

**DOVER PLANNING BOARD WORKSHOP
MINUTES OF MEETING
JANUARY 17, 2006**

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Swartzendruber, Perry Plummer, Doug Steele, Tony McManus, Ron Cole, Frank Torr , Donald Andolina, Dean Trefethen

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bryan Cahoon

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael Joyal, City Manager, Marsha Colbath, Ron Stock, Kirt Shuman

STAFF PRESENT: Steve Stancel, Planning Director; Jacqueline Freeman, Recording Secretary

Chairman Cole opened the workshop at 7:03 PM.

Chairman Cole introduced three of the four people who have applied to the Planning Board. They were Marsha Colbath, Kirt Shuman, Ron Stock.

Steve Stancel stated that he went back to the 2005 Goals and added those goals that were not reached last year to the list. He said that they got busy with the McConnell Center, the waterfront, and Liberty Mutual and Measured Progress also took up a lot of time. He went over the list of goals.

1. Begin the process of updating the Economic and Land Use Section of the Master Plan.

Some of the things that need to be done are the following:

A. Institute series of "Speak Out Dover" session. Steve Stancel explained that they asked people what they liked and what they disliked in their neighborhood, as well as what they liked in the City and what they disliked. They took all of the pros and cons and created a report based on that. Between 1998 and today the Department did two major re-codifications that represented more than 100 different zoning regulations based on the recommendations of that plan. It is time to begin gathering data regarding this section of the Master Plan and begin analyzing development trends within the City, as well as the region.

Steve Stancel said that three years ago there were 268 housing starts in the City and in two years there were 142 and this past calendar year 84. You can see the downward trend. Historically, it is about a 10 year trend.

Steve Stancel explained that they have done a lot of data collection. They are taking a look at the fiscal impacts of residential housing within the City of Dover. The establishment of impact fees is working.

Tony McManus asked for a list of how much has been taken in for the School Impact Fees.

Steve Stancel explained that the School Impact Fees go into a separate fund and it is drawn upon by the School Department for capital improvements.

Ron Cole suggested also getting a list of funds taken in for the Recreation Impact Fees.

Perry Plummer felt that it would be a good time to look at the ordinances covering the impact fees to be sure that they are up to date.

Steve Stancel stated that he would add a little more flexibility in terms of waivers based on what we have seen come before the Board recently.

3. Review various regulations that have been passed in the last five year for possible revisions. The Transfer of Development Ordinance (TDR) needs revisions because there is a problem with the sending areas.
 - B. Open space changes. He said that some of the smaller open space subdivisions have the lots that are just barely smaller than normal and look an awful lot like a conventional subdivision but they meet the open space regulations. Maximum lot size is one of the things that we might want to think about. In other words you can't have a lot that is 30,000 sq. ft. and still be considered an Open Space Subdivision.
 - C. Wetland Setbacks. Tom Fargo was asked about recent projects. Do we want to stick with the blanket 50 foot setback or do we want larger setbacks from wetlands that should be protected and perhaps less for wetlands that are not very important is a question for discussion.
 - D. Conservation District regulations. Is it time to take a look at the 100 foot setbacks or not.
4. Analyze and amend, as necessary, the Subdivision and Site Plan Regulations to incorporate the Phase II Stormwater Management Requirements.

Steve Stancel explained that these are requirements that are coming down from the State of NH and the City needs to tweak their regulations to make sure they meet the State regs.

5. Finalize Class VI Road committee recommendations.

Steve Stancel stated that the City Council, at the request of the Planning Board, made several recommendations for Class VI roads and one of which was to create another committee to look at Old Garrison Road.

6. Promote Downtown traffic changes as outlined in the Rizzo Report, particularly Parking Alternatives, including researching and promoting funding alternatives such as Tax Increment Funding Districts. Study potential truck route alternatives as incorporated in the report.

Steve Stancel stated that there were many recommendations made in the Rizzo Report, all of which were very important and most recently the Council eliminated a couple of recommendations from the Debt Financing portion of the CIP and they are suggesting that they be funded by the General Fund. He said that it is going to be important for the Planning Board to get involved in the process and perhaps get involved in potential funding sources and parking resolutions in the downtown area.

Ron Cole said we are going to be adding a couple thousand people to the community during the daytime. This would be an opportunity to assist the downtown merchants by getting the Liberty people downtown during the day, lunch hour etc. The downtown rapid transit loop would become more important.

8. Participate and promote City-wide transportation initiatives located in the Master Plan such as the City-wide Trail System and Downtown Rapid Transit Loop.

Steve Stancel stated the Transit Loop is currently being studied by a consultant. A workshop was held with the City Council last year and they hope to get back to the City Council in February or March of this year with an updated report on the feasibility of such a system. The type of system that they are looking at would be a three prong approach where the City's transportation center, (the train station) would be the hub of the system. Coming out from that hub would be three different transit loops. They would head out from the urban core into the rural area and back probably within a 15 to 20 minute timeframe. What is unique with this system is that you would stand at a bus stop and be picked up. You could also make a phone call and the bus would deviate and pick you up and then drop you off. He said that there are a lot of para transit providers in the City today, the hospital, the senior centers, and some of the social service agencies. They are hoping to get buy in from all of the people who are currently running their own para transit systems so that it becomes more economically feasible.

7. Continue to cooperate with other city agencies in developing the Riverfront and to make sure that the Board is active in whatever plans are taking place.

Steve Stancel said that the staff is in the process of working with two different developers for the waterfront. He added that Frank Torr is on that committee.

Frank Torr added that in addition to Dean Trefethen, Beth Thompson and Mike Joyal also sit on the Waterfront Committee meetings.

9. Review changes to Chapter 170-10(E), allowing zones to encroach into one another by 50 feet.

Steve Stancel stated that this continues to be a problem area of zoning. The first issue came up with the Dunkin Donuts issue on Silver St. but more recently, Paolini used it to go 50 feet into an adjoining zone to allow them greater density of development. This needs to be looked at again.

10. Create an ordinance to change Chapter 3.62 Planning Board provision for a number of alternates.

Steve Stancel stated that Ron Cole would like to increase the number of alternates from 3 to 5.

11. Expand on the Recreation Master Plan – review potential neighborhood park locations – could also recommend Recreation CIP activities, trail locations – greenbelt system.

Steve Stancel stated that was an item on last year's list that we didn't get to. We are getting subdivisions that are coming into the City and starting to collect fees for recreation. There is really no plan even in the recreation master plan for new neighborhood parks or upgrades to existing parks. As we create impact fees for recreation we need to take a greater look at this.

Tony McManus asked if it would be helpful if we had some subcommittees on some of these things. Currently, the Board has to rely on the Planning Department to generate things, do the work and then bring it to the Board. A few examples of what subcommittees could do is to look at truck routes and neighborhood parks.

Steve Stancel thought it was an excellent idea. He said that he was going to suggest taking a look at creating more committees with the Planning Board members playing a greater roll in some of these goals.

Ron Cole said that anyone having a particular area of interest could contact him and he would delegate from there.

Steve Stancel said that there was some discussion in the past year about sidewalks and whether we should require them or not. That could be another possible addition to this list. Street trees and utilities were mentioned also.

Doug Steel said that Engineering asked him to bring up the subject of trees. He will find out what their concerns are.

Steve Stancel explained that the original problem of a couple of years ago was that we required two trees on every new lot. They were on private property and what often happened is people would buy the lot and cut the two trees down. We then made the change to put the trees in the City ROW, generally between the sidewalk and the curb, 60 feet apart and alternating on opposite sides of the road. Steve explained that there was a list of trees created and it was left up to Community Services to approve the type of trees.

Dean Trefethen wanted to add a couple of items to the list for discussion purposes.

1. Resident growth restriction that could be done through a Building Permit restriction limit or through Site Plan Regulations or through Zoning changes requiring larger lots,

bigger setbacks or whatever it is that would cause a given piece of land to have fewer houses on it. Not a building moratorium because he didn't want to restrict industrial, commercial or office. It would strictly be aimed at residential.

2. Study parking needs and produce accurate parking needs for multi-family developments and possibly redo the parking regulations. He felt that we would need to go into the larger condominium projects at 4:00 AM when everyone is home and see how many cars are there and how many spaces are used. He felt that the byproduct would be that more parking is needed for these developments and that in turn would reduce the number of units that could be built on a parcel of land. He said that the stormwater recommendations dovetail in the same thing. He said that in the winter parking is sometimes at a premium.

Perry Plummer asked which projects are problematic right now.

Dean Trefethen said that he knows that The Garrisons, on Durham Rd. has a problem. Northway Circle and Winchester Arms are also very tight for parking. He said that the society that we live in today could very well generate 4 cars per unit because of overnight guests. He felt that we weren't keeping up.

Steve Stancel stated that he agrees, particularly in some of the smaller projects. Two spaces per unit does not leave enough spaces for visitors. The three projects that were mentioned are older and were approved with the regulations saying one and a half spaces per unit.

Tony McManus stated that some of the apartment complexes probably rent to students where there are 3 to 4 students per apartment and everyone has a car.

Marsha Colbath spoke about some runoff that she saw from her kayak that may have come from an apartment development on Back River Rd.

Steve Stancel stated that he would look into that.

Dean Trefethen stated with regard to 3. (b) Open Space changes, that we need to look at the elimination of all the bonuses that were built in. They have to do the OSS, so why reward them for doing what they have to. He gave an example of bonuses for maintaining the view. He felt that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Generally, the OSS has been very successful. Some of the developers would have liked to do a traditional subdivision because they would get more money for each unit. In many cases they are saving a lot of money on roadways and utilities.

Ron Cole stated that a goal is to make all the gravel pit owners stand up and be counted so that the Board doesn't go through this year what it went through last year. He said that a pit was shut down for a while making the pit owners aware that there is a bite with the bark. He said that he would work with the Planning Director to develop a list of things that the Planning Board and Planning Department have done to affect the community in the past five years. He would like the citizens to understand what the Board and the

Department have been doing while the taxes have been going up and to advise some of the folks out there that the people they are referring to as “the City” are residents and taxpayers also and they are not looking to increase their own taxes.

Chairman Cole left the workshop at 7:38.
Tony McManus took over the workshop.

Tony McManus felt that the Board should look at the design standards that Attorney McNeill was looking at. He said that is something that a subcommittee could work on and make suggestions. He added that he has some of the same concerns.

Steve Stancel stated that these are design guidelines that go above and beyond the ones that we have just adopted.

Tony McManus said that Chris Parker told them the other night that they have not been adopted yet. He thought that they had been adopted.

Steve Stancel explained that what Chris Parker was talking about were the specific guidelines for the ETP area that we are now doing the overlay zone for. What the Department has drafted are changes to the design guidelines for those two particular areas so they would run concurrent for Planning Board approval at the same time as the overlay zone moves on to the City Council for their approval.

Tony McManus said that he thought that we had adopted them. Atty. McNeill’s presentation pointed out that we shouldn’t adopt them because of all of the problems that are there.

Steve Stancel said that the guidelines are more stringent. We can add to the goal list to review those guidelines for the other zones to make sure that we are satisfied with them.

Frank Torr said that his concern is passing one portion and having it reference the architectural design that are not being passed. He felt that was dealing with something that is in limbo and they should be adopted together.

Steve Stancel said that the Zoning change is a two-month process. The Design Guidelines are a site review and subdivision regulation issue, and they don’t have to go on to the Council. They are approved by the Planning Board. They wanted to move forward with the zoning because it will take 45 to 60 days on the Council level and by the time it got approved by the Council, the Planning Board would have the Design Guidelines adopted. If not adopted they would be posted and would be in effect.

Dean Trefethen asked for the Goals to be prioritized.

Ron Stock asked when a company like Liberty Mutual brings in 2,000 people, where would they live if we are limiting the housing market.

Dean Trefethen felt that it was a good point. He said that was something that should be looked at and whether the residential restriction is tempered or called work force type housing. There is a very stringent law in Massachusetts that says 10% of your housing must be low income or work force priced housing. He said that it is up to the local Planning Board to meet that level. It's a concern and may be something that we do on a temporary basis or a limited basis. The very people who get hurt, the quickest, and the most often in a moratorium are the people who already live in town and can't get a building permit to add on to their houses or build on their existing lot.

Perry Plummer said that we would rather have people add on to their homes than buy another house.

Dean Trefethen stated that infill development is much better than sprawl and maybe the end result would be that we wouldn't end up with any less number of houses being built in a given year, but they would be built in a different area and possibly become more of an infill from a single family to a duplex.

Donald Andolina said that in a community that he once lived in, new housing was restricted but additions or improvements to existing houses was not.

Perry Plummer spoke of a management ordinance that had a points system. He said that points were given if you were outside of the water district and installed a residential sprinkler system.

Steve Stancel said that he is not a big fan of growth restrictions or moratoriums. In his view you are controlling managed growth through long-range planning. He said that in the past 5 years we have done that. We have made more than 100 changes to the Zoning Regulations but only rezoned land from residential to non-residential. We have decreased density in some areas and increased environmental protection in other areas. We are preserving open space. He said they are taking a proactive approach to growth management in the community and he said that it is paying off. In NH you can manage growth in one of two ways. A temporary growth moratorium that you can put on for a year while you redo your Master Plan and the other is to put temporary limits on the number of building permits issued on an annual basis but those have to be directly tied to an infrastructure deficiency within the community. You also have to plan on how you are going to alleviate that deficiency. He said that once that deficiency is gone so goes the growth moratorium. It's important that we don't jump into these things, but the better approach would be to update the master plan and then from that see what things we need to do. There is a fine line between maintaining affordable workforce housing and communities that put restrictions on permits. The values of their properties increase 10 or 15%, which is something that he isn't sure that we want to achieve. He said that he isn't opposed to taking a look at different options, but feel that a better approach is to maintain the long-range plan and get that section of the Master Plan done.

Discussion ensued with regard to City infrastructure. The conclusion was that there is no immediate issue that could be pointed to that has to be fixed before new houses could be built.

Marsha Colbath asked if it was possible to get a breakdown on houses by sq. footage and type, whether it's multi-family, etc. She said that there are a lot of older homes in older neighborhoods with smaller more affordable houses and there is a lot of Section 8 in apartment housing. She said that she would be interested to see the breakdown. It would give her a better picture to have a count of the subdivisions and 55 and older plans that have been approved but haven't been built yet. She wanted to get a better picture of the demographics of the City.

Steve Stancel stated that the Department tracked all that so they have that information. He said back in 1998 in the Land Use Section of the Master Plan they identified that Dover had more than it's fair share of affordable housing and rental houses within the region. In that Master Plan it directed that the City should be looking at more single family detached units. There may be different goals and objectives that come out of this section of the Master Plan now such as workforce housing.

Dean Trefethen said that if we are not careful, changes that we make to limit or restrict growth could hurt affordable housing and have a negative effect on what we are trying to do. If it's harder to get a lot, the lot will have to go for more money. They will have to build a huge house on the lot just to pay for the lot.

Tony McManus said that one of the things that was on last year's list was to take a look at how we planned for and encourage infill development in the downtown area. He felt that the Board should be looking at this because there is still a huge amount of space in the urban core that is empty or just used for parking and could be much more productive than it is. He felt we might want to look at other communities and what they are doing.

Frank Torr said that the Little Bay Bridge is a cause of many problems and it could affect the people working at Liberty Mutual. It's a major bottle neck.

Tony McManus said that there is a group that is formed that has funding and is attempting to work with employers. There is legislation that would allow a tax credit on your business profits tax for each employee that you can talk into taking public transportation or do car pooling. People at Pease were going to go up and testify in favor of that. Something like that would work to Liberty Mutual's advantage. Other than the State, there are people who are actively attempting to do something about the traffic.

Doug Steele stated that he recently reviewed the recommendations for the Class VI Roads previously done. They had made a recommendation that Old Garrison Rd. be done as a separate group or committee. He asked if this is something that we should still consider or should we just include Old Garrison with their recommendations.

Steve Stancel said that we had recommended that the Council create a new committee and he agrees with that recommendation. He said that it falls under #5. Finalize Class VI Roads Committee recommendations. He said one of the subcommittees of the Planning Board was to look at what those recommendations were and to create a game plan as to how to implement them and one might be to recommend to the City Council that a new committee be formed.

Donald Andolina asked if the Council ever saw the results of the Class IV Road committee. He said that he sat on that and it seemed like it might have been left a little bit up in the air. He said that he never heard any feedback as to whether the Council received the recommendations.

Dean Trefethen said that the Council did receive the recommendations. He said that he doesn't remember the details but some of the recommendations were to leave them the way they are.

Discussion ensued with regard to some of the roads.

Steve Stancel announced that the joint meeting with the Council next week was postponed.

Workshop ended at 8:05 PM.