

PLANNING BOARD
27 School Street
HILLSBOROUGH, NH
February 15, 2023

TIME: 7:00 p.m. – 7:40 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: 03/01/23

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: Kim Opperman, Steve Livingston, Adam Charrette, Jim Bailey, Nancy Egner

Public: Carl Gehring

Guest: Matt Taylor CNHRPC

Call to Order:

Chairperson Susanne White called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and appointed Dana Clow to sit in place of Jim Bailey.

Minutes

02/01/23 Melinda Gehris made a motion to approve the minutes. Ed Sauer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

WORK MEETING

Gateway Zone Project

Matt Taylor CNHRPC

Matt Taylor came to the Board to discuss the proposed Gateway Zone and Planned Unit Developments. He forwarded examples of Planned Unit Developments from different towns to demonstrate a way of guiding development in the Gateway Zone prior to this meeting. He also brought to the meeting an example from Salem NH. He said that the Planned Unit Developments could be combined with the Gateway Ordinance. Planned Unit Development is authorized under the Innovative Land Use statute.

Matt Taylor said Planned Unit Developments are commonly referred to as Master Plan Communities. The municipality would get a Master Plan for a parcel or multiple parcels. With that Master Plan you get the densities and uses that are allowed. It gives flexibility to the Planning Board and gives them the ability to approve the zoning specific to a parcel. This also provides a lot of flexibility to developers because all sites are different and there are different things to consider when developing a site.

Matt. Taylor said it could be an overlay district where you would still have the underlying

commercial district, but the overlay would allow Planned Unit Developments. The guidelines for development can be very flexible. It requires a mixture of uses but there are no ratios to comply with. The process would include designating an area, deciding on guidelines for development and then setting up the process. He suggested using Conditional Use Permits as a means for permitting these developments. He pointed to the ordinances in Salem and Londonderry as the best examples for Hillsborough of Planned Unit Development ordinances that are in use today.

There was discussion about the amount of land required for a Planned Unit Development. Londonderry requires 100 acres and Dana Clow said he didn't think that was a realistic figure for the area. The Salem ordinance requires a minimum of 25 acres which made more sense.

Matt Taylor said if the Board wanted this to work in tandem with a TIF district or with utilities, the property needs to be of a scale that can pay for those utilities. He said he agreed that 20 or 25 acres would be more reasonable.

Susan White said she liked in the Rindge ordinance that a certain percentage of the parcel needed to be common land.

Robyn Payson said that she liked in the Rindge ordinance was the fact that the common land had to be usable land and not all of the steep slopes and wetlands on the property.

There was a brief discussion about the number of parking spaces allowed in the developments. Robyn Payson suggested that issue would be better addressed in the overall zoning.

Matt Taylor said that in the past parking requirements have been excessive and the Board should have flexibility over parking ratios.

Melinda Gehris said that as far as parking, what the Board learned during the workforce housing application was that there was the assumption that every unit would need two parking spaces. The Board learned that would not be an appropriate number.

There was discussion about the Salem and Rindge Ordinances

Matt Taylor said that the example from Salem was the most flexible. The Planning Board has the discretion to approve whatever standards you want.

Susanne White said she liked the idea of putting utilities underground.

Dana Clow said that ought to be the standard.

Melinda Gehris liked about the limited access points discussed in the Salem ordinance. She said they are definitely going to need to talk about.

Robyn Payson said she thinks route 202 is a limited access highway so DOT is not likely to approve more curb cuts than are already there.

There was discussion about the placement of buildings and whether parking would be required at the back of the building. Matt Taylor said there is flexibility to allow for determining where the parking would be on a case-by-case basis.

Matt Taylor went on to discuss density. He said that was a tough one to predict. He asked if the Board would want to leave that open ended and see what kind of plan they get.

Melinda Gehris said she would because we don't know who is going to be interested in developing. She said she was much more amenable to leave it flexible.

Dana Clow said especially for the terrain of the properties.

Robyn Payson said it was important that this be kept mixed use.

Susanne White asked if there should be any limitation on multifamily dwellings.

Dana Clow said that goes along with the flexibility and evaluating every project. The ordinance encourages the developer to come in, in a very preliminary way to discuss their concept.

Matt Taylor said that would be something that would be included in the process.

Susanne White asked about a property owner's association.

Matt Taylor said he thinks that the Board, if there are going to be private covenants, that would be something that the Board should review and approve. Those are typically reviewed by the town attorney.

Dana Clow said that if you are going to have publicly accessible open space there have to be some responsible parties.

There was discussion about the other ordinance examples.

Matt Taylor said a lot of these ordinances were developed with a specific area in mind. The Board has the opportunity to do that here.

Susanne White asked if they have to think of the protective covenant that would go with open space.

Matt Taylor said he thinks that they want to present that as part of the application and then you want the town attorney to review it.

Susanne White asked if they want to require a percentage of the housing be affordable?

Robyn Payson said it might be a good idea to offer an incentive to encourage the construction of affordable housing.

Matt Taylor said in the interest of flexibility, that might be something that would be negotiated by the Planning Board. You could have that as one of your guiding principles that the town will encourage construction of affordable housing and that the Planning Board would consider incentives.

Dana Clow said that a structured bonus with flexibility built in. Then allow an additional number of units. For example, if they build 10 units and 2 are affordable, they can have a bonus of maybe two or three more units. Some formulation that encourages them to at least consider it. It's a wonderful idea and its needed, but the cost of development makes it prohibitive, so it needs to be sufficient incentive to make it work for somebody.

Matt Taylor asked if using the conditional use permit process would work for them along with site plan or subdivision review. He said there should be a process where you consider the criteria that would be established in the ordinance for approving a Planned Unit Development Master Plan.

Robyn Payson said that there is a stand-alone Conditional Use Permit article on the warrant for town meeting. She said she thought that would work well with the additional criteria in the Planned Unit Development ordinance.

Dana Clow said there needs to be specific standards built into this criterion.

Matt Taylor said that you can include any specific criteria you want for the Conditional Use Permit.

Matt Taylor talked about once there is a draft that the Board is comfortable with, contacting the property owners and meeting with them and the Water/Sewer Commission.

Matt Taylor said he would draft an ordinance for the Board to review.

Other Business

Melinda Gehris said she wanted to compliment the Dark Skies Committee on the presentation on the Town website.

Melinda Gehris made a motion to adjourn. Ed Sauer seconded the motion.

Meeting Adjourned 7:40 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Robyn L. Payson, Planning Director