

Discussion 5/29

Planning commission, session 2

Six community members attended, not including Danny K., Dennis C.; interested party:
John Garn

Synopsis

This evening started out with town plan elements particular to housing, but the bulk of the time was spent discussing how increased housing development might actually look, and what obstacles we might face from a public perception perspective. Generally, there seemed to be consensus that we a) need housing that meets the “missing middle” in terms of affordability, both for seniors and working families.

DK: overview of town plan process.

1. community assessment
2. Develop a shared vision
3. Define community goals and objectives
4. Map out the future

Goals—Objectives—Policies 4.1.01 g1, g12 ,g13

There was brief general discussion about the Goals/Objective/Policies

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Questions:

How are we measuring up?

Are they still relevant?

What needs to change?

Housing: what would the future look like?

Not much discussion of “new” housing in the town plan. We should examine recent history of new housing.

DK: Maybe farm “protection” is less of a priority this time around?

Goals: do we just answer yes or no re: are we making progress?

(vs. more objective measures)

Some objective measures re housing are available, but many of the goals are hard to assess.

Is there a definition of High Quality, re housing.

Objectives use the terms: maintain (2x); Improve. A little vague. Should it be more visionary/aspirational?

Encourage multi family/duplex conversions? ADUs (yes, all options on the table)

Septic capacity may be an issue. Are waste water rules “bedroom” based?

(Yes, Vermont residential wastewater and potable water supply rules are primarily based on the number of bedrooms.)

In town... ~a dozen or so individual detached (i.e., not simply rooms in a house) short term rentals

Upland forest –ROD --how was it defined?

(FC zone basically leftover after all other zoning districts are defined)

Use Ag Land Evaluation Site Assessment tool (LESA) to define highest priority areas??
Should we do something like that? (RT comment: has not been successfully applied to forest land, for various reasons)

Act 181 housing targets high

Act 181 allocated to towns based on current housing growth rates.

How close are we to being built out

Meadows Edge development controversial: site plan taken to environmental court. Wanted to build 6, DRB 4; 4 in PUD; one down the hill. Less conflict now, still some hard feelings.

Other housing ideas discussed: Community Housing trust, Lincoln's Weathervane model. Bristol Firehouse apartments.

Discussion shifts somewhat to: How concerned should we be about public opinion around additional growth? What actions can be taken to mitigate the expected NIMBY concerns? Can we understand the impacts? Put them on the table. Discuss them? Work through it, neighborly.

How is the housing going to look, architecturally? Can we mitigate the concern?

(RT): should we advance the idea of a specific project into the public discourse?

Specifically, a multi unit development on town land adjacent to the school, using the village water supply? (some discussion)

Small developers workshop attended: lots of good info on how to pull it off.

Defining how the scale fits?

Senior housing: could it be less controversial (big constituency)

Why do we need more housing; THE SCHOOL

blank canvas problem—put examples on the table to make them concrete. Better than talking in concepts.

New Haven is looking at housing development in the village. State seems to be supporting the idea of larger sewage treatment systems in communities.

Some discussion around alternative septic technologies.