

**Town of Boscawen**  
**Planning Board**  
Boscawen Municipal Complex  
Draft Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, December 19, 2017 at 6:00pm

1 Members Present: Bruce Crawford - Chair, James Scrivens, Barbara Randall.

2 Alternate Members Present: Rhoda Hardy, Jeff Reardon

3 Others Present: Alan Hardy, Planning & Community Development Director, Kellee Jo Easler,  
4 Planning & Community Development Assistant & Linda Chandonnet, Planning & Community  
5 Development Clerk & Recording Secretary

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6 Chair Crawford called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm.

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8 The meeting began with the first speakers Mike Tardiff and Matt Monahan from Central NH  
9 Regional Planning Commission. They displayed 2 maps for everyone to see the proposed Plains  
10 Village District in the Town of Boscawen and they had the zoned areas highlighted in different  
11 colors to help guide with the information that was passed out.

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13 In looking at the maps and showing a zone with a corridor that every single zone district converges  
14 there, and what you have is really a zone that has every use in town permitted on it but it doesn't  
15 really have a sense of identity. So over a year ago the board sought to first engage with the public  
16 and then based on the public's feedback, to develop an ordinance and try to unify the zone and  
17 protect the character of the town as the public defined it.

18  
19 Going over what's happened, there has been a series of listening sessions and the Planning Board  
20 has reached out to ask what the town's people thought with an open house session held at the  
21 Winthrop Carter House on November 14, 2017. At that session, we had different topics of  
22 discussion such as Transportation, Economic Development, Land Use and Housing. A summary  
23 of the open house has been created to capture the information from that listening session. We have  
24 also put together an ordinance that captured many thoughts from that session. It's balancing five  
25 different zoning ordinances on one area. The effort at the open house was about "what do you the  
26 town's people think the character of this is here, what are the uses that are here and what should  
27 be here?" and that is what will drive the development of the ordinance.

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29 Typically most towns in the region will write a zoning ordinance, have public hearing number 1,  
30 public hearing number 2 and that's the only opportunity that the people have to weigh in on it.  
31 What's been done here is that we have changed the way we work; we took the input first before  
32 writing the ordinance. On the first page of the packet it starts at Goodhue Road to follow King  
33 Street and Route 4 which is the starting point is. The working title of the ordinance will be called  
34 Plains Village District based on the historic descriptions of the area. It's a new single zone to  
35 overlay the five that are there. It allows a mix of uses and it tries to protect the character. It focuses  
36 on historic and aesthetic designs, and it looks again at the mix of uses. It is not a historical district  
37 so they won't be discussing this much. The differences between the old and the new is instead of  
38 all the individual districts we have now, we will have one overlay district based on what people  
39 have told us. It addresses uses as the main focus, not just the physical aspects of the zoning district.  
40 Most zoning districts will deal with uses and they will have set back requirements and other things  
41 like that, but it's more use and less physical. This changes things and makes it look at the physical  
42 lay of the land for these project and proposals and there are some uses that are governed and

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controlled through Article 4 – Table of Uses, but for the most part it looks at how it’s physically designed.

Similarities to the old ordinance, there are commercial and residential uses, or a mix of uses. One thing to keep in mind is uses that are not included in the new zone would be grandfathered until they stopped that use for a period of time.

Article II: Keep in mind that this proposal amends several articles and proposes a new one. It amends Article II and it adds the Plains Village District at the bottom of the table in the packet and it would be just adding the name to the district. Under Section G is a new proposed section and describes the district in a big picture wise. The Plains Village District is based on zoning that is focused on protecting the character of Boscawen’s built environment so that it blends in and is compatible with the surrounding land uses, architecture, and physical form. The District implements the Town’s master plan vision for the area and supports the results of community input regarding the District. This zoning district is intended to reinforce the historic development pattern of the District, and provide a range of defied standards for the site development and buildings that preserve the character of the District. The District is intended to promote an appropriately scaled mix of uses including shopfronts, restaurants and upper story residences and offices as well as civic uses, commercial enterprises, and residential.

Article IV; The Table of Uses, specifies the uses that are permitted by right Special Exception, are permitted by Special Exception, are permitted by Conditional Use Permit or are prohibited. Examples were given to the public and explanations. Questions from the public were asking why we’d want to make such a large expansion. They were told they may change the boundaries if they want.

Page 11, Article V; Minimum dimensional and area requirements.

Pamphlet 1-6 pages; A brief overview of the basic topics were discussed. Chair Crawford made a statement about the front setbacks of businesses and part of the design of that is to put the parking in the back behind the buildings. He gave an example of one that is already using this. The overview continued about the Building and Façade Requirements. Questions from the public were asking about any new buildings that will be built and they were answered that a building such as Dunkin Donuts that was built and very well done and fits King Street and the Village. The whole attempt here was not to create a historic district but to find a way to take what people described that thy feel the district about, and put it down on paper to protect it. This was the feedback that they got a year ago.

Roger Sanborn asked an example if he could purchase a parcel of land and put up a 100 ft. Morton Building on Route 3. Alan stated first we would need to find a piece of land that would allow the intended use, then you would have to be able to put up his Morton Building on that land, so it narrows down greatly where you’re going to have options for his example. Alan noted that this is

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not a situation where we've got a road from one end to the other and open on both sides without buildings. So the only time you're going to have new buildings constructed is when the building that currently on the parcel that you're acquiring is no longer serviceable. So the hypothetical example would only work when the existing buildings were being replaced.

It was brought up about how there is a residential area where Bernie's Garage is and why did we get into this area, and bring in all these single family homes into this new zone. It was explained to the public that this area is a starting point. It was mentioned that this is a listening session and the board is looking to get that feedback and we have talked about a number of different options and there is still some room for discussion. The whole idea of what the district boundary is certainly part of the discussion.

Ted Houston stated that the King Street area to calling it the Plains Village District and the word Plains doesn't reach the Concord City line, and thinks that Boscawen Plains to them always was far south as you could get. He also thinks that it cuts off a lot off that area. They think this area from Crete's to up to the dip and that it was manufacturing, commercial all in that area is opening a can of worms and they can't be considering it the Plains.

Someone in the public audience asked what percentage of the Town of Boscawen is Commercial? They were told they don't have those specific percentages. The public mentioned that Boscawen has one of the highest tax rates in the state. Part of our problem is we have very little commercial business in town. We know in order to reduce our tax rate we need to bring business to town. We have to designate some portion of the town as commercial. What can we do to facilitate bringing the type of businesses we want to see in the town that will not have negative impact on our community and will fit the character of our community? How much are we willing to give the town for that type of development?

It was explained that there is no perfect balance of commercial or residential. In the Winthrop Carter Open House, we heard that the people wanted to have developments that fit in the area. We heard that people want more commercial growth. Another public member stated that not everyone wants to bring commercial and some didn't move here for that, that they moved here for the agrarian background, and are willing to pay the higher taxes to keep that. They were told that the Planning Board is responding to what people were saying in the Winthrop Carter Open House. They are trying to balance a lot of pieces from what the people have told them.

The discussion went on about Landscape/Streetscape Elements: The public asked about the trees and there has been a huge cut from Unitil recently. As a business owner they don't want to plant trees and to find out Concord Electric will cut them. Alan Hardy responded by stating Unitil cannot tell you to cut a tree down to the ground, they need your permission to cut them. Chair Crawford stated that it is worth thinking about is not having planting and trees that will cause problems and grow into the powerlines to only need them cut down.

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The discussion went on about Landscape/Streetscape Elements:

- One topic discussed was trying to limit light pollution,
- Another topic was

Mechanical Equipment: Screening and trying to keep the physical appearance of historic feel of the corridor.

Parking, Vehicular Traffic and Pedestrian Access: Parking to have behind buildings or to the side. If parking is in the front to be screened from the street with landscaping. Vehicular Traffic encouraging inter connection between lots. It will cut down the number of driveways which means it's better for traffic.

Pedestrian Access: To make sure we are accommodating pedestrians and having ADA accessibility and sidewalks as needed.

The public asked in general terms why do we want to increase the commercial or Industrial zone? They answered it's because this is what was heard what the public wanted, and it is clear there is concern on the boundaries. It would be encouraging for the public to ask the planning board how to have a smaller district but using the same standards and narrow it down. It was brought up what would look better is from split to split because this would go beyond the Plains Village concept. It was brought up that this is one of the steps and there are more steps in the future. The public asked in envisioning the corridor that the industrial area doesn't make sense and it's a terrible eyesore for people visiting and coming into Boscawen. It was suggested that maybe this would be a Plains village new zone discussion for 2019 or maybe there's an opportunity to extend this other zone to a second phase in another session.

Alan Hardy spoke about the land that was designated by the town many years ago is industrial and has houses on it now. It was zoned for industrial with commercial growth and the houses were put on after. It wasn't a conversion of residential to industrial, it was industrial land that was flipped to residential use and the opportunity was forgone. The largest parcel that was targeted down in the River Road area is currently in agricultural production, so that would take more than a leap of faith to make that change. One thing to consider with the parcel on River Road is that the entire parcel is zoned that way but what you have there is limited shoreline protection.

The next topic was about the Table of Uses, and when you look at them all and go thru them it doesn't address them all and there is a few uses that take them off out of the corridor. Elektrisola Inc. is a good example of how it fits in so well, basically a residential area surrounding it and it's the physical aspects of it that make it fit nicely.

It was noted that it's a listening session, and we know what we've heard about the boundaries and what does the board think of the proposed boundary? Chair Crawford mentioned that the area of the Old Tannery and Stratton Mill etc. it's already MRD which is a different zone but it's a zone that says "what do you want to do, we'll talk about it" and is where we are at with it. He believes

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the footprint of what's there is grandfathered in as far as shoreline protection. So if you wanted to take one of these building and build on the footprint, housing on the river, fancy restaurant. The ten year plan which is now in year nine moves the intersection north several hundred feet. There is an improvement project on the back burner for King Street with the State DOT and that is to make some adjustment to the intersection where Routes 3 & 4 come together and a roundabout north of where the split is now. He doesn't mind moving these lines around but this is what they got out of the listening session. There were over 60 or 80 people who came to and there was a method to how this was arrived at. This session is for the board to hear of what you the public think and your feedback.

Right now it's December and we do have some time and from what they are hearing is the concern is boundary. One way would be split to split and that is what was heard at the listening session and it might be a way to see what the next session brings. You could always extend it up as the roundabout and further north or think about it down North Main Street in the future. But the split to split might be a way to take it from this visioning session brings to the next session. But the ordinance as it's set up a little smaller now might actually fit a little better now for that smaller area and won't affect the MRD and Mill District. We can take what we have earned tonight and make a smaller line.

The public mentioned that we need to be careful of what it is exactly we want because we are allowing any form of commercial or industrial or residential and we might not get what we are looking for. Adele Sanborn mentioned that she would like to see more businesses such as Eclectic Whim on King Street. That is such a wonderful combination of commercial and residential in Adele's opinion. This type of development fits well in that area and is the type of business that the Town should support.

The plan is to have another meeting in January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Notifications will go out to the property owner's residence. There can always be another session for a Phase II if needed. The public meeting will be in March.

There was a question to when the propose boundaries to get that on the website. We have a noticed hearing on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and we already have a Plan A so they could come up with and Plan B and Plan C and have it ready for then. Chair Crawford said thank you to all for coming and that your comments have been noted.

**The meeting adjourned at 8:55pm.**

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Linda Chandonnet.*