

**PLANNING BOARD  
RINDGE, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
December 17, 2013**

**DATE: December 17, 2013 TYPE: Public Meeting APPROVED: January 7, 2014**

**TIME: 7:00 pm**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

**ROLL CALL MEMBERS:** Chairman Kirk Stenersen, Hank Whitney, Phil Simeone, Charlie Eicher, Bruce Donati

**ROLL CALL ALTERNATES:** Holly Koski, Burt Goodrich

**EX OFFICIO:**

**PLANNING DIRECTOR:** Mark Smith

**PLANNING SECRETARY:** Susan Hoyland

**ABSENT:** Kim McCummings, Roberta Oeser

**APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES**

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Roger Hawk, Robert Peterson, Elise and Ty Taylor, Michelle Matilainen, Larry Cleveland, Kelen Geiger, Paul Chambers, Roni and Bob Hamilton, Brenda Lashoa, Rick Griffith, Robert Knight, Janet Goodrich and others.

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**1. Announcements**

Chairman Stenersen said he would take responsibility for not cancelling tonight's meeting due to weather. He said that the Planning Board has deadlines to meet, this is New England and the Board needed to press forward to get its work done.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

- a. December 3, 2013

**MOTION:** Phil Simeone moved to approve the minutes of December 3, 2013. Bruce Donati seconded, Burt Goodrich abstained. Vote: 5-0-1

- b. December 3, 2013 site walk

**MOTION:** Phil Simeone moved to approve minutes of December 3, 2013 site walk. Hank Whitney seconded the motion. Burt Goodrich abstained. Vote 5-0-1

**3. Old Business**

**4. New Business**

**5. Planning Department Report**

Chairman Stenersen said he would like to move the Planning Dept. report to the end of the meeting so that Roger Hawk could present first and then get home safely.

## 6. Work Meeting

### a. Public Workshop/ Listening Session with Roger Hawk, CPG Grant

Roger Hawk said that we have been working on this particular project for about a year. He said that the origins date back to 2002 when the Rindge 20-20 Plan was done. At that time, there was a lot of support for creating a new commercial center for the Town. The recent work was to update the Town's zoning regulations to allow a town center to happen. The discussion has been around the Fogg's Corner intersection at 202 and 119. Earlier, discussions took place around changing the West Rindge Village District. Some small changes are being proposed in the presentation this evening.

Roger Hawk said that for those who are not aware of it, the grant that is being used to pay for this work comes from New Hampshire Housing. The money for this originated at the Federal Government level. The State of New Hampshire Housing put out a solicitation for proposals around the state, and the result was that Rindge received a grant to do this work. The terms of this grant require that the Town put forth some ordinance changes before the voters. The voters may approve or deny these changes. The Town's obligation is only to put it before the voters.

Roger Hawk said that the impetus of this whole concept of creating a town center probably originated when the state of NH decided to move Route 202. That took all the traffic out of the village, which was a good thing. The bad thing is that it took the life and vitality out of the historic Rindge Center. For the past 15 years, the townspeople have been talking about how to create a true village center and that is the origin of what is being discussed tonight. The Town of Rindge Master Plan, which was updated in 2006 talked about the same concept; of creating a new town center. That was followed by the Economic Development Plan which was completed in 2011 and hit on similar issues of creating a center or village. Then, the Town applied for and was awarded a Plan NH community design charrette which happened a little over a year ago where 12 to 15 professionals, architects, engineers, got together and said, if we are going to do this, what will it look like and where will it go. Prior to that, it had just been talking about a village center. Now there was a vision. And, finally, the two grants came from New Hampshire Housing.

*Roger Hawk showed the audience the Charrette graphic.*

He said what the Charrette talked about doing was to create a small complex of small buildings, ideally with offices or residences above and create them to look like New England architecture. That had been stressed in all the previous studies that were mentioned. Not big box stores as are further south on 202, but more like Peterborough downtown or Jaffrey. More small retail and residential uses. The architecture would be to residential scale with a quaint New England feel through design of architectural features.

Roger Hawk discussed the concepts of

- Taking commercial buildings and making them look like they belong in New Hampshire
- Big house/back house/little house/barn

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- Franklin Pierce University-more flexibility in zoning toward higher density
- Crossroads Overlay Zoning District
  - Smaller lot sizes, less frontage needed
  - Developing architectural standards/classic New England architecture
  - Encouraging mixed use buildings/residential/commercial
  - Encouraging smaller scale buildings
  - Safe for pedestrians and bicycles.
  - Shared parking, shared septic systems
  - Uses to be no more than 5000 sf
  - Lot size ½ acre minimum provided it can meet state standards for water and sewer
  - 100 ft. frontage requirement, smaller setbacks, parking behind buildings
- Soil based lot sizing to be utilized in three districts
- The location of the state right of way at 119/202
- Lot frontages in Village District to be 100 feet
- Lot sizing, half of the existing lots are under 2 acres now
- College District: Partner with FPU to improve Town of Rindge
- Psychologically bring FPU closer to 119/202 intersection by encouraging development along Mountain Road (elderly or faculty housing)

*Roger provided a graphic of the boundary lines for the Crossroads Overlay Zoning District.*

Audience questions and comments about these suggested changes included:

- The reasoning for such a small overlay district.
- Are the existing businesses being forced to comply with new regulations? (no, this is a choice)
- Is this concept coming from the survey? Can we see the results of that survey? (yes, available in the Planning Office)
- What is the benefit of partnering with FPU? (Graduates might start businesses here, live here; they are the biggest employer in Rindge and an important piece of the economic puzzle.)
- Reference to the November meeting when Roberta Oeser asked Ben Frost if any other towns were experiencing concerns about grants. Ben's answer was no. The audience member (R. Hamilton) thinks Ben Frost may have been mistaken. She cited Greenfield, Dover, Sugar Hill, Goffstown, Rochester, Sharon and others have similar issues because companies want to come in and build and if you don't follow the rules, they sue you. (Chairman Stenersen said that no one is coming in to build. He said that what is being presented tonight is to allow opportunities for landowners to do what they want to do while providing guidelines to keep the rural character of the town which is what townspeople have repeatedly said they want. ) R. Hamilton said that today, she called the secretary of state's office and spoke with someone named Michael about Bill 1634 regarding International Housing for Local Environmental Initiatives. She said this bill failed before the House. She said HUD is part

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of this initiative. She referred to the terminology that is being used today (she referenced lot sizing, frontage, integration, coordinate, regional plan, village plans,...she said that everything we are saying here is in the Nashua Master Plan and Nashua is crowded and we don't want that here. She asked the Board to admit to the Public that all this Master Planning or its continued name-changing is really just coming from the Federal Government, which she said includes HUD, EPA and DOT. They are telling the state what to do and the state is telling you what to do. Will the Board at least admit to that? Chairman Stenersen said No; no one tells us what to do. We are using grant money. But we are taking no directives from anyone. R. Hamilton asked if more research could be done as she feels this is coming down from the federal government. Roger Hawk said that the process that is happening here for the last couple of years is that the Town wants to create a new commercial center, residents answered a survey and asked for that. The Planning Board listened to the residents and thought it was a good idea. They found these grants that came to the state from the federal government and applied. Roger Hawk said he has looked at these grants, he said he helped write this last one, there are no strings attached. The Town told Ben Frost what they wanted to do and they were awarded a grant. *R. Hamilton gave Roger Hawk a handout related to HUD sustainable community grantees.*

- Another question regarding strings about the grants and a question as to whether or not they needed to do a warrant article to return grant monies? Chairman Stenersen explained again that the Planning Board stated in a grant application how they would like to use the grant money and were awarded the grant. The grant did not tell the Town what to do. The Town told NH Housing what they wanted to do and were awarded a grant to do that.
- Larry Cleveland asked if the Planning Board knew when they applied for a grant for a commercial center that there would be housing involved. Chairman Stenersen said that the Planning Board is not forcing housing but is allowing for it. It is not a requirement.
- Larry Cleveland asked how the overlay district came about. Roger Hawk said that he had it on the slideshow at the last presentation but didn't explain it well. Larry Cleveland said that all of a sudden this overlay district just appeared now. Roger Hawk said that the overlay district has been discussed throughout this project. Larry Cleveland said there was no mention of it in any of the minutes. (editor's note; This was discussed and is in the minutes of July 25, 2013)
- Larry Cleveland, when we come back on January 6<sup>th</sup>, will something new be proposed then? Charlie Eicher said that every time there is a meeting or a discussion about this, feedback is given. And then changes are made, so that the next generation of the process comes closer and closer to the final product. So there may be changes before January 6<sup>th</sup> and there may be changes after January 6<sup>th</sup> first public hearing.
- An unnamed person said that you don't get something for nothing. She asked what we, as a town, have to do to fulfill the requirements of the grant? (bring warrant articles before the voters)
- Has anyone surveyed or explored what the increase in taxes would be for the town for a development like the Charrette? (Chairman Stenersen said this is not a planning function, CIP would address this)
- Question about how soil based lot sizing works? (State approval is required prior to approval of lot size)
- Would cluster building require a town water or sewer system? (no)

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- How will these businesses be sustained? Is this concept financially feasible? (that would be a private business decision)
- Does this plan include pubs and drinking establishments to attract the college students? (they would be allowed)
- Why not put this concept on Mountain Road rather than at 119/202? (this was discussed and rejected)
- How many landowners are incorporated in the Overlay District (6 or 7)
- Question about the amount of space between buildings. This started at 25 feet and now is 10 feet. Concerns about that.
- Has everyone on the Board read the grant? Question about matching funds?
- Question about five year reporting requirement of grant? (they want to know if something new was built as a result of this work, a progress report)
- Why was a town wide mailing not done for this meeting? (cost)
- Disappointment that another survey was not sent out? (time factor)
- A mass mailing may have been cheaper than paying 46 cents per person.
- Disappointment that tonight was not rescheduled due to weather.
- Duplication of mailing process, some people got duplicates or triplicates. This is wasting taxpayer money
- Concern about housing coming to Rindge. A desire to do what we are doing without the state and federal government being involved. Fear of drug problems that plague other towns
- Where is the money going to come from to pay back a grant?
- Concern that money from the grant is going to Concord and not employing someone in town.
- Question if FPU pays taxes? (yes, quite a large amount)
- Comment that two State Representatives from earlier meeting insist that the grants do have strings attached. (The string on this grant is to place articles on the Town Warrant that all people can vote on.
- What is the Planning budget for mailing out items? (\$400)
- Question if town zoning right now would allow for tenement housing? (yes, if they have enough land)
- Will Overlay zoning change that? (three corners of 119 and 202 would change - the minimum area required per unit) (Under present zoning, 20 acres would be needed to build a 10 unit building, under the overlay, 10 acres would be needed to create a 10 unit building, subject to DES approval)
- Why is the current Planning Board allowing a multi-tenant unit in Rindge?
- Are there any pieces of land in the overlay district that would allow for the multi-tenant units? (perhaps- the Market Basket property, but there is wetland that may not allow for it)
- Appreciation expressed for the volunteer Board members and what they do. A comment that Westchester County was sued by a third party for failing to meet the terms of their contract and have a diversity assessment. (Chairman Stenersen said that Westchester's grant was to build housing, our grant is a planning grant)
- If all these contracts are the same, then why has no one in this town sought legal advice to review this contract? (Chairman Stenersen said he had no answer for that)
- If we in Rindge are found to not be a diverse community, could we be forced to comply?

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- Has a diversity study been done? Can HUD come back and say that we didn't do the diversity study?
- Is there any money left in the grant right now? Are you aware that money is set aside for public education?
- Concern about wetlands between Market Basket and Diner and how this will affect this overlay district. TIF funding for water and sewer. If this is in the Charrette, can we be made to provide water and sewer? (Roger Hawk said TIF funding was discussed for many years as a means to town water and sewer systems.)
- Why change the zoning if there is a possibility that this is not buildable? (Chairman Stenersen said that there are areas that are buildable)
- If you had 10,000 sf of commercial space, and you could get 20 living units about it, could you do it? (Chairman Stenersen said if you could meet State of NH lot loading requirements, it would be allowed)
- Concern about what is being said tonight and during past meetings about housing. Opposition has been voiced that young people with children will come to Rindge and attend our schools and raise taxes; that the elderly might come and need special services and are not welcomed here. So, new families with children are not welcomed to Rindge, and the elderly aren't so welcomed here either, and God forbid you come from out of town. And when affordable housing was brought up, a person in this room specifically named Hispanics and people of color and commented that crime rates will go up and property values will go down. What I'm hearing in this room is that we want middle aged; middle classed white people only who don't have children. So if you're young and come to Rindge, you need to be sterile. To my ears, prejudice and bigotry is alive and well in Rindge, NH.
- When will the grant be completed? (Chairman Stenersen said in March, although for five years, we have a requirement to let New Hampshire Housing know if any new ordinances coming from this are used.)
- Comment that concern about HUD housing is not based on bigotry or racism. HUD Housing brings in criminals. A suggestion to ask chief of police where all the crime is.
- Apology made by a woman who claimed to have made the racial comment. She said her comment was against people who don't work and not meant to be racist.
- Concern that the Crossroads District is small and several parcels are owned by the same person and this may be an issue.
- Request that the Town Warrant include if the Planning Board is in favor or not of the articles that they are proposing.
- How can the college be involved with Senior Housing? (Roger Hawk said he didn't think FPU wanted to get involved in this but that this concept came from the Charrette. Mark Smith said this issue has been shelved. )
- Comment that a lot of senior housing developments are being built on college and university campuses. This provides seniors a good place to live and have access to the amenities of colleges and universities.

Chairman Stenersen asked if the two issues could be separated. His question was if these zoning amendments were being considered, but not funded by grant money, would there still be an issue.

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The questions and comments continued:

- A passionate request that the Planning Board research things more than has been done here.
- Chairman Stenersen said that we have the ability on Planning Board to have 5 alternates and currently, we have only two. Because they are the only people who have volunteered to come out. He said it is quite difficult to get people to volunteer to take part in the process.
- Request for a special zoning commission, not involved with the Planning Board, that would be recommending changes to the Planning Board. (Chairman Stenersen said typically we appoint subcommittees, but as he said earlier, it is difficult to find people to volunteer) (Chairman Stenersen said that anyone can place a warrant article with 25 signatures)
- Did we contract with our regional planning commission as part of this grant? (Chairman Stenersen said we had the option to put this out to bid for a private consultant or have the regional planning commission do the work. We went with the private consultant)
- If these votes fail, will the Charrette stay part of the Master Plan? (it will stay part of the Master Plan) A request that the Charrette not be a part of the Master Plan.

*Chairman Stenersen suggested a five minute break before moving along to Zoning Amendments discussions.*

Chairman Stenersen called the meeting to order. Due to the late hour, it was decided that this meeting should be continued to another evening.

**MOTION:** Phil Simeone moved to continue this meeting until Thursday, December 19, 2013 at 7:00 PM. Holly Koski seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0**

**Meeting Adjourned: 10:00 PM**

**Susan Hoyland**  
**Planning Secretary**