

**PLANNING BOARD  
27 School Street  
HILLSBOROUGH, NH  
November 30, 2022**

**TIME:** 7:00 p.m. – 7:55 p.m.

**DATE APPROVED:** 12/07/22

**MEMBERS:** Susanne White- Chairperson, Melinda Gehris -Vice Chair, Adam Charrette, Ed Sauer, Steve Livingston, Nancy Egner

**EX-OFFICIO:** James Bailey III

**PLANNING DIRECTOR:** Robyn Payson

**ALTERNATES:** Kim Opperman, Dana Clow

**Excused:** Jim Bailey, Susanne White

**Guest:** Matt Taylor, Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission

**Call to Order:**

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson Nancy Egner called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Nancy Egner called the roll and appointed Dana Clow to sit in place of Jim Bailey. Melinda Gehris attended the meeting by phone due to illness.

**Work Meeting**

Robyn Payson said the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the Gateway Zone and review the goals for the zone. She said it seems that the focus has appears to be on adding residential uses to the commercial zone and not as much on mixed use development. She said it is not very likely that the Town would be in favor of losing commercial uses in the Commercial zone. She said she invited Matt Taylor to come and work with the Board on this discussion.

Matt Taylor said he reviewed the 2018 Master Plan, and it said that the intent of the Gateway Zone was mixed use. He said it is up to the Board how to balance that. He said if the Board was thinking of doing strictly residential, they should consider amending the Master Plan and seeing if there is support in the community for that. This property has been zoned Commercial for a long time and people in town want to see things happen there. He said adding residential to that mix could make it happen sooner. He said based on his recollection with the towns he has been working in that's "down zoning" and that isn't usually supported.

Robyn Payson said she was concerned about this when the Board talked about allowing residential cluster developments in the Gateway Zone.

Ed Sauer talked about the plan for Weatherstone Crossing that had two phases of commercial and one phase for residential.

Robyn Payson said the residential portion was senior housing and they got a variance to allow that residential use.

Ed Sauer said it has been talked about before and asked about the commercial to residential ratio.

Matt Taylor said whatever the percentage is, it can be waived. If you set the bar too high, and someone comes in with a good project then it can be waived, but if you set the bar too low it is unlikely that a project will come in that isn't primarily residential. He said residential development is where the money is right now but having a balance is more beneficial to the town. The idea is "live, work, play" where you can live, work, and potentially recreate or maybe go to a restaurant within walking distance.

Dana Clow said what he has found troubling, is that the Board needs to get focused. He said there was a tendency to try and make this all things to all people. So we make it so we can have industrial uses, agricultural uses, residential uses and commercial uses. He said you have to decide what it is that you want. If you allow industrial uses, that is inconsistent with the examples of mixed-use development. If you start with a mix of industrial uses, then that's fine. But to make everything allowed so as not to scare anyone away is bad policy. He said what is being envisioned is a combination of residential and commercial and commercial does not include industrial or agricultural.

There was discussion about the Weatherstone Crossing property. Ed Sauer asked how much of that property was buildable. Steve Livingston said all of it was and that it had views and everything you would be looking for. Ed Sauer asked Robyn Payson if she had plans of that site and she said she did.

Matt Taylor said the Board needed to focus on the uses and what did or didn't fit.

Ed Sauer said that commercial and residential would be a good mix.

Matt Taylor said Research and Development space might be a good fit. He gave the example of the Mills in Manchester. He said they filled up with R&D space. Whether or not the Board wants that is their call.

Robyn said Avanru Development who did the workforce housing development were looking for a place to put a modular manufacturing facility and a trade school. That would not fit in with the Gateway concept, but she would like to find a way that would be a possibility in the area.

Matt Taylor said it could be amended to segregate some uses within that zone, so it doesn't have to be all mixed use in that entire zoning district.

Dana Clow said it will be an attractive area especially if utilities could be brought in. He said it may make sense to scale back the district and leave part of it Commercial. He said you don't want to preclude a good manufacturing or industrial development.

Melinda Gehris said she was having trouble reconciling having commercial and residential and some how carving out something for Avanru. She said it doesn't seem to be going with the conversation.

Robyn Payson said as Matt said, it might mean shrinking the district down to allow more of the Commercial zone to remain which would allow for the industrial use.

Melinda Gehris said she has a concern about making a plan around a particular potential user when we are a long way from knowing if that use is going to happen.

There was discussion about other parts of town where a large industrial use could be located.

Robyn Payson said this is unique in that there was so much vacant land in that area.

Nancy Egner said it has a strong potential to break it up into separate uses, commercial and mixed residential.

Matt Taylor said that an area could be designated in the Gateway Zone as an industrial park, and the other part could be a mixed-use park. He said there are a lot of different ways it could be done. He said you can have a Gateway Zone and designate an area for industrial and another for a mixed-use village.

Matt Taylor discussed the potential for Planned Unit Developments which gives the Planning Board the flexibility to approve site plan and zoning at one time.

There was discussion about the configuration of possible developments in the Gateway Zone.

Matt Taylor said the Planned Unit Development is kind of a negotiated site plan where the Planning Board and the developer have a conversation about what they would like to see there, and they would develop a plan based on that. Its kind of a Master Plan for the area.

Dana Clow said maybe as we formulate rules for applicants to make applications, the rules could be focused around trying to attract some developer to come in and implement some vision of a village concept that is some mix. It is something that can be negotiated based on market conditions. The developer is going to say they have the opportunity to come in and present a proposal to the Board and he knows right now his money is going to be made in residential development. Right now, commercial is tough. If they are willing to put up having to construct a commercial component in order to be able to build a residential development. Right now, it isn't easy to rent out commercial space, but markets change. If you have an ordinance that encourages a developer to look at it and made concessions and still have a project that will generate revenue. He said he has seen a developer come in and do exactly this.

Matt Taylor said the Board may think about shrinking the floor to area ratio. He said you may want to look at where you want to put that density and shrink it down.

Matt Taylor said he could give examples of Planned Unit Development regulation for the Board to look at. He said the Board needed to think about the uses allowed. The Board can look at it and he can look at the draft.

There was discussion about the floor to area ratio as an incentive.

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Robyn Payson said the Board can look at Planned Unit Developments, consider the size of the Gateway Zone and possibly set aside an industrial zone.

Matt Taylor said you can be looking for an area for the high-density mixed-use development.

Ed Sauer said the Board needs to keep it open, so they don't end up in a bind later on.

Dana Clow asked if there were any market studies showing what is needed in this region.

Matt Taylor said it was all about location. Residential versus commercial is a chicken and the egg situation as to what comes first.

The Gateway Zone will no be on the town warrant for 2023. The Board will be able to work on it further during 2023 and consider bring it to Town Meeting in 2024 in conjunction with the TIF which is for infrastructure improvements.

There being no other business:

Ed Sauer made a motion to adjourn. Steve Livingston seconded the motion.

**Meeting Adjourned 7:55 pm**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Robyn L. Payson, Planning Director