

**Unofficial  
Neighborhood Heritage District Meeting  
January 23, 2014  
6:00PM  
Hooksett Public Library**

**Meeting Facilitators/Presenters:** Jo Ann Duffy (Town Planner), Carolyn Cronin (Assistant Planner), Roger Hawk (Planning Consultant, Hawk Planning Resources, LLC), Maggie Stier (Field Service Representative, New Hampshire Preservation Alliance), Kathie Northrup (Chair, Hooksett Heritage Commission)

**Introduction:** M. Stier gave an introduction on Neighborhood Heritage Districts (NHDs). She explained that a Neighborhood Heritage District is a planning mechanism designed to help preserve the unique character of a neighborhood and protect it from uses and designs that do not fit the current feel of the area. The Village is a good candidate for an NHD because its historic character and design are assets to the community. A NHD differs from a Historic District because it does not regulate specific architectural standards or designs; it is a voluntary neighborhood plan that is facilitated by a group of neighbors called an Advisory Committee. It can help preserve amenities such as trees, fences, or sidewalks. The amenities are chosen by the neighborhood Advisory Committee.

**Presentation:** R. Hawk gave a presentation which included the results of a Village resident survey and potential options for meeting the goals of the survey results. The resident survey showed that residents preferred building design similar to what already exists in the Village. Among the things they would like to see are traffic slowed in the Village, more pedestrian safety measures, sidewalks, and recreational opportunities on the river. Hawk presented such options as traffic calming street design and a “museum in the streets” project, which would tell the history of the Village in Hooksett through a series of outdoor plaques. These types of neighborhood enhancement measures would keep the Village the psychological center of Hooksett.

Hawk concluded the presentation with four possible courses of actions:

1. **Do nothing:** Leave the town’s land use regulations as is and leave future building design changes entirely up to the property owners. While this will continue to erode the quality and character of the Village Center, it will preserve the freedom of choice by property owners.
2. **Establish voluntary guidelines:** A companion document to the Master Plan has been drafted to illustrate how simple design standards can be used as a guidebook to advise property owners about building design features that retain the architectural qualities that make the Village Center architecturally unique
3. **Establish a Neighborhood Heritage District:** This will require adoption of a zoning amendment at town meeting and creation of an advisory committee that can administer the design standards included in the “Hooksett Village Center Design Guidelines.” A draft ordinance is included in Appendix 5 of the Hooksett Village Draft Plan with suggested district boundaries.

4. Provide a financial incentive for using the Design Guidelines: To further reinforce recommendations 2 and 3, it would be desirable to administratively link the design guidelines to the provisions of RSA 79-E, providing a small tax incentive to property owners to undertake appropriate building renovations or additions. This concept would give property owners the opportunity to keep their property taxes stable for a number of years.

**Public Comment Session:** Residents of Merrimack Street voiced concerns about their street. They don't want to see any changes to their neighborhood. They feel bad about old, historic buildings, but do not want to preserve them because they don't want the Town involved. They do not trust the Town government and are afraid of outsiders making changes to their neighborhood. They would like to see the area directly around Robie's Store preserved, but would like Merrimack Street left out of it. They said that traffic is a problem they would like to see changed and they do not want any commercial activity in the Village.

Opposition to the NHD resulted in the "Do Nothing" option #1 and the defeat of the Plan.

**The meeting concluded at 7:00PM**

Respectfully Submitted by,  
Carolyn Cronin, Assistant Planner