



City Center Project Steering Committee
Tuesday, November 27, 2012 at 5:00 p.m.
The Visitor's Center
14 North Street, Claremont, NH

Minutes
Approved 1/3/13

I. Roll Call

Present: Marty Davis, David Putnam, Victor Bergeron, Jason Farrell, Thomas Rock, Robert Tatro, James Feleen, David Messier, Gary Trottier, Kristen Kenniston, Keith Raymond

Absent: William Greenrose

Staff: Tracey Hutton, Jane Taylor, Guy Santagate, Kelly LeBlanc

II. Meeting Minutes

Agenda : approve the agenda

Made by: Ms. Kenniston

Second: Mr. Farwell

Vote: 10 – yes, 1- no

Mr. Davis does not support voting on the agenda.

Motion: to approve the October 23, 2012 minutes.

Made by: Ms. Kenniston

Second: Mr. Rock

Vote: Unanimous

III. Old Business

- Review of Draft zoning documents with The Cecil Group

Steve Cecil and Eunice Kim from The Cecil Group were present to talk with the CCCP.

Chair Putnam stated that the memo re: Discussion Topics from the last meeting are advisory and not decision making (5).

(1) Eunice Kim addressed the residential uses on a bottom floor in the multiple use district. You could have a residential building in the MU district but not a commercial building with an apartment on the ground floor. The question is if the ground floor is integral for an apartment if mixed use. The Cecil Group would like to get the board's recommendations. Steve Cecil stated the ground floor could be the concern. If not enough business space it would remain empty. If there is too much residential use on the ground floor, the vitality of an MU district might be lost. Ms. Hutton stated there is a balance of critical mass. Mr. Trottier stated this would be self regulating and we must take into consideration the market. The owner should have the opportunity to invest in their property. Mr. Raymond stated we should not limit the opportunity. Mr. Messier stated the concern would be large plate glass windows with blankets and such hanging in them if a residential space. Mr. Tatro stated that business in the front and apartments in the rear could be a possibility. Mr. Cecil suggested going by street or going by a case by case basis. Mr. Cecil stated a special use proposal with criteria written in is a possibility. Ms. Hutton stated that the standards need to remain measurable. An ambiguous standard could become impossible. Mr. Feleen asked

how we set up potential uses and reasonable regulations down the line. Mr. Trottier stated diversification is key. First floor also allows for handicap accessibility. Chair Putnam would like the Cecil Group to write a recommendation with options.

(2) Dimensional standards – Ms. Kim stated this is a view of how housing density should be applied to the MU. Ms. Taylor agreed and stated that the concern was the mixed use buildings and not wanting to have 1 unit per 10,000 SF. Some of the ideas were to retain the SF concept in the B-1 district. Where it is purely residential, retain the density requirements. If you have a 3,500 SF density, will onsite parking be required? Would the 3,500 standard be dealt with as a SE? Mr. Rock asked how this would impact the downtown. Ms. Taylor stated parking is the primary problem. The PB can waive parking, but the density change is only for MU buildings. Ms. Kim stated that we would keep the ratios in B-1. The parking regulations are generally where the concern comes in per Mr. Cecil. Mr. Feleen asked what the check of the system is. Ms. Kim stated there are square footage per units that are mandated by building code. A one bedroom must be 550 SF and a 2 bedroom 850 SF. There is no maximum SF. Ms. Taylor suggested that for MU buildings only to go with density requirements and not a minimum SF per lot. A dormitory is not considered residential. Mr. Cecil stated that parking will primarily govern the solution. The Cecil Group will address concerns. Mr. Picano, citizen, asked if the residence will be confined to the same definitions as a business. Chair Putnam stated it is done through definitions and the zoning chart.

(3) ‘Interior lit signs’ are not allowed – Mr. Messier stated that the HDC has never allowed interior illuminated signs and they would like this codified. Ms. Hutton stated that no day-glo colors or fluorescent colors are permitted. Movement of signs are restricted to date, time, temp & public service announcements therefore open signs and blinking signs are not allowed. If a sign is not moving and has a permit, it is ok. The HDC overrides the Sign Ordinance. Guidelines should be set up to add value to the area. Window decals need to go to the HDC and be approved. Chair Putnam asked Mr. Messier to email to the Cecil Group the guidelines for the HDC signage.

Robert Woods, new business owner, has restored historic aspects to his building and he sees the benefits of what the community was and can be. With open minded planning the City can come into its own. He would like to see the downtown as a walkable community. He stated the business owners need the roots to create a good, vibrant downtown. Signage is artwork and can enhance the architectural aspects of the building. The accentuation of art, architecture, and the building it represents is essential.

Mr. Feleen and Ms. Kenniston left the meeting at 6:24PM.

Mr. Folta does not find fault with neon marquis signs or lighted signs. Mr. Farrell stated the sandwich board signs are now enforced at intersections where visibility is an issue.

(4) Businesses built next to a residential in a residential zone. A buffer is needed. Ms. Hutton stated they want to protect the residential and non residential uses. Mr. Messier stated the concern is that if you live in a house and there is a business next to you, is there a buffer or regulation of landscaping to protect the residential use. Chair Putnam stated they are looking to grandfather previous situations and change going forward. Mr. Picano stated he has an increase of trash and gas debris from the gas station that abuts his property. The residence needs to be protected. Mr. Trottier stated that parking remains an issue and a 15’ buffer would allow for a considerable buffer. He would like to see parking excluded from the buffer zone. Mr. Cecil stated the buffer would be between the business and residential zone, not throughout the zone. Site Plan review might be the answer if a project is next to a residential building. Ms. Hutton stated that there is a 5’ parking lot buffer in the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Board has often required opaque screening. This would be a site plan recommendation. Mr. Fowler stated that the Planning Board takes

dumpsters and landscaping seriously. It is the authority of the Zoning Administrator to enforce these regulations.

(5) Gas Station/Convenience Stores in the City Center – Ms. Hutton stated that some City staff are concerned and possibly the Historic District should extend down Broad Street to the Chestnut Street area. Mr. Bergeron stated this will make renovation more difficult in the area. Mr. Rock stated that restricting the type of building allowed could be an option. Mr. Messier stated it would be easier, politically, to restrict the type of building. Ms. Kim stated that in PR, they would grandfather existing gas stations but not permit new additional gas stations. A future ‘look’ for the City is essential. Ask The Cecil group to draft a recommendation. The idea for PR is to look residential but allow business, a transitional zone.

- Definitions

Ms. Taylor discussed proposed definitions and their compliance to state and case law. The document was based in 1978. Categories of housing cannot be excluded from the Zoning Ordinance (e.g. dormitories). The suggestion is to allow boarding houses in MU or CCR1 or CCR2 and take it out of the other residential zones. This is only a suggestion. Mr. Cecil stated that some of these are clean-up definitions. Revisions are meant to assist the Zoning Board of Adjustment. The Cecil Group is in agreement with the definitions Ms. Taylor provided. Ms. Taylor will be drafting a provision/ new definition for Storage Containers.

The Cecil Group would like to have the final document of design guidelines by the next meeting. Traffic recommendations will be submitted as a written document.

Proposed wrap-up meeting February 9th – Sat AM

Mr. Santagate reported on a previous truck traffic study that reviewed 3 roads for an alternate route. All were poor options. The City is not looking to create a major problem in a different location.

Mr. Picano suggested streamlining the application process without Planning Board approval.

IV. Adjourn

Motion: to adjourn.

Made by: Mr. Trottier **Second:** Mr. Rock **Vote:** Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 7:50PM

Respectfully Submitted by, Kelly LeBlanc