are too high and too bulky. The zoning should be changed to reduce total building height and massing.
- Large houses on small lots

Mr. Spengemann noted that the neighborhood was once a dairy farm owned by Dorrance Currier. The Currier family subdivided the farm. The first house was built in 1939. At that time there were no trees. Restrictions on the deeds required that any house built would need to cost more than \$7000. There used to be views to Vermont. In his opinion, the character of the neighborhood has changed greatly since that time.

ADJOURN: The meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vicki Smith, Senior Planner