

Form Based Code Committee
Wednesday, October 1st, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.
Village Walkabout
DRAFT

Attendees:

Scott Meyer, Kiley Hill, Walter Pomroy, Charles Flaum, Meghan Rodier, Phillip Wilson, Linda Molde, Jollie Parker, Douglas L. Molde, Charles Gallanter, Howard Romero, Diane Lehouillier, Don Blais, Ingrid Nuse, Bob Hoag, Glenn Callahan, Ingrid Nuse, Renate Callahan, Ben Waterman (all Johnson residents); Valerie Valcour (Health Department and Lamoille County Planning), Kate Whitehead (Lamoille Healthy Valley), Paul Dreher (Dreher Design), Abby Mattera (State of Vermont Safe Routes to School Program and Dreher Design).

Paul Dreher of Dreher Design gave a rundown on Form Based Zoning so the group would have examples of what other towns have done – both in town centers and rural areas. Paul said that Form Based Code does not focus on regulating property uses. The Code's primary focus is the form, or the look, of buildings and how the buildings relate to the street.

As an example of a development pattern that form based code encourages, Paul talked about buildings being at the front of the street rather than set back behind a parking lot. The shopping plaza where Johnson Sterling Market is located currently does not follow this pattern. The parking lot abuts the street and the building is behind.

The group stopped by the Hoag property and talked about how this property used to have a beautiful building right next to where the sidewalk is.

Paul used Tangles and Pizzeria buildings as nice examples of street/building interaction. These buildings have historical character, inviting store fronts and apartments located upstairs. On the contrary, the old hotel building at the corner of Main and Railroad Street, has apartments at the ground floor, right at the edge of the sidewalk – to Paul this did not have the right street feel.

Paul mentioned that form based code cares about public realm. This means the way streets and buildings related to each other and the feel this connectedness gives to passer byes. Form based code does not so much care about what is located behind/away from public realm.

The group stopped at the intersection of Main and Pearl Street. Paul remarked, while commending our Main Street Project effort, how wide the street felt and that there could be ways of narrowing the street down. It was mentioned that one reason the street is so wide is because school buses need a wide turning radius.

Next, the group had a conversation about the Old Fire House parking located at the front and the Vermont Studio Centers writers' studios.

On Pearl Street, there is a nice flow of commercial and residential buildings. Paul said that this kind of development can be written into a code.

On Main Street, Johnson Woolen Mills has a nice strip of lawn. The Woolen Mills building is also a good example of a store that is up front. Stores upfront are better for pedestrians.

Notes written by Scott Meyer and Lea Kilvadyova