



Town of Hopkinton Planning Department

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HOPKINTON PLANNING BOARD MINUTES – WORK SESSION OCTOBER 24, 2023

Members Present: Chair Michael Wilkey, Vice Chair James Fredyma, Ex-Officio Thomas Lipoma, Jane Bradstreet, Rich Steele, and Alternates Emily Bouchard and Molly Hardenbergh. Member Absent: Clarke Kidder and Rob Dapice. Staff Present: Planning Director Karen Robertson

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- I. **Call to Order/Roll Call.** Chair Wilkey called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM in the Hopkinton Town Hall, 330 Main Street, Hopkinton, NH, with the introduction of the Planning Board.
- II. **Zoning Amendments/Work Session.** A copy of the full text of the draft amendments, including supporting documents, is available in the Planning Office at Town Hall and on the Town website: <https://www.hopkinton-nh.gov/planningbuilding>.

Amendments proposed by the Planning Board as follows:

- A. Amend Section II, the definition of “Lot Line, Front,” clarifying the designation of a front lot line on a corner lot;
- B. Amend Section V, 5.2.1, Use of a Nonconforming Lot, eliminating the requirement that an owner owning contiguous land must merge lots for a nonconforming lot to be built upon. Revising Section 5.2.1 would expand the Planning Board’s efforts to further comply with NH’s law concerning the Restoration of Involuntarily Merged Lots;
- C. Amend Section XV, Zoning Board of Adjustment, to be consistent with the powers and duties specifically granted to the Board under RSA 674:33.
- D. Amend Section XVII, Floodplain Development Ordinance, to comply with the National Flood Insurance Program requirements.

Amendments proposed by the Economic Development Committee (EDC) as follows:

- A. Permit single-family dwellings in the Commerce and Community Overlay District (CCOD);
- B. Expand the existing CCOD at what is known as Hart’s Corner (TM 210, Lots 18, 18.1, 19, 19.1, 20, 21, 24, 25, 25.01, 25.2, 26, 27, 27.1, and 28);

Subject to review and approval.

- a) Overlay the CCOD on properties in the Exit 6 area (Maple Street TM 227 Lots 2-4, 6, 7, 39.4, and 40-45; Dolly Road TM 228 Lots 16-18, and 35-38, and Maple Street, near McLane, TM 228 Lots 19-38), and
- C. Overlay the CCOD on properties in the Burnham Intervale area (TM 220 Lots 2-7, 8.1, 10, 11, 15, 17, 21, 22, 23.1, 23.2, 24-29, and 32-25; TM 221 Lots 14-22 and 33).

Chair Wilkey noted the following:

- In December 2022, the Planning Board discussed zoning amendments proposed by the Economic Development Committee, with the majority of the Planning Board agreeing that before moving forward, the Board should wait until the Housing Committee has an opportunity to assess and analyze Hopkinton's housing and make zoning recommendations to the Board.
- Housing Committee Chair Tricia Morin's email indicated, "As we are still working on completing the requirements of the HOP Grant Phase I and have not received funding for Phases II and III, it would be premature for our committee to weigh in on a subject that we have not fully analyzed and/or vetted."
- Public testimony (written/in-person) received at the October 17, 2023, hearing in opposition to the amendments proposed by the Economic Development Committee.
- The amendments proposed by the Economic Development Committee overlaying the Commerce and Community Overlay District (CCOD) over the Industrial (M1) districts and on parcels along Dolly Road could be considered a significant change from what is presently allowed in the underlying M1 district.
- The Industrial (M1) district presently permits single- and two-family residential units; the CCOD permits 24 residential units per building.
- Hopkinton's Master Plan, The Vision and How to Achieve the Vision, includes ensuring commercial development is focused in key areas in Exit 6 area, West Hopkinton along Maple Street, and providing housing options, including affordable single-family homes, multi-family homes, and Accessory Dwelling Units that "blend with the historic character" and are available to residents of all ages.

Rich Steele recalled comments at the October 17 public hearing that a cost for community services study involving other towns had shown that residential homes cost towns more money as the taxes paid do not cover the cost of services. The residential cost is disproportionate. The example referenced at the public hearing showed that a residential unit costs a community \$1.15 for every \$1.00 of revenue. In contrast, land used as open space, farming, or commercial/industrial purposes is a net gain to a community as the cost for services per dollar is less than the revenue generated.

Mr. Lipoma responded that the cost analysis is a set of ratios showing revenue to expenditure for the selected land uses within the community. The cost would not be the same for every community. The study is not as simple as it may appear. It requires allocating the correct portion of expenditures and revenues based on land use types.

Mrs. Bradstreet discussed the changes in development over the years, noting that housing will also increase the town's value.

In reviewing the Regional Housing Needs Assessment 2023, Mr. Steele noted that in 2020, Hopkinton's population was estimated at 5,900; in 2050, it is estimated at 6,400, an increase of 500 people. Mr. Steele reviewed each of the proposed areas where the CCOD is recommended. When considering the total acres and the potential for eight units (two people per unit) per acre, he calculated a potential increase in population of 14,392. Mr. Steele reduced the estimated population by half to 7,196, considering the existing buildings and the fact that it is unlikely that all of the property could be developed.

In response to Mr. Steele and Mr. Lipoma's comments, Chair Wilkey suggested it would have been helpful if a similar analysis had been provided with the recommended amendments. Chair Wilkey listed questions members should consider when deciding on amendments to the Zoning Ordinance:

- Are the requested zoning amendments consistent with the Master Plan?
- Are the requested zoning amendments consistent with other plans, studies, or reports prepared by or for the Planning Board or Town?
- What are the effects of the proposed zoning amendments on municipal services, capital facilities, and planned facilities as described in the Capital Improvements Program?
- What are the effects of the proposed zoning amendments on the natural, environmental, and historic resources of the town?
- What are the effects of the proposed zoning amendments on the neighborhoods?
- What are the effects of the proposed zoning amendments on the town's economy and financial resources?
- Will the requested zoning amendments cause "spot zoning?"
- What is the impact of input received from Town committees and residents?

Eventually, the Planning Board will make one of the following decisions:

- A. Adopt/recommend the zoning amendments as written;
- B. Change the zoning amendments as currently proposed; or
- C. Decide not to move the zoning amendments forward to the voters.

Mr. Steele recommended that the Planning Board not move the amendments recommended by the EDC forward, allowing the Housing Committee time to complete their work.

Chair Wilkey indicated that allowing the Housing Committee to finish its work in completing a regulatory audit, it would, like the Master Plan, function as a source for amending the Zoning Ordinance or other town regulations. Furthermore, when considering EDC's recommended zoning amendments, the Planning Board must balance the need for residential and commercial/industrial uses, given that the proposed amendments cover all industrial (M1) properties.

Mrs. Bradstreet and Mrs. Bouchard concurred with Chair Wilkey, noting that balance includes quality of life and considering whether mixed-uses (high-density residential and commercial/industrial) can coexist given the possibility that the higher residential density

may cause tenants/owners to push back on the commercial/industrial uses that may be proposed or already exist in the Industrial (M1) district.

Mrs. Hardenbergh suggested that the change in zoning should be incremental, especially when considering any potential impact on the school system and other community services. She explained that as a realtor, she is completely aware that people move to Hopkinton because of the school system. However, she does not understand the value of allowing a higher residential density in the Industrial (M1) district.

Finally, Mr. Steele noted that overlaying the CCOD on the Burnham Intervale area will cause spot zoning for one lot (221-33) as it would be the only lot along Pine Street that is designated differently.

At this time, Chair Wilkey opened the work session for public comments.

Amanda Gilman of West Ridge Circle agreed that workforce housing and housing for seniors is needed; however, Hopkinton's tax rate is very high, which could be a barrier to development.

Liz Carey of Bound Tree Road questioned how higher-density development would affect the walkability of Contoocook Village, given that there would be more vehicles traveling through the Village.

With no additional public comments, Chair Wilkey thanked those present for attending, noting that the next public hearing will be Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 5:30 PM. The deadline for submittal of revisions to the proposed zoning amendments is Wednesday, November 1, 2023.

IV. Adjournment.

MOTION Rich Steele, seconded by Jane Bradstreet, to adjourn the work session at 7:40 PM. Motion carried in the affirmative (Fredyma, Steele, Lipoma, Hardenbergh, Bouchard, and Wilkey).

Karen Robertson
Planning Director