



## **AGENDA**

### **Joint Planning Board and Planning, Licenses & Development Committee**

**Monday, January 14, 2019**

**6:30 PM**

**Council Chambers**

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes - December 2018
3. Building Better Together: Downtown Form Based Zoning Discussion on Proposed Subdistrict Boundaries and Types
4. Next Meeting - Monday, February 11, 2019
5. Adjourn

**CITY OF KEENE  
NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**JOINT PUBLIC WORKSHOP  
PLANNING BOARD/  
PLANNING, LICENSES, AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, December 10, 2018

6:30 PM

Council Chambers

**Planning Board Members Present**

Gary Spykman, Chair  
Doug Barrett, Vice-Chair  
Nathaniel Stout  
Douglas Barrett  
Councilor George Hansel  
Chris Cusack  
Mayor Kendall Lane  
Pamela Russell Slack

**Planning Board Members Not Present**

Martha Landry  
Michael Burke

**Planning, Licenses and Development  
Committee Members Present**

David Richards, Chairman  
Councilor Margaret Rice  
Councilor George Hansel

**Planning, Licenses and Development  
Committee Members Not Present**

Councilor Philip Jones  
Councilor Bart Sapeta

**Staff Present**

Rhett Lamb, Community Development Director  
Mari Brunner, Planner Technician  
Tara Kessler, Senior Planner

**1. Roll Call**

Chair Spykman called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and a roll call was taken.

**2. 2019 Meeting Calendar**

A motion was made by Councilor George Hansel to approve the 2019 meeting calendar. The motion was seconded by David Richards and was unanimously approved.

**3. Building Better Together Update**

Senior Planner Tara Kessler addressed the Committee first and welcomed those present. She went over the format of the meeting, noting that this meeting would be a hands-on activity. Those present introduced themselves. Ms. Kessler began going over the timeline for this project and the work that has already happened for the Building Better Together project such as meeting one on one with department heads, hiring consultants, review of city code and regulations, public launch of the project, Joint Committee review of regulations, and community outreach.

She noted initially the plan was to finalize the downtown zoning update and to have a draft of the land development code by March 2019. However, staff is proposing a revised schedule to be considerate of the time the community has to look at this project as well as knowing that this is a rather ambitious project. The new proposal is to shift the latter half of the schedule by six months. The final draft of the project will be ready for review by Fall 2019.

Ms. Kessler stated the first activity question for tonight is “should the proposed downtown boundary be amended”?

In their draft Technical report, the consultants have proposed certain subdistrict/place types and have asked the community to answer the questions: are these subdistricts appropriate? Should they be modified? If so, how?

The draft downtown boundary as proposed by the consultants begins north at Mechanic Street south at the Marlboro/Winchester/Main Street roundabout, west at Gilbo Avenue connects to West Street and east along Beaver Brook to Dunbar and Water Streets. The existing zoning district consists of eight districts.

The committee next split into groups to discuss the questions: is the boundary for downtown appropriate? Does it go far enough? Are the place types identified by the consultant appropriate?

Ms. Kessler encouraged the public in attendance, which included City Councilors, to participate in the small group discussions/activity.

#### Discussion Summary:

When the small group discussions ended, each group reported their findings as summarized below:

- Some groups questions whether the Main/Winchester/Marlboro Street roundabout should be taken out of the boundary? One group suggested that the boundary extend further south along Main Street to NH Route 101.
- All groups suggested that the boundary extend further on Emerald Street to just before the substation.
- All groups suggested that the boundary extend down Marlboro Street; however, the extent of this expansion varied between the groups. Two groups suggested that the boundary extend from the roundabout at Main Street to the Grove Street area. One group suggested that it go as far south as Baker Street and as far east along Marlboro Street where Baker Street intersects it.
- There were comments from groups about the location of the northern boundary. One group suggested that the northern boundary end at the south side of Mechanic Street.
- There were comments made about the inclusion of residential areas adjacent to current downtown zoning districts within the downtown boundary. Each group varied in their opinion as to how much and where these residential “transition” areas would be located in the downtown boundary.

Ms. Kessler went over the sub-districts proposed by Camiros with the group. A description of each is described below.

Downtown Core 1 – This subdistrict represents the existing heart of the downtown with the highest mixture of uses allowed today. The consultants saw Core 1 as incorporating all of Central Square and the buildings/land along Main Street to its intersection with Emerald Street. Currently, most of the existing buildings in this area go right up to the sidewalk are between 2 and 5 stories tall.

The rationale for subdistricts is to either preserve and encourage similar patterns of development from what is present today or to guide a desired type of development in an area. For the area along Main Street in the proposed Core 1, the consultants have suggested preserving the range of existing building heights and setbacks. The regulations that exist today allow for building

between one story and up to seven stories with special exception. The consultants propose allowing for a range of 2 to 5 stories in this district with a 0 foot build to line.

Downtown Core 2 – This area includes the streets/parcels radiating off Main Street and Central Square where there is currently denser, mixed use development. For this subdistrict, the consultants recommend higher building heights between 2 and 7 stories, a 0 to 5 foot build to line. Existing buildings of significant height in this proposed subdistrict are Central Square Terrace and the Cleveland Building.

Downtown Core 3 – This subdistrict reflects the area of the downtown that is lower density, smaller scale development that is a mix of residential uses with commercial and office uses. The area proposed for this subdistrict is to the north of downtown in the Mechanic and Elm Street area. The proposed building heights are 1 to 4 stories (currently 2.5 stories is the average height in this area) with a build to setback of 0 to 30 feet.

Downtown General – This area reflects portions of the downtown core that are currently designed with a focus on vehicles rather than pedestrians. These areas are towards the south and northeast of the downtown.

Downtown Growth – These areas reflect parts of the downtown that have previously identified as places where additional growth and development might be encouraged. The consultants identified these areas based on the Comprehensive Master Plan and the City's existing zoning overlay districts for the Gilbo Ave and railroad land areas. The proposed regulations for these areas would be a 0 to 10 foot build to zone, which departs from what is currently present, as well as a building height of between 2 and 7 stories.

Downtown Transition – There are areas of residential and low intensity development that immediately abut the existing downtown. The current zoning provides for little transition more intense uses and activity to residential uses, such as in the areas on Roxbury Street near Franklin Street and Spring Street, Davis Street, and Dunbar Street. The current Office District does provide this transition in the areas near and around Court Street and the Downtown. The consultants have proposed a transition subdistrict to ensure that there is a buffer between more intense and less intense uses and development. This transition area is proposed in the areas of Court Street near Central Square, Spring Street and Roxbury Court, Dunbar Street, Davis Street, and Winter Street. The proposed build to line in these areas is between 10 to 20 feet with a proposed building height of between 1 and 3 stories.

Ms. Kessler asked the groups to use the maps provided to consider the following questions: Do the descriptions of the place types make sense for downtown? Where would these fit on a map? Should they be amended? Should there be fewer place types or different place types?

**A summary of the reports from the groups on these questions is included below:**

- There is general consensus that the subdistricts should be narrowed from six to three. While each group proposed different boundaries for these three subdistricts, there was generally agreement that the subdistricts would include Core 1 that reflects the development within the existing downtown core (areas between Central Square and the Main/Winchester/Marlboro roundabout). There was agreement that Core 1 and Core 2 are very similar and could be combined. In addition to a core downtown subdistrict, there could be a subdistrict that reflects the buildings and development outside of the core downtown area, including areas of

potential growth and redevelopment. The third subdistrict would be an area of transition between the downtown and residential areas.

- There were concerns expressed about building heights up to 7 stories. Groups proposed either a reduction of a the maximum building height from 7 to either 5 or 6 stories or the requirement that any addition of height above 5 stories would require compliance with standards such as those in the SEED District.
- Within the Downtown Core or Core 1, the build-to line should come up to the sidewalk; however, in areas where there is a desire to have more activated sidewalk space, it may make sense to proposed a greater build-to range.
- Buildings that are higher should have different setbacks and potentially step backs in height.
- There was variation between the groups regarding the extension of subdistricts along Marlboro Street and Main Street south of the Main/Winchester/Marlboro roundabout. One group proposed that Marlboro Street was historically a downtown corridor and it would be sensible to incorporate it into the district; however, it was not made clear as to what subdistrict this area would fall into. Other groups proposed including portions of Marlboro Street; however, these groups concentrated on those areas closest to Main Street or Water Street.
- One of the groups discussed the incorporation of areas of the Office District into the proposed transition subdistrict. This group noted that it does not make sense to bifurcate the existing Office District, however, it is important to include a transition zone in areas where the Office District is not currently present.

Respecting the time, Ms. Kessler noted that staff would take the feedback provided from the activity and return with revised boundaries and subdistricts for review and consideration by the Joint Committee. She thanked that attendees for their active participation and comments.

##### **5. Next Meeting - Monday, January 14, 2019**

##### **6. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Krishni Pahl,  
Minute Taker

Reviewed by Rhett Lamb, ACM/Community Development Director and Tara Kessler, Senior Planner