



Town of Hampden
Planning Board Workshop
Tuesday April 16, 2019

Minutes

In Attendance:

Planning Board

Gene Weldon, Chairman
Peter Weatherbee
Kelley Wiltbank
Jake Armstrong
Tom Dorrity

Staff

Karen Cullen, AICP, Town Planner
Sean Currier, DPW Director

Public

The meeting was called to order at 8:09 pm.

1. Discussion with DPW Director Sean Currier regarding subdivision regulations and impact on the town:
 - Roads with “wiggles” in them create problems for plow drivers who cannot tell where the edge of the road is during snowstorms, there are some roads in subdivisions where this is an ongoing problem and results in the plowed area being offset from the actual paved surface where these curves exist. Straighter roads are easier to plow and result in less damage to the shoulder, lawns, and mailboxes.
 - Some mailbox supports are serious problems for plows, being large immobile objects that are subject to damage as well as potential damage to the plow itself when they get hit, as they sometimes do, especially when the roadway is narrow and oncoming cars require the plow to move into the shoulder. A better design would be gooseneck posts which allow the plow to pass underneath without damage to the post.
 - Large cul-de-sacs are expensive to maintain, taking a lot of time to clear of snow and a lot of pavement to resurface. They do not add to the safety of a development and result in increased costs to the taxpayers of the town.
 - Allowing smaller frontage for lots on cul-de-sacs can result in so many driveways around a cul-de-sac that plows have no place to store snow without impacting driveways. There should be space left available for snow storage somewhere around each cul-de-sac. Planner Cullen noted that if we want to continue to allow reduced frontage for these lots, perhaps requiring shared driveways to provide snow storage space would be a reasonable solution.

Mr. Currier thanked the Board for their time and stated that any assistance they could provide in regards to the subdivision requirements would be greatly appreciated.
2. Zoning Ordinance proposed amendments – miscellaneous amendments; the Board reviewed draft v5 prepared by Planner Cullen:
 - §2.5 – no comments or changes
 - §3.1.3 – no comments or changes

§3.2.1.5 – revised to read: “All parking areas for multi-family dwellings must be located to the side or rear of the building unless the Planning Board makes a finding that a different location would be beneficial to the abutters.” It was noted that the concern is with the abutters, not the development.

§3.4.1 – no comments or changes

§3.4.2.2 – no comments or changes (except typo in section number, should be 3, not 5)

§4.1.5.2 – no comments or changes

§4.5.1 – Planner Cullen noted the reason for these changes are to clarify that if a property is made nonconforming by reason of a public taking, then all of the nonconformity section applies, not just the lot size – this affords more flexibility for property owners who are impacted by a public taking.

§4.6, cluster housing – The board discussed the proposed changes in light of the recently approved cluster development which raised a number of issues and concerns during the review process. Member Wiltbank stated that the desire is to allow cluster development, but such developments cannot impinge in the rights of abutters.

§4.6.2 – splitting setbacks and buffers in the dimensional table. The board was in favor of this change, which will make it clear these are not the same – a buffer is meant to provide visual and sound mitigation between land uses, while a setback is simply a distance from one point to another (e.g. a property line to a building). Footnote 1 is proposed to be added to restrict the placement of accessory structures such as dumpster enclosures closer than 30 feet from the tract boundary, to protect abutters from potentially noxious activities. It was noted that 30 feet is a standard setback in the zoning ordinance and is not an arbitrary number.

§4.6.4.1 – discussion regarding open space percentage and how much open space is allowed to be wetland or within the perimeter buffer. After discussion, it was decided to rework these elements to have essentially three categories of open space: the perimeter buffer, any wetlands (which are regulated under NRPA), and recreational open space. The thought is that every cluster development must provide a certain amount of useable open space specifically for recreation or other amenities (e.g. community garden), and take the perimeter buffer out of the equation. Planner Cullen will rework this section and will sketch some examples to illustrate alternatives. Discussion about how to handle the amount of recreational open space will be required, could do it based on tract acreage or based on the number of dwelling units (i.e. population), which might make more sense.

§4.6.4.2 – Planner Cullen noted that the deleted language is being moved to a new section dealing with the tract buffer.

§4.6.4.3 – Switch the order so the deed restriction option is listed first and conservation easement listed second. If we use the alternative method of handling open space acreages as discussed above, then delete the last (new) sentence of this section.

§4.6.4.6 – it was noted that we need to include language (here or elsewhere) to address who has the responsibility for maintenance and costs associated with the common open space areas – this would include all types of open space (buffer, recreational, and wetland).

§4.6.5 – this is a new section dealing with perimeter buffers. It was suggested we should either reference the standards in §4.7.2 (buffer design standards) or if none of them are appropriate, create new standards and include here. In addition, §4.6.5.5 item 1 is no longer needed and will be deleted, and item 2 will be reworded to make sense.

§4.7.1.1 – no comments or changes

§4.7.5.3.9 – no comments or changes; Planner Cullen noted this is a result of changes in state law.

§4.25 – no comments or changes; Planner Cullen noted this is a clarification that some owners can add a second unit using the duplex category instead of the accessory apartment provisions, which provides them with more flexibility in what they do.

§7.2 – no comments or changes.

3. Shoreland Zoning Ordinance: Planner Cullen noted that given the hour, we won't start to review this tonight. She said the proposal is to repeal and replace the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance; the new version is consistent with the 2015 DEP Guidelines and with Town Council direction to only regulate those areas that are required by statute to be regulated, and no longer regulate the optional areas.

The Board discussed workshop schedules for these amendments (zoning and shoreland) and noted the following:

- May 14th will be for zoning to review the revisions to the cluster provisions
- June 18th will be for the shoreland zoning ordinance
- July 10th will be public hearings for each, at the regular meeting

It was noted that the topics for the June and July meetings could be switched.

The workshop was adjourned at 9:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Cullen, Town Planner