

PLANNING BOARD
TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH, New Hampshire
Minutes of September 17, 2012

Members Present: Alan Zeller, Rick Clark, Alternate Audrey Cass, Tom Weeks, Rick Monahan, Ivy Vann, Joel Harrington and Barbara Miller, *ex officio*.

Staff Present: Carol Ogilvie, Director Office of Community Development; and Laura Norton, OCD Administrative Assistant.

The Planning Board met at 5:30 p.m. for the purpose of interviewing three ORW Landscape Architects & consultants who had responded to a Request for Qualifications from the Office of Community Development for a Community Planning Grant that was awarded to the Town. The purpose of the grant is to hire a consultant to assist the Board in the development of a zoning amendment for an infill ordinance, including public outreach and education and facilitation at public hearings. The three consultants who were scheduled for this evening are ORW Landscape Architects & Planners with Hawk Planning Resources, LLC; VHB (Vanasse Hangen Brustin, Inc.) and Fougere Planning & Development, Inc.

ORW Landscape Architects and Planners and Hawk Planning Resources.

Caroline Radisch, AICP Principal, began by thanking the members for their interest and attention. She briefly reviewed her credentials and gave a brief profile of her firm's planning practice. She introduced Roger Hawk of Hawk Planning Resources, LLC. Ms. Radisch distributed and interview supplement that she reviewed with the members. That document reviewed team responsibilities, project approaches (including community outreach via multi-media approaches; identifying and understanding the issues, the importance of the "stakeholders" and preparing the information materials for the public). She reviewed several project experiences in Vermont and New Hampshire, including her hometown of Hanover, New Hampshire. Mr. Hawk also reviewed his credentials and told the members "I will come up with all the graphics" adding "it is all about what it looks like." He distributed sample of other projects he had completed as he talked both community engagement and participation. He also spoke of the importance of bridging the "professional to layman's gap" by using common terms and graphics.

Mr. Miller noted the Board's goal was to create infill while protecting the character of what exists, adding "there is definitely resistance to change." She referred to a few years back when there were picketers outside the town hall in opposition to an infill ordinance that was not even on the warrant. She noted "they claimed we were creating ghettos" she said. A brief discussion about public engagement and participation followed. Ms. Vann noted the Board's attempts in the past remembering "we held meetings, the public was invited but did not come or when they did they shouted so we did not go forward." She added "the public has a fear (that an infill ordinance) will act as an incentive for tear downs."

Mr. Harrington noted a section in one of the supplements Mr. Hawk had passed out. He noted the headings of *Vision Sessions*, *Bringing it together*, and *Making it happen*. "How did you do that?" he asked. Mr. Hawk replied "many meetings and public sessions" adding "prioritizing the vision sessions and how they are related to the neighborhoods is key."

Mr. Harrington concluded by asking what project presented was the oldest and what the status of that project was today. Ms. Radisch replied “great question” and gave a brief synopsis of the status of several of the projects.

Chair Monahan interjected “I would like to shift the focus for a moment and ask how you would visualize your two personalities acting on behalf of our community?” adding “for instance would you both be here all the time? Mix it up? Are there other individuals in your office that will be involved?” Ms. Radisch replied that they would be personally involved with all major community outreach pieces and public/stakeholder meetings. Ms. Radisch noted her partner; Bob White who was not present would also be involved. Mr. Hawk added “we are seen as a neutral party for people to tell us what they are thinking” adding “*and* it enables us to throw out trial balloons and you don’t take the hit if it is not popular.”

Ms. Vann noted a project in the supplemental material Mr. Hawk distributed that offered density bonuses. “What happened with that?” she asked. She also added “that is fascinating and really germane to us. It looks at what you have on the ground and how to codify it.” She concluded by noting “the sense is nothing new can be built that is attractive as it is now.” Mr. Hawk replied “you have to make it *not bad*, it may not be *as good* but it is *not bad*.”

Ms. Cass asked for more information on public educational with Mr. Hawk reviewing the multi-medias (traditional, social, interactive project websites, cable access television broadcasts, surveys and direct mail, etc.) that would be implemented.” We really beat the drums” he said.

Wrapping up Mr. Hawk stated “we want to stress that we are great listeners.” He noted their work in small communities has them keyed in on what those communities have to say. “We synthesize the results” he said “using experts with a broad range of tools that are traditional to form-based codes and anything in between. We are seasoned facilitators and this is right on target for the type of work that we do. Thank you.”

6:15 p.m.

VHB (Vanasse Hangen Brustin, Inc.)

Gordon Leedy introduced himself and his associate Geoffrey Morrison-Logan from their Boson office. He thanked the members for their interest and attention. Mr. Leedy briefly reviewed their credentials as he distributed a handout on their planning services. He noted “we believe in the public process and we are experts in outreach and planning.” He reviewed their integrated approach to planning that included familiarity and experience with the development of New Hampshire land use regulations and focus on municipal clients.

Mr. Leedy noted the Mr. Morrison-Logan would “be the leader of the effort it selected” and went on to review several of the projects they had completed in their professional careers, focusing on the range of expertise and perspective views they bring to a project. Mr. Leedy looked to the members and with a smile said “in my 30years of experience I have learned that change is bad!” He went on to note the importance of “Explaining what change means is critical.” He went on to note the various multi-media platforms that could/would be used for distributing “effective and

useful information.” He noted they had reviewed the Towns’ draft ordinance adding “an excellent start, we are very excited about the opportunity to help you.” Chair Monahon in essence, asked the same question he had asked in the first interview. “Who will be sitting across the table from us?” he asked with Mr. Leedy replying “mostly Geoffrey, he will be the Project Manager with assistance from Senior Planner Ralph Willmer and XX Gordon XX. “We keep him in the mix to review zoning regulations.” Mr. Leedy noted “we are committed to providing you the best service, there will be no bait and switch thing going on.”

Ms. Vann asked Mr. Morrison-Logan what his favorite project of the last 18 months was with Mr. Morrison-Logan replying “probably the West Man Street project in Middletown.” He proceeded to explain the village center right along Route 114.

Ms. Miller asked the same question she asked the first group (re: picketing the infill ordinance) with Mr. Leedy noting “people will say anything” Ms. Vann interjected “and it was not even on the warrant.” Mr. Morrison-Logan responded “my first instinct is to tell me more” noting the importance of having an appropriate response to such behaviors at events. Mr. Leedy asked “was it about density?” Ms. Vann replied “yes in the sense that it would incentivize tear downs and put up hideous new structures.” Mr. Leedy replied “it is not how dense you make it, it is how you make it dense. It is really a communication thing.” A very brief discussion about forms of town government followed.

Mr. Harrington interjected “I have a question related to the purpose at hand” and asked “where is Southborough today?” Mr. Leedy responded with their system of accountability and implementation “we assign managers and time frames, go through the visions and goals and prioritize, then assign a champion for that particular recommendation to be able to track it better.” Mr. Harrington replied “accountability is good and great for historical purposes too.” Mr. Leedy replied “momentum is a big part of implementation, get the people engaged and capitalize on the momentum to keep things moving, that effort is very important.”

Mr. Harrington asked about public participation and community outreach. Mr. Leedy responding with the typical multi-media techniques resonated by the first group but also noted an innovative tool they employ called TurningPoint (an interactive audience participation tool used to collect public comments, concerns and observations at public meetings). Mr. Leedy added “and we would rely on you to help us realize what direction to go to be able to cast as wide as net as possible.” He qualified that by offering the example of providing child care at public meetings. “We have to be creative as we can” he said. With no other questions from the Board Chair Monahon thanked them for their time.

6:50 p.m.

Fougere Planning & Development, Inc.

Mark Fougere introduced himself and thanked the members for their interest and attention. After a brief review of his credentials Mr. Fougere introduced Steve Keach, a Civil Engineer active in planning, design and permitting functions for public and private land development and infrastructure improvement projects. Mr. Fougere noted work done with the town several years ago adding “we would like to help the town decide what to do with this proposal.”

He noted the “obvious anxiety” sparked by an infill ordinance adding “change is difficult, especially if the people don’t know what they will get.” He noted locations, uses and the language itself were all important factors. Mr. Fougere also noted the unintended consequences and how ordinances can be broken to serve special interests. “You want the highest and best use” he said adding “but do you always get what you thought you were getting? In many cases yes, in others though, no.”

Mr. Fougere spoke about the specific criteria that would make a parcel eligible or not for infill noting that criteria may in fact differ slightly from location to location. Mr. Keach noted “the highest and best use is defined by the zoning ordinance” adding “not everything is land-based; you need to have that component of thought attached to your ordinance.” Mr. Keach spoke briefly about adaptive re-use and infill in underutilized parcels as well.

Mr. Harrington asked about their thoughts on public participation and community outreach. Mr. Fougere replied “reaching out is vital” adding “it would depend on what works for your community.” He cited many of the multi-media techniques resonated by the other groups. Mr. Keach noted “and considering the design issue, we are *designing* an ordinance.”

Ms. Vann asked “how do you know if a lot is conforming or not? Is Conditional Use the best way to approach it? Or would an overlay district be better?” Mr. Fougere referred to the criteria “if the lot meets the criteria, ipso-facto it is conforming” he said. Ms. Vann mentioned efforts to reach the underserved and under-represented noting they could be the silent minority. Mr. Fougere noted a good example would be renters. “Good point” said Ms. Vann.

In closing Mr. Keach noted “we have done this type of work for quite a while” adding “we start with identifying your goals, create ideas and take a test drive from a designer perspective.” He reiterated the importance of schematics and graphics to illustrate what things would look like, and reminded the members of the unintended consequences that may come out of good intention ordinances.

7:20 p.m.

The members had a very brief discussion of the five candidates they had interviewed. Ms. Ogilvie not she would set up another meeting to discuss the candidates before September 28th.

Ms. Vann noted she had a pretty good indication of who she preferred and asked if an informal preference of straw poll might be in order. She added “I like ORW and Roger Hawk.” Ms. Miller and Mr. Weeks agreed with Ms. Vann. Ms. Miller noted “they communicate in a comfortable way and gets things across.” When Mr. Clark was asked he replied “the first two (ORW).” Mr. Harrington asked Mr. Zeller, “Alan, where are you?” Mr. Zeller plied “I have the same sense as you.” He noted VHB “is very big and they were very professional but sometimes it is better to have a hometown type. ORW had a lot of what we are looking for.” Ms. Vann agreed noting “I think they are aware of some of the differences and issues you face with a small town” adding “especially when she (Ms. Radisch) spoke about her project in Hanover.”

Ms. Cass made a reference to the under-represented population, specifically the young professionals who live in town. “They don’t vote” interjected Mr. Clark. Mr. Harrington replied “*what?* I take offense to that.” Mr. Clark noted many of his colleagues rent, they do not own homes, “and they don’t vote. When you own a home, you start to vote” he said.

Mr. Harrington suggested they take a vote “clearly there is a consensus here” he said. Ms. Ogilvie asked “so you see no reason to have a second round of interviews?” Ms. Vann replied “no, our goose is cooked.”

A motion was made/seconded (Vann/Zeller) that the Planning Board engages ORW and Hawk Planning Resources for the purpose of helping the Board produce an appropriate infill ordinance for the town of Peterborough with all in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton,
Administrative Assistant