



City Center Project Steering Committee
Tuesday, July 24, 2012 at 5:00 p.m.
The Visitor's Center
14 North Street, Claremont, NH

Minutes
Approved 8.28.12

I. Roll Call

Present: Marty Davis, David Putnam, Victor Bergeron, Jason Farrell, Keith Raymond (5:09), David Messier (5:15), Thomas Rock, Gary Trottier, Robert Tatro, James Feleen

Absent: Kristen Kenniston, William Greenrose

Staff: Nancy Merrill, Tracey Hutton

II. Meeting Minutes

Motion: to approve the minutes of June 26, 2012.

Made by: Mr. Bergeron **Second:** Mr. Farrell **Vote:** 9 in favor, Mr. Rock abstained

Motion: to approve the agenda as the minutes for July 21, 2012 meeting from 9:30am till noon.

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

III. New Business

- Design Charrette – update
The general consensus was that the Zoning Charette had a good outcome even though there could have been more attendees. The Cecil group and its subcontractors had enough background information to make it suit Claremont.

Ms. Merrill explained that there was at least one new concept presented. This was in regards to slowing traffic around the bullpen to make it more pedestrian friendly. In addition, there was discussion of the linkage between Pleasant, Opera House Square, and the Mills. This was a concept that has been discussed before.

Pleasant Street could be redesigned with angled parking, due to its width, in order to slow traffic. Slower traffic is better for businesses.

Mr. Bergeron said there was some confusion about the industrial game piece. It may have been beneficial to have separate pieces for light industry.

Mr. Tatro asked about making Pleasant Street one-way. It was explained that this is a State highway and that this sort of change would take action from authorities much higher than the City. Mr. Davis though this could be considered, regardless of the obstacles, since the Charette was a time to think about possibilities.

Mr. Bergeron has heard from some individuals that the City of Claremont is taking on this challenge in order to take buildings by eminent domain and tear them down. He explained to the Steering Committee, that he corrected this rumor by stated this was never a goal and that the real focus was improving regulations in the City Center to make it easier for residents and building owners.

Mr. Feleen felt the day was well organized and he was glad he attended. He was glad to hear that Steve Cecil commented on the fact that the City of Claremont has “good bones.” Transportation will now be the key to revitalization. Mr. Feleen also addresses the importance of having input from Public Works Director, Bruce Temple, including a discussion about the sidewalks on Main Street since they are scheduled to be worked on as well as a discussion with surveyor Wayne McCutcheon, and the local Realtors about issues in the City Center.

Mr. Farrell said the Visual preference Survey was his favorite part of the day. He is anxious to see the results. Chair Putnam noted the difference in the photographs was the dimensional aspects and not the quality of the buildings.

Mr. Messier stated there was no real focus on zoning, but more on traffic and taxation. Ms. Merrill explained the downtown TIF to the Steering Committee.

Mr. Bergeron stated that in his option to meet the goals of the city Center there needed to be cluster/workforce housing, which is quality affordable housing. Mr. Merrill concurred and stated that City owned parcels could be sold for this purpose.

Mr. Rock stated that neighborhoods like the Bluffs, that are single family, need to be retained and the character of those neighborhoods retained.

Chair Putnam stated that the way that mixed use comes together will form the updated zoning map.

Mr. Bergeron inquired about Home Occupations and the definition thereof. Ms. Merrill discussed broadly defining the use group categories such as Residential, Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional. Mr. Bernie Folta, Ward 3, inquired when the result would be in so the community could find a way to judge the proposals.

Ms. Merrill said this is ordinance “surgery” not a full repeal and replacement. Mr. Folta continued by reiterating that this is a good process with a dedicated

committee. He furthered by stating that you cannot always count on the efforts of a shrinking City staff.

Chair Putnam concluded the discussion with the statement that all of the information will forwarded to the Cecil Group.

- City Center Sidewalks recommendations
The Steering Committee examined the Safe Routes to Schools/ Sidewalk survey maps. Ms. Merrill explained that the goal was to identify recommendations for high priority areas. Chair Putnam expressed also the need for expectation of the quality of the sidewalks when and if work is completed.

Mr. Feleen encouraged the Steering committee to think more globally about pedestrian issues in the City Center.

- Current Zoning Ordinance Issue
Ms. Merrill began this discussion with an overview of the list of problem areas in the Zoning Ordinance that was given to the Cecil Group. The list included:

Definitions (including but not limited to):

Structure
Building

Backyard farming
Non-conforming structures
Accessory Dwellings
Parking
Home Occupations
Camping
Signs

Mr. Rock stated he would like to have street/front setbacks to the list of problem. May variances are applied to for this criterion.

Ms. Hutton explained that in her option the front setback are indeed too large. She went on to explain the concept of set-to lines rather than set-backs.

Ms. Merrill reiterated, after being prompted my Mr. Davis, that the grant has to be complete in December. This is when the final recommendations will be ready.

Mr. Folta asked how judgments are made if Form Based Codes are less specific than Euclidian zoning. Ms. Hutton explained that no judgment is necessary. Form Based codes contain specific dimensional standards that have to be met and use categories that are well defined.

IV. Other

V. Adjourn

Motion: to adjourn.

Made by: Mr. Bergeron **Second:** Mr. Messier **Vote:** Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 6:29 PM

Respectfully Submitted by, Tracey Hutton