

FINAL

**LEBANON PLANNING BOARD
Regular Meeting
Monday, April 26, 2021, 6:30 PM
Remote Via Microsoft Teams
LebanonNH.gov/Live**

ROLL CALL OF

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bruce Garland (Chair), Matthew Hall (Vice-Chair), Joan Monroe, Kathie Romano, Jeremy Rutter, Gregorio Amaro

MEMBERS ABSENT: Karen Zook (Council Representative), Laurel Stavis, Kim Chewning

STAFF PRESENT: David Brooks (Planning Director), Tim Corwin (Senior Planner), Rebecca Owens (Associate Planner), Mark Goodwin (GIS Coordinator)

1. Call to Order Chair Garland called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

A. Review of meeting procedures and NH RSA 91-A “Right-to-Know” requirements.

Mr. Corwin shared the State directive and participation details for the online meeting in Microsoft Teams. All members identified themselves.

Chair Garland conducted a roll call of members present as reported above. An overview of the meeting agenda was outlined.

2. Other Business

A. Discussion re: Ped/Bike - Related Amendments to Site Plan Review and Subdivision Regulations

Ms. Owens led the discussion of the amendments as presented in the meeting packet. The bicycle storage design guide was included. The goal for this meeting was to gather additional feedback and answer questions prior to a legal review and the preparation of a new version. A number of definitions were clarified.

Ms. Owens introduced the section on Design Standards. The Complete Streets information is no longer in a footnote but in its own location. The universal design includes clear demarcation of where bicyclists and pedestrians can walk or ride with clear pathways and adequate facilities. To reduce confusion, signage would conform to the updated manual on uniform control devices, which would provide visibility and safety. Land use and traffic calming are covered along with dedicated routes. Most safety issues occur on private property and are not reported or regulated. Most communities are moving to more specifically defined requirements. Board members commented on issues in parking lots or in and around cars. Sarah Riley, a Conservation Commission member, cited the example of a parking lot situation needing additional consideration.

Ms. Owens made comments on the Orientation and Form section. Desired building entrance designs would reduce the distance from a public way to the building entrance, which should be clear. Examples of various entrances were shown. A welcoming façade would be desirable. There would be new

requirements for screening of multi-family parking and promoting options for more attractive curb appeal.

Ms. Owens noted aspects of the Access and Traffic section. There are no major changes to sidewalk requirements. It would be up to the Planning Board members if section D regarding sidewalks would be included. Mr. Corwin stated that every development must comply with zoning regarding parking, which would be reviewed as necessary under current regulations. Site plan review is not required for single family homes.

The Board members discussed pedestrian safety, transit, ride sharing, and necessary sightlines. The members considered changes to requirements for short and long-term bicycle storage and parking. Some adjustment for larger developments would be needed, and the requirement could be a range with specifics based upon discussion with each developer. A limit of 20% based upon the number of units was suggested. Councilor Erling Heistad offered that providing a bicycle hook along with each parking space in underground parking would be useful. Researching bicycle parking provisions in other towns could offer more options. Ms. Owens noted that there would be another discussion.

Chair Garland noted the lack of proposed language for fire. Mr. Brooks stated that Staff is continuing to reach out to the Fire Department to get that resolved. Staff would also like an adjustment to the Planning Board fee schedule for advertising. The current charge is \$35 per application, but it is costing \$175 or more for an ad. Only a small percentage is being covered, and Staff is proposing a higher amount.

B. Review and discussion of Open Space Plan

Mr. Brooks noted that several Conservation Commission members were on tonight's call. An Open Space Plan as recommended in the Land Use and Natural Resource chapters from the Master Plan was prepared by a consultant, and there is a final draft that has been reviewed by the Conservation Commission. It is being presented to the Planning Board and City Council for comments and feedback with the goal of finalizing and adopting it within the next few months.

Mr. Goodwin gave a presentation on the plan that has been developed over the past two years and aligned with the Master Plan. There was a need for an Open Space Plan, which was developed in-house. It is ready for public comment, and the Conservation Commission has already reviewed it. New benchmarks for a ratio of 78% developed to 22% undeveloped, which still allows much room for development, were discussed. The goals would be infill and redevelopment.

Ms. Romano noted there was no discussion on prime agricultural land, and there should be greater emphasis on what is left. She asked if there is anything preventing a road from DHMC to Route 10. Mr. Goodwin noted there is an easement on Indian Ridge, but it would not exclude a road and utilities, but it would be challenging. He noted that forest management is important, both for working forests and protected forests.

Mr. Hall commented that while it is great to have that much protected land, there are consequences to the targets in the plan. Recent studies report that open space policy leads to housing prices going up and tax revenue going down. There is a dearth of housing at present. If the move is toward less development, prices will go even higher, pricing many people out of Lebanon. There are consequences to the policies that should be considered.

Mr. Goodwin noted that tax revenue benefits from larger, consolidated housing projects. There are always unintended consequences, but experts say it is necessary to go in that direction. With the right

zoning, it is possible to increase density to still provide adequate housing, and 18,000 acres would still be in play.

Mr. Brooks suggested that if there is agreement in what the City is trying to achieve, it would be necessary to update other tools. There is no true conservation district. Some zoning doesn't line up with the Master Plan, and everything is still in play. Councilor Heistad noted that lots of community effort went into developing the Master Plan. It is important to determine what it envisioned. It is up to the Planning Board to determine how to achieve it.

Mr. Goodwin stated that a number of other techniques are available, not just down-zoning. Some communities are doing things differently.

The Board members discussed the need to let the public know the location of protected lands, and creating a map was suggested.

C. Overview of Proposed 2022 Zoning Amendments

Mr. Corwin gave a brief presentation with the focus on housing opportunities and natural resource protection. The Zoning Regulations are being brought up to date. The goal is increasing housing opportunities using a variety of tools, both small and large measures, to create affordable housing opportunities. Creating accessory dwelling units while meeting lot size requirements and allowing special exceptions rather than prohibiting them are possibilities. It is also possible to create a new residential district. Planning Staff will bring proposals to the Planning Board later in the year. The Master Plan calls for increasing housing opportunities. Encouraging development where the City wants to see it and protecting natural resources are important. Encouraging energy efficient development, adjusting school impact fees, and updating parking regulations are also goals. The Planning Board can suggest and review zoning requirements.

3. Committee Reports

A. Planning Board Subcommittees:

Planning Board Capital Improvement Program (VACANT/VACANT/Garland/L. Stavis) – Mr. Hall expressed an interest in participating on the CIP subcommittee again.

Planning Board Development Regulations Update (M. Hall/K, Romano/ J. Rutter / J. Monroe)

B. City Council Subcommittees:

Class VI Roads Advisory Committee (J. Monroe) – The Committee took a break from meetings, and is now continuing to work on roads.

Lebanon Energy Advisory Committee (J. Monroe) – no report

D. Other Subcommittees:

City Council Representative (D. Whittlesey/K. Zook)

Heritage Commission (J. Rutter)

Pedestrian & Bicyclist Advisory Committee (G. Amaro)

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (B. Garland/VACANT)

UV Sub-Committee of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions (B. Garland)

Upper Valley Transportation Management Association (VACANT)

Mascoma River Local Advisory Committee (K. Romano)**Steering Committee for the Implementation of the Master Plan (SCIMP - B. Garland/K. Chewning/VACANT/J. Monroe)**

The Department will be working with individual boards and committee to evaluate chapters of the Master plan to determine if they are still accurate and express the current vision. If the vision is still accurate, then the Department will work on updating actions and strategies. If not, some chapters may require a new visioning process. The future of SCIMP was discussed. Different boards are in charge of specific chapters. The volume of effort in reporting and tracking became overwhelming, and the Department lost momentum along with boards and committees. Mr. Brooks noted that it may be updated by committee areas. New revision dates may be needed, perhaps a 5- to 8-year plan and not 18 years as before.

West Lebanon Revitalization Advisory Committee (L. Stavis)**Planning & Development Department – Task Status (D. Brooks/ M. Goodwin/T. Corwin/R. Owens)**

Mr. Brooks noted that Kathy Urfffer of the Connecticut River Conservancy will attend the City Council meeting tentatively scheduled for June 2, 2021 regarding the dam relicensing process. There will be a discussion of what role the City should play in the process conclusion.

The Keys to the Valley project has been finalized. The effort involved 3 regional planning commissions, and two years were spent putting material together with responses from the public. The website (keystothevalley.com) is excellent and includes great information. There will be lunchtime presentations and discussion of pieces of the report in May.

Mr. Brooks stated that the CIP process is underway. There is one spot left on the committee, which provides a very interesting look at the City's prioritizing and budgeting process. The projects go to the CIP Committee in late July and to the Planning Board in late August.

City Manager Mulholland has announced that, barring some change in COVID rates, the City Council will be back to meeting in person in June, with other boards following in July or later. The Planning Board can consider going back to in-person meetings with a quorum physically present. The Teams meetings will remain an option, and in May the Board can discuss going back to in-person meetings.

Mr. Brooks noted that there is a prospective developer for the Iron Horse project, and a meeting was to happen earlier in the day. It may come to the Board for conceptual discussion.

Mr. Hall inquired about the Prospect Hills appeal. Mr. Brooks stated that Staff is pulling together information for a certified record. Mr. Corwin noted that the appeals board hearing is similar to a superior court hearing but is supposed to be an expedited process.

4. Approval of Minutes**A. March 22, 2021**

Matthew Hall moved to approve the Planning Board minutes of March 22, 2021, as presented. The motion was seconded by Kathie Romano.

Roll Call Vote:

Voting in Favor – Mr. Amaro, Mr. Rutter, Ms. Monroe, Ms. Romano, Mr. Hall, Mr. Garland

Voting Against – None

****The MOTION was approved (6-0)***

5. Adjournment

A MOTION by Matthew Hall to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Kathie Romano

Roll Call Vote:

Voting in Favor, Mr. Garland, Mr. Amaro, Ms. Monroe, Ms. Romano, Mr. Rutter, Mr. Hall

Voting Against - None

****The MOTION was approved (6-0).***

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Howes

Recording Secretary