



City Center Project Steering Committee
Tuesday, October 9, 2012 at 5:00 p.m.
The Visitor's Center
14 North Street, Claremont, NH

Minutes
approved 10.23.12

I. Roll Call

Present: Marty Davis, David Putnam, Victor Bergeron, Jason Farrell, Keith Raymond (5:07), Thomas Rock, Robert Tatro, James Feleen, David Messier (5:05), Gary Trotter, Kristen Kenniston (5:22)

Absent: William Greenrose

Staff: Nancy Merrill, Tracey Hutton, Guy Santagate

II. Meeting Minutes

Motion: to place the September 25, 2012 minutes on the next agenda.

Made by: Mr. Tatro **Second:** Mr. Rock **Vote:** unanimous

III. Old Business

- Review of Draft zoning outline with recommendations with The Cecil Group

Mr. Putnam stated that the Steering Committee was here this evening to review the draft outline with Steve Cecil and Eunice Kim from The Cecil Group.

Ms. Merrill reviewed the process stating that there is a lot to accomplish in a short period of time. Now it the time staff and legal review will be brought in on a parallel track.

A more precise time line will be developed between The Cecil Group and staff in the coming days. Potentially there will be a joint Zoning Board of Adjustment / Planning Board meeting on November 5th.

Mr. Cecil explained that he will review the map and ideas first then have questions and answers. After that has been completed he will begin review of how the zoning will be created and the organization, but does not want to get lost in the details at this time.

Mr. Cecil reviewed the map stating that the basic idea was to set aside the cone distinctive to the City Center area. In order to accomplish this, the perimeter was refined to accommodate the desire for specific City Center zones. For example the small areas of AR and RR were removed from the study area. Some of the B-2 of the western side was included, but the cemetery on West Pleasant will remain R-1 and moved outside the study area.

Some of the basic principles include having two lower density neighborhood clusters as CR-1, clusters of multi-family with occasional other uses as CR-2, the downtown core as MU, and the three corridors (Pleasant, Broad, North) as PR. Automobile oriented businesses, the gateways of Main and Washington, would be CB-2. This brings us from 11 zones to six. The existing zoning in the Spofford neighborhood is B-1.5, but it is residential in nature.

Mr. Davis inquired why some of the exterior was removed from the study area. Mr. Cecil responded that those areas have more in common with the adjacent areas out the City Center than within. For example the area of North by Grandview, it doesn't seem broken so why fix it. Mr. Rock furthered that the only commercial in that immediate area was the Public Works garage.

Mr. Cecil explained that from the aerial photograph it appears to be a single family neighborhood and fits with the existing zoning.

Mr. Messier stated that the area around Jiffy Mart did seem to be a question. Mr. Rock asserted that these areas will not change in the next 15 years so both pieces should be CR-2. Mr. Cecil said the R-1 was single family homes around Warren/Donald/Albert and should remain such.

Mr. Messier suggested that the homes that front on North should be CR-2 and the remainder of Grandview should be R-1. There was much discussion but the consensus was to agree with Mr. Messier's idea.

There was then discussion of the difference between the allowed uses in the single-family CR-1 and the multi-family CR-2.

Mr. Folta said that it would be interesting to see how the TIF and Historic overlays relate in the City Center.

Mr. Davis suggested that a chart showing the differences between the existing zones and the comparable new City Center zones would be helpful.

Mr. Cecil agreed and explained that such a chart would show changes and benefits of the new zoning scheme.

Ms. Merrill asked if the CB-2 portion of Washington Street was a down zoning. Mr. Cecil explained that it wasn't, there would merely be more design requirements.

Mr. Messier asked about CVS being in a PR. Ms. Merrill responded that retail was a permitted use in that zone as recommended.

Mr. Putnam directed Mr. Cecil to begin the next phase of the discussion. Mr. Cecil directed the Steering Committee to the outline provided; Ms. Kim will go through the items one by one.

1. B-1 and MUM are merged into an MU; in this way the mills and the downtown core get the same benefits.
2. Cultural Core; this would promote recreation. Arts, B&Bs and the like in the downtown core.

Mr. Messier inquired which zones this encompassed. Ms. Kim responded that it was the MU.

3. PR as a mixed use corridor to include personal services, Main is not one of these corridors.

Mr. Cecil added that neighborhood zones need to join to make walkability happen, so the more commercial areas are therefore split up a bit.

4. This item suggests active uses on the first floor of buildings in the downtown core. Special Use permits would be required from the Planning Board for other uses.

Ms. Merrill expressed that a lot of communities, including Claremont, have offices on the first floor and it is not a negative for the community.

Mr. Cecil said it was a matter of whether the buildings have a chance to be full or remain empty. There is a critical mass required of active use; perhaps protecting a few critical blocks is the key.

Ms. Merrill suggested that this is a question for the committee. Mr. Davis stated that it would look nice if it were all shops, but right now it just needs to be full. Mr. Feleen stated that not a lot of the 2nd floor can be utilized, with the exception of Moody and Oddfellows.

Mr. Trottier was concerned and feels building owners need the freedom to fill with what they feel is appropriate. Mr. Putnam agreed

furthering that that was the intent of the Steering Committee's goals and objectives.

5. It was suggested that the limiting of conversion of single-family to multi-family is more appropriately a Planning Board Process than a Zoning board of Adjustment one.
6. Heavy industrial uses should be limited in the downtown core to those allowed only by Special Exception.
7. It would be good practice to allow neighborhood scale retail and services in the CR-1 by Special Use permit, these uses would be limited by size.
8. This item deals with the permitting process. There would be tables for the uses and dimensional standards. Technical Review would mimic that which is authorized by NH state law. This item will be further reviewed by staff and the City Solicitor and additional comments sent to The Cecil Group.
9. Non-Conforming uses deteriorate over time. In this was, if an expansion is able to meet the dimensional standards of the zone, expansion of the use would be allowed so the business could flourish.
10. Here The Cecil group is suggesting changing the dimensional standards to more accurately reflect what is predominant now.
11. This concept is to allow increased densities in the downtown core to be more realistic to the type of development that exists there.
12. "Similar" uses are not appropriate in New Hampshire. The revised recommendation here is to broaden the use classes and definitions so they are more encompassing.
13. This item suggests that design review standards should be contained in the site plan review regulations not in the zoning ordinance.
14. Architectural Review criteria could be voluntary best management practices as opposed to mandatory standards. Ms. Merrill inquired if there could be incentives for meeting the criteria. Mr. Cecil suggested one incentive might be density bonuses. Another method to achieve compliance would be to make it a required part of a public action.
15. The transportation recommendation will be contained in a separate memorandum to be taken in concert with the zoning recommendations.

It will be important that infrastructure becomes both a private and public investment.

16. Parking standards for commercial and residential projects needs to be revised. Access management agreements should be utilized.

17. These should be new sign standards for MU and CB-2.

Mr. Cecil concluded by saying he was very happy with the comments of the evening; the next step is to continue onto the next level of detail.

IV. Other

V. Adjourn

Motion: to adjourn.

Made by: Mr. Trottier **Second:** Ms. Messier **Vote:** Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM

Respectfully Submitted by, Tracey Hutton