



Planning Board Meeting
Monday May 12, 2008, 7:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers, City Hall, Claremont, NH

Meeting Minutes
Approved 5/27/08

Meeting Called to order by Chair Alan Grigsby at 7:02 pm

I. Roll Call

Present: Richard Wahrlich, Paul LaCasse, Mayor Deborah Cutts, Alan Grigsby, Lori Richardson, Andy Austin
City Staff: Eric Giles, City Planner; Allan Britton, Director of Planning & Development; Michelle Aiken, Boards and Commissions Coordinator
Absent: Peter Guillette

Chair Grigsby advised that the next meeting will be on Tuesday May 27th and the meeting will start at 6:30pm.

II. Minutes of March 24, 2008 and April 14, 2008 Public Meeting Minutes

Motion to: Approve the March 24, 2008 meeting minutes as amended with minor grammar changes and additions as listed in March 24th minutes

Made by: Ms. Richardson **Second:** Mr. Wahrlich **Vote:** Unanimous

Motion to: Approve the April 14, 2008 meeting minutes as amended with minor grammar changes

Made by: Ms. Cutts **Second:** Ms. Richardson **Vote:** Unanimous

III. Master Plan

Chair Grigsby wanted to give Ms. Richardson and Mr. LaCasse the chance to comment on the Master Plan. There is also an error in the Master Plan, Appendix D, pg 5 regarding school enrollments and it states that the number of students is decreasing and we lost almost 900 students. We have checked with Superintendent Jacqueline Guillette and she advised that it was wrong and it was actually 69 students in 3 years. The numbers went from 2,052 students in 2004 to 1,983 students in 2007.

Motion to: to change the Master Plan to reflect the correct numbers for school enrollment

Made by: Mr. LaCasse **Second:** Mr. Wahrlich **Vote:** Unanimous

Chair Grigsby advised that in the Master Plan where it discusses zones he has a problem with the rural residential agriculture zone has manufactured housing parks and he would like to eliminate that. In the survey that was passed out from UNH it stated that this was the least desirable of housing. This information came from the citizens of Claremont and he knows that this was one of the reasons the Lebanon Zoning failed. Chair Grigsby felt that these parks are a serious problem from an operational point of view, you have to extend water and sewer sometimes, there is property value problems and because it rated at the bottom for desire. Mayor Cutts advised that there are neighboring communities that have been developed and the housing is not identical but they are all manufactured, some of them are \$300-400k and beautiful. Chair Grigsby advised that he is talking about parks not individual houses. Mr. Wahrlich advised that manufactured home has a metal frame under it and has to follow HUD guidelines. The confusion is that modular housing is a regular stick built home, it may be manufactured but it does not have a metal frame or wheels. Mayor Cutts wanted it to be clear that manufactured parks are the least desirable. Mr. Wahrlich also noted that in the 1970 Master Plan that mobile home parks were their answer to low income housing. Chair Grigsby advised that he feels that this will be an opportunity for homes to be built on small parcels of land and workforce housing, a 2000 sqft home is \$300k, which is a lot of money for a worker.

Ms. Richardson advised that she feels that trailer parks are undesirable, but maybe we could change it to say manufactured developments which would mean the beautiful houses the board are talking about. Mr. Lacasse advised that a

manufactured home is something with a metal frame, axel and is towed to the site, a modular home is something that is put on a frame, towed to the sight and put on the site. Mr. Lacasse doesn't feel that you can exclude manufactured housing but you don't have to have it listed as parks. Mayor Cutts would want to exclude a park type development of manufactured homes that have an axle with a metal frame. Ms. Richardson asked for an example. Mr. LaCasse advised that a mobile home is now called a manufactured house and anything else is called a modular home made of wood in pieces and sits on a slab or foundation.

Motion to: to remove the section of the Master Plan that talks about parks
Made by: Mr. Lacasse **Second:** Ms. Richardson **Vote:** Unanimous

Chair Grigsby advised that now Mr. LaCasse and Ms. Richardson can have their say and ask any questions they may have on the plan. Ms. Richardson had questions about tourist homes & B&B's and if they would include hotels, etc. Chair Grigsby advised that it is mentioned several times in the other zoning sections. He feels that when they do zoning they would need to be careful where things like that are suggested because you would not want them in an area where the houses are close together. Chair Grigsby advised that when you do zoning you have to be careful that you are not going to hurt the neighborhood, for example you wouldn't want a corner store on the corner of Nelmar Heights. Mr. Wahrlich felt that no a commercial looking building would not be ok but certain things like that would be ok as long as it is tastefully done and maybe it looked like a nice house and the room was there.

Ms. Richardson also felt that the Vision Statement should be the first thing that someone reads, she doesn't feel that it should be lumped in with the land use chapter. Chair Grigsby advised that it was put after the introduction because it is like a blueprint for the Master Plan and it was put in front of land use to explain the reasons for the content of the land use section. This all was to set the table for discussion on existing land use and land use change. Mr. Wahrlich advised that it is to get the vision out there and then discuss the land use. Chair Grigsby advised that it is a living document and can be changed as they do the other chapters if they still feel it is not in the right place. Mayor Cutts thought maybe if needed as chapters are completed it could be also in other sections. Chair Grigsby advised that the previous Master Plan was done all at once, he would like to finish all the chapters before things like that are changed.

Mr. LaCasse advised that he is concerned with the Land Use maps and wants the area around his property changed back to his rural residential which is why he purchased the property. Chair Grigsby advised that when these maps are being worked on and zoning changes are proposed it will come back to us and that is when we will do this. Mr. Wahrlich advised that every time they got into this discussion they had to go back to the fact that these are not zoning changes, it is a proposal. Mr. LaCasse felt that you are in the process of changing zoning by proposing this. Mayor Cutts advised that this proposal was part of a visionary session and everyone agreed that we want to grow Claremont and actually what they are proposing is to bring the zoning up to speed with what is actually there and it did not actually change a whole lot from what is actually there. The contents remain the same; she didn't trust it at first but did take a look at it herself and does feel it is what is actually there. Chair Grigsby felt that reconciling those details is going to be difficult. He also advised that when they do zoning they would form another group of citizens for that. Mr. LaCasse advised that he went to the MPAC and asked them to change it and they did not. Mr. Lacasse was worried that the residential area is going to mean high density. Chair Grigsby advised that when zoning is done that is when density will be done and it was not the job of the MPAC to write zoning laws.

Mayor Cutts advised that some people may be dissatisfied with the concepts, but the option of leaving everything the way it is and the tax rate will stay the same and the city will not grow or develop and will be the way it was 5 or 6 years ago. But if we grow the city responsibly, but thinking beyond our own thought or that of a few people, its to look at the overall health and development, welfare and continued viability of the city. Chair Grigsby advised that he does not agree that if there are no changes to the City zoning it does not mean we are doomed. He feels there is a lot of ability in our zoning for the City to grow. The attitude toward people who come to the City makes a big difference and the Planning office is very good and helps to get people started. Mr. Wahrlich felt that leaving the zoning as is will not help the City grow, the more you plan and fine tune things, the better it works. Chair Grigsby advised that there are opportunities to do a better job.

Chair Grigsby advised that he would like to talk about the chapters that will be completed next by the Master Plan committee or other groups.

The first chapter is **Transportation**. Chair Grigsby read the definition of the transportation chapter. Chair Grigsby sat in on the transportation session of the Master Plan forum. At that forum everyone put in a basket an idea and there were some good ideas and some wild ideas. In a few years prior they talked about transportation and they proposed a list of ideas. Mayor Cutts asked if anyone mentioned rails. Chair Grigsby advised that bus routes were mentioned but there

was no mention of rails. It would be good for the Master Plan committee to talk about this and see how it fits in. Money is always the issue although if it's a good idea it should be discussed and done when possible. Chair Grigsby felt it was an important one for the City. Mr. Wahrlich felt that transportation was third on his list.

Community Facilities – Chair Grigsby read the definition of the Community Facilities chapter. Chair Grigsby advised that all the department heads commented about the community facilities. Consensus from the board that this is a lower priority.

Economic Development – Chair Grigsby read the definition of the Economic Development chapter. Chair Grigsby advised that the Economic Development chapter can be done by the Planning and Development Office since this is something they are always working on. Consensus from the board that this is a priority.

Natural Resources – Chair Grigsby read the definition of the Natural Resources chapter. Mr. Wahrlich advised that there has been some work done on this already and he is not sure that it's a priority. Mayor Cutts advised that the Conservation Commission would appreciate more attention to obtaining inventory the area and she believes they are interested in being a part of the Master Plan. Chair Grigsby was not sure that the commission would have the resources or materials to complete. Ms. Aiken advised the board that the Conservation Commission has already started some work on the Master Plan and they do have a budget. Mr. LaCasse advised that they are given a percentage of current land use money. Chair Grigsby advised that this would be a yes then because the Conservation Commission does have some money to get this done. Mayor Cutts felt that it is important to balance this with Economic Development.

Flood / Natural Disasters – Chair Grigsby read the definition of the Natural Hazards section. Mr. Lacasse advised that we already have flood maps, etc. Consensus from the board that this section is a no.

Recreation – Chair Grigsby read the definition and advised that the Parks & Recreation committee might be interested in working on this chapter.

Public utilities – Chair Grigsby read the definition of Utility and Public Service. Chair Grigsby advised that at the OEP seminar he went to and he saw a presentation on community energy and their vision was to have a power plant, in an area such as Home Depot where there were a cluster of businesses, that would generate electricity; you would have heat from wood chips and is actually going on in communities in the north east. They recommended when the Master Plan is done that energy is included in your zoning so that the ability to do this is included. Mr. LaCasse advised that wind farms are also becoming popular and our zoning should take a look at where these would be appropriate. He feels that the future of energy is important. Mayor Cutts advised that this is a tough one and finding a group or person who is qualified would be a challenge. Mr. LaCasse felt that he could get someone come in and talk to the board like John Osgood from the Public Utilities Commission. Mr. Britton also thought the City staff could help with this if the board felt it was important.

Cultural and Historic Resources - Chair Grigsby read the definition of Cultural and Historic Resources. Mayor Cutts advised that we have a Historic District Commission and the Historical Society and the group has had several speakers come in and talk about how some communities have a Heritage Commission which is outside the Historic District area and she feels that this is important for the History is our City and we want to take care of it. Chair Grigsby advised that we would need to find out if they would like to get involved. Mayor Cutts felt that they would like to get involved.

Regional Concern - Chair Grigsby read the definition of Regional Concern. Chair Grigsby advised that he would rather work on local projects with the minimal funds we have. Mr. LaCasse advised that there are projects that surround our borders and other communities that may have the resources. Ms. Richardson felt that this is important and needs to be looked at and as a whole we should talk about how surrounding communities could affect us. Mayor Cutts felt that this is way for Claremont to look outside itself. Mr. Austin felt that the big landfill that is being put across the interstate is a good example as to why this is a good chapter; we may be encouraged to use this area for our recycling and feels this chapter is important. Chair Grigsby felt that we could speak to City staff and the UVLSRPC to help see if this is something we should work on. Ms. Richardson and Mayor Cutts agreed that they do not like that it is called Regional Concern and would rather it was called a collaboration.

Neighborhood Plan – Chair read the definition of Neighborhood Plan. Chair Grigsby advised that he feels this is part of the zoning and would be like design standards.

Community Design Section – Chair Grigsby read the definition of the Community Design Section. Chair Grigsby advised that he is not sure how this section could be accomplished. He feels this is about the designs and appearance of buildings

and this should be included in zoning. Chair Grigsby advised that an example would be some businesses use a truck box for storage and this is something that might be practical but not desirable.

Housing section – Chair Grigsby read the definition of the Housing Section. Chair Grigsby advised that we have applied for a grant for this and it would be a definite chapter if we receive the grant

Implementation – Chair Grigsby read the definition of Implementation. Chair Grigsby felt that this should be done last and maybe it is something we should do when all the other chapters are done. Mayor Cutts thought maybe we should have the Master Plan Committee oversee the other sections. Mayor Cutts doesn't feel that we should have a separate group overseeing all the other groups. Ms. Richardson agreed that it should be the responsibility of the group that is working on the section to present their work to the Planning board.

Chair Grigsby advised that there were 8 out of 12 sections that were a positive. Ms. Richardson asked when the MPAC comes back. Chair Grigsby advised that they would not but whichever committee is responsible would do their part. Mr. Austin feels that Master Plan is a working document and with all the changes he feels that these committees will be worked on consistently and change as needed. We should always be looking for better ways to do things and we are not finalizing anything. Mr. LaCasse felt that the Planning Office could do the work on the implementation. Mr. Britton advised the Planning Office felt that the MPAC taking a look at the Master Plan annually or semi-annually would be a great idea. Ms. Richardson advised that there has been no mention of the MPAC and are they now active or are they going to work on it more. Mr. Wahrlich advised that the MPAC was looking forward to working on more chapters.

Chair Grigsby advised that the MPAC is a citizens group in charge of oversight and maybe it would be a good thing to have them review the plan and there could be a need to review what was done in the past when there is a new chapter. He also does not want it to be a product of staff, it should have civilian oversight. Mr. LaCasse felt that the planning office could do it but it should be bounced off a citizens committee. Chair Grigsby felt that for example the HDC and Historical Society could bounce it off the MPAC. Mayor Cutts felt that the group should bring a final report for each chapter to the Planning Board and/or City Council. Mr. LaCasse didn't feel that these chapters would cost a lot of money to do and staff could help with the details and then its brought to the Planning Board and then it can go to the Council for adoption.

Mr. Britton asked to pick a couple of sections and then have the Planning Department organize with the MPAC to form groups and see how we would attack these sections. We have to see if these groups are even interested in participating. Consensus from the board that they would let the Planning Department work with the MPAC to form groups and bring that information to the Planning Board at the June 9th meeting.

Mr. Wahrlich would like to choose 2 or 3 sections and when those are done we would choose 2 or 3 more. Mr. LaCasse didn't feel that the MPAC was needed. Chair Grigsby advised that yes the Planning Board could do it but we do not have the time to do all this work and to be responsible for that is too much. Also since the board approves it, it would be better to have someone do the work and bring it to us. Ms. Richardson feels that we could form tons of committees and she feels that one committee reporting to the board would be sufficient. Ms. Richardson also feels that transportation, economic development and housing are important. Mayor Cutts felt that we could also get the benefit of Historic District, Natural Resources and Recreation and she sees them as free ones where there is a committee working on them already. Mayor Cutts felt like the HDC might be interested in forming a Heritage Commission.

1st sections – Economic development, Transportation, Historic & Community design, Housing – if grant is awarded
2nd sections – Natural Resources, Public Utilities, Recreation

Mr. Britton advised that some of the work will have to be written by someone else and he does not think that there is the money like there was for the last Master Plan. He also feels that citizen input was high with the last sections of the plan. He is worried about citizen burnout when you add in the forestry management plan also. He thinks that we should focus on 2 or 3 sections so that we can focus on just those. Ms. Richardson felt that we wouldn't do as good of a job if we do too many. Chair Grigsby advised that he is worried about the group such as the MPAC getting burnt out. Mr. Wahrlich feels that everyone in the City should know about the Master Plan and he feels that having a focus on a couple of things will be good and four sections will be too much to manage.

Mr. LaCasse advised that he thinks there is a traffic committee. Mayor Cutts feels that economic development goes to P&D, transportation, Housing we are waiting on a grant, the Historic District & Cultural Design would be done by the HDC. Chair Grigsby advised that we can propose these to the MPAC who can work with the Planning and Development office. Chair Grigsby advised that it would be ok to speak to the Conservation Commission that we will be looking to

them down the road to work on this chapter. Natural resources, recreation, and utilities can be done in the second phase. Mr. Wahrlich advised that he felt that there is a lot of work already done on recreation so maybe the recreation should take the place of the Historic District and have that go to the second phase. Mr. Britton felt that the Parks & Recreation Department has their hands full with the new community center. Chair Grigsby felt that they probably do have their hands full.

Motion to: Recommend to MPAC the first four areas be Transportation, Economic Development, Historic & Community Design and Housing. The 2nd phase to be Recreation, Public Utilities, Natural Resources and possibly Regional Concerns
Made by: Mayor Cutts **Second:** Ms. Richardson **Vote:** Unanimous

IV. Correspondence

- o Joint Meeting with the Zoning Board on June 9, 2008 for a presentation on the Community Center
Chair Grigsby wanted to advise everyone that there will be a joint meeting with the zba at the June 9th meeting.

V. Other

Mr. Folta advised that the City Council allows public participation during the discussions and he felt that during public discussions the citizens should be able to speak. He also felt that just because the law lists those chapters of the Master Plan doesn't mean that you have to do those, there is a chapter on energy that some communities have started to do. Another chapter that is found is a chapter on solid waste management and natural disasters has become broader to a natural disaster/homeland security. Some towns you will see a chapter on education, there is nothing saying that the city cannot comment on their schools. There are other possibilities on the chapters other than what they have discussed. The housing chapter is potentially full of conflict and he is in favor of hiring a consultant for their expertise. He also feels a consultant for the transportation section is needed for their expertise, it is dependant on data, traffic counts, etc. the UVLSRPC can help with this area. As for the discussion on modular homes, Mr. Folta felt that if this is going to lead to something in zoning then the definitions should be clearer.

VI. Adjournment

Motion to: Adjourn
Made by: Mayor Cutts **Second:** Ms. Richardson **Vote:** Unanimous
Meeting Adjourned at: 9:34 pm
Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Aiken
Boards and Commissions Coordinator