

PLANNING BOARD
December 3, 2013 at 7:30 PM
Trumbull Hall, Etna

In attendance:

Members: Kate Connolly, Bill Dietrich (Vice-Chair), Judith Esmay (Chair), Joan Garipay, Michael Mayor; Iain Sim; Nancy Carter (Selectmen's Representative)

Staff: Vicki Smith

Others: Tim van Leer, John and Lise Richardson, Tom Hall, David Merker, Sharry Baker, Dick Baughman, Robin Carpenter, Drew and Perry Cunningham, John and Shelley Hochreiter, Devora Gronauer, Kathleen Fernald, Jolin Kish, Karen DuBois, Janet Simmons, Anne Morris, Margaret Bragg, Ann and David Cioffi, Hilary Pridgen, Harold Frost, Alexandra Corwin, Heather Drinan, Bill Baschnagel, Ann and David Adams, Betsy Storrs, Tim Bent, Charlie and Charlotte Faulkner, Paul Tobias, Nancy and Jamie Horton, Liz and Matt Marshall, Maureen Dietrich, Gail McPeck, Ruth Perriner, Elaine Bent, Greg Franklin

1. ETNA NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING PARTY

Judith Esmay greeted the assembled group and introduced the Planning Board members and neighborhood organizers, Anne Morris, Dave Cioffi and Heather Drinan. She described the Planning Board's work with other neighborhoods and the work of the Technical Review Committee. She then asked each person to introduce themselves, state their address and offer a one word description for Etna. The words included:

Beautiful (4 people)	Peaceful (2 people)	Rural (6)
Rural village (3)	Home (3)	Idyllic (4)
Quiet (2)	Peaceful and quiet	Schizophrenic (2)
Village	Endangered rural	Historic
Community	Unique	Overgrown
Changed	Natural	Home and village
State of mind	Bucolic (2)	Suburban
Divided	Healthy rural environment	Forested
Changing	Safe	Home and old
Treasured	Traffic	Friendly
Wonderfully dark	Greenspace	Conservation area
All of the above		

People elaborated noting:

-schizophrenic because there are commuters on a busy road just beyond the front yard and mink running along the banks of the brook in the back yard.

-Etna is a real community of people living at the edge of a natural community featuring Mink Brook and the Appalachian Trail.

-wildlife is an outstanding feature of life in Etna and so important. I love looking out my window and seeing moose, turkey, coyote, bear, fisher, birds, mink, deer, cows, and even skunk. Living close to wildlife makes me feel a part of something bigger.

-The Post Office, General Store and Library make Etna a village and provide a place where we run into each other.

Judith Esmay asked: what would you change, if you could? Answers included:

-Nothing

-Roads and traffic

We have too much traffic and vehicles travel too fast

It used to be pleasant to sit on my porch. Traffic makes it unpleasant.

A lot of the traffic is commuter traffic. The Lyme to Lebanon via Hanover Center commuting route is attractive now that the roundabouts have been installed. Traffic has shifted from along the River to Etna.

Our local traffic is not a problem- it is the through traffic from the north and east in the morning and south and west in the evening.

Goose Pond, Ruddsboro and Stevens roads are all alternatives to Exits 17 and 18 and Route 120.

Construction workers coming from Vermont create unsafe traffic conditions.

In addition to commuter traffic, Etna is an artery heavily used for school buses, town dump trucks and log trucks. The diesel exhaust from all the trucks is obnoxious.

Canaan and Enfield commuters pass through Etna and even onto Partridge Road.

The Ruddsboro Road to Partridge Road to downtown Hanover route is increasingly popular.

Partridge Road is congested with speeding cars and drivers that leave lots of beer cans on the road.

A police monitor was stolen while monitoring traffic speed and volume on Partridge Road.

On Partridge Road, almost once a week every summer there is a near accident where a car coming down the hill will almost hit a car going up the hill. It is very dangerous.

On the Great Hollow edge, Creare and Hypertherm create a lot of car traffic. There is also truck traffic early in the morning and buses (Advance Transit and the Current) which travel way too fast and do not stop to serve Etna residents.

Hanover DPW should upgrade the roads, but cannot because Etna Road is a State road.

Changing the speed limit will be hard because it is a State road.

The speed limit should be 20 mph for pedestrian safety but the road design supports faster speeds.

We need more enforcement or to let the road conditions deteriorate so that motorists will reduce their speed that way.

We should have dirt roads again in Etna.

We need to preserve the dirt roads to slow traffic.

The road has widened and gets closer to my house. The road has moved and widened over time.

Everyone slows down for chickens in the road.

If we let the roads go, we will lose the shoulders.

We need local determination to address a regional problem.

Traffic is a major problem that draws neighbors together in their shared concern.

Hanover does an excellent job monitoring traffic. We have good data on traffic at a variety of intersections.

A road announces its speed limit by how it is designed and built.

There should be a bridge built across the Connecticut River that connects Wilder and West Lebanon so that DHMC can be more easily accessed. The reaction to this idea coming from Hanover is that Hanover residents are transferring traffic problems to other communities.

Federal sources of funds for the renovation of the Ledyard and I89 bridges are more easily accessed than funds for the creation a new bridge.

So many of us in Etna are car dependent for just trips to downtown Hanover. This is a reality of life in Etna.

The Planning Board does not have the authority to help with traffic.

-Pedestrian safety

I cannot walk our dog along the side of the road.

There is a blind curve which makes an unsafe situation for walkers.

Etna is a recreation paradise even on the road with runners, bikers, and roller skiers. Speeds must come down to provide a safer environment.

I saw a runner get hit by a car.

This is NOT a sidewalk village; we should have a hardpack trail from the ball field to the store.

We should have a nice trail so everyone can walk through town. There is a great loop from Partridge to the General Store to Trescott and back via the Hayes Farm Park.

Because of traffic, we have to walk single file. It is dangerous even then.

With the unenforced speed of cars, we are going to lose pedestrians.

The State should put in nice lights to make it look like a village.

The Town should mow the side of the road to make a safer pedestrian path.

-Lack of public transportation

Amenities should be connected so residents do not have to drive.

Let's set up parking areas so that folks can ride share or take public transit to DHMC or downtown. These could be satellite lots that are out of view. Shift workers could get on buses in satellite lots.

Hypertherm is funding buses that take employees to various plants and shuttles them to Lebanon to connect with the Advance Transit system.

Advance Transit carries over 500,000 riders per year and is one of the largest rural bus systems.

Carpolling vis zim ride and the list serve is also possible.

-there is a sense that if we are not growing rapidly, we are falling behind.

We are not protected from growth elsewhere. Traffic is just one example. This is an enormous problem.

There is a lot of growth on the Route 4 corridor.

-People no longer have the attitude that I will adapt to the place to fit in. There is the assumption now that the place must change for me.

-We are vulnerable to the tyranny of the majority.

-Our land used to be open to hikers and hunters. Deer carcasses left behind have been a problem so now we do not allow hunters on our land.

-Land is closed off to hikers.

-The quality of being in a place you come home to and honor has disappeared.

The conversation arrived at a discussion of uses.

-Uses

My barn is a community asset.

The limitations on accessory buildings and dwelling units are too restrictive.

We should encourage agriculture and small business in the home, including the construction of non-objectionable instruments (this was a funny comment because the implication was that some instruments are objectionable because of the noise they make.)

I am worried about the loss of residences to offices.

There should be a residency requirement for businesses to be established.

Historically in this village, we had mills all up and down the brook.

Is the ladder factory building still there?

Professional office use helps us keep the nature of the village. We should be legislating the effects of uses, not uses. The size, scope and impact of uses should be evaluated.

How should home occupations be addressed?

This should start with a conversation about impacts and effects. The ordinances should control the effects, not the particular occupation. Noise, lights, and traffic are all a concern.

Judith Esmay asked: **What worries you?**

I worry that the College will move the golf course to one of the old farm properties owned by the College.

I would rather have a golf course than a condominium development.

A golf course is an eco-disaster and uses too many chemicals, so would not be good either.

A member of the Dartmouth College Community Liaison Committee said that the College has no plans immediate or future to move the golf course.

The Leavitt property's future is a large concern. The litigation is still not finalized; an option involving some conservation is being pursued.

Zoning around agricultural use is not good in our ordinance.

We have a lot of open space and the only way to keep them open is for our Zoning Ordinance to support agriculture.

We need to be more liberal in our definition of agriculture and maybe have an agricultural conservation district.

I am confused about what one can and cannot do around agriculture.

Agriculture should be encouraged.

With regard to agriculture, what is appropriate?

Everyone should have a farm.

No alligators or crocodiles.

I want to complain about the permitting involved with fences over 4 feet high.

Livestock is an important part of Etna.

There should be better regulations with regard to agriculture. Horses were offensive to some residents of Blueberry Hill.

Large dogs in small houses and miniature ponies in a house are not much different.

Sawmills are handled in different ways. Portable ones are allowed.

The state definition of forestry includes a portable sawmill.

Sawmill is permitted by Special Exception in the RR district with limitations on where it can be placed and the hours of operation.

A number of other topics were discussed with the following topics:

Water Supply

Zoning should prevent overbuilding and the potential loss of water supply. The world is running out of water.

The Etna aquifer is changing. Many people have had to drill new wells.

The Town should be more rigorous in recording the results of well drilling.

There was an example given of the variety of water supply yields for a few properties which are relatively close together- the Montessori School, the Baschnagel home and a house on Partridge Road. The point was that water yield changes a lot in a small area.

What would have less value than a house with an inadequate water supply?

We do not know what the sustainable water yield is in rural Hanover. Once we are overbuilt, then what?

Trails and Open Space

We need better parking at trailheads and better signage especially at Highway 38 and Shed 2.

I love the trails around Etna.

The Town should consider opening up the Trescott Company lands to recreation.

The AT corridor is very restrictive. The Town should not zone to widen the corridor. The best way to work on conservation is through land trusts, not via zoning.

We need to hold those treasured large acreage areas close to the AT corridor.

The trails are all open and wonderful. Keep them that way. They are a treasure.

Dartmouth College owns lovely land by the Adams farm. The views are expansive and open for all to see. I would hate to see that disappear.

General Land Use Issues

Our current zoning ordinance results in a suburban land use pattern. The whole town should not be carved into two acre lots. Some areas require more room around the houses.

I am concerned about one landowner buying all the land on King Road.

What will happen when the Byrne's are no longer interested in this property. Will the College expand onto this land?

We should not have golf courses, condominiums or commercial development in Etna. I heard the College was planning a golf course on the Rennie Farm. It would be allowed as an outdoor recreation use.

Dartmouth College has told the Planning Board that it will not have to move beyond its institutional footprint in the next ten years.

The zoning ordinance is too restrictive. When I wanted to add to my garage, I had to re-do my septic system.

Zoning protects the community but also restricts use of personal property.

Our zoning ordinance lacks a "why" or explanation about what it is trying to do. Why should we observe setbacks?

Values

Etna should have more community activities.

Here, we value privacy. We value where and how we live, but still we come together for community events.

In privacy, there is a sense of coldness and separation. We need more community outreach, something like the porch on the Lyme Country Store.

To create community we must be willing to participate. We learn this behavior. In the long term to preserve this way of way we need to share this sense of place.

We are conscious of what creates and sustains values we like.

There is a great diversity here in Etna.

A by-product of our history is diversity. The Zoning Ordinance makes our house non-conforming by definition.

If we want to preserve our diverse character, non conformities should be defined in a different way.

Bill Dietrich is asked to define non-conformity.

Setbacks are a stumbling block.

Accessory building regulations are not appropriate and should be revised for Etna. A seven-foot setback from the property line is too little.

For small lots, there should not be a limit on accessory buildings that support agriculture.

Accessory dwelling units should be able to be built as needed.

Trescott Road has hundreds of acres of wonderful land.

We need ball parks as well as trails.

There is both village and rural character.

Agricultural buildings are part of the fabric of Etna.

Placement of structures on a lot matters.

There is also a diversity of uses.

Though single family use predominates, there should be no more "Simpson" developments. This type of development has not added to the quality of life.

Cluster housing would not work in Etna.

The preferred form of housing is single family in a rural setting.

Big developments are not consistent with the character of Etna.

There was consensus among the group that diversity is valued and should be preserved.

The feeling amongst many in the group was to keep Etna rural, quiet, open, dark and a good place for wildlife.

This has been a great discussion, very professionally run and forward looking. Thanks for listening!

2. **ADJOURN:** The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vicki Smith
Scribe