**Form Based Code Committee**

**Meeting Minutes**

**December 17th, 2014**

**DRAFT**

Committee members in attendance: Brad Moore, Walter Pomroy, Kyle Nuse, Mark Nielsen, Glenn Callahan.

Other attendees: Charles Gallanter, Paul Dreher, Lea Kilvadyova.

Paul opened the meeting by presenting an updated map of the proposed village districts. He said that, in the description of the districts, he reduced the “built-to-line” dimension. Walter said that for him the key thing regarding the built-to-line standard is to make sure that front yards do not become parking lots. If the front yards are small, they cannot become parking lots. Paul said that we can achieve this by not allowing parking in front yards.

Paul said that the map is shaping up nicely and we are in a really good shape in terms of the project’s timeline. The Committee could tell Paul to wrap up today and we would have an outcome that we can present to the community at Town Meeting. There are a few outstanding topics that Paul would like to discuss. One topic is whether/how we will address the Manchester Lumber/Parker & Stearns area. Paul suggested that he will try to write a frontage standard for the area and we will let the rest of it be what it is. We can call this area an industrial/warehouse/special district of some sort.

Charles Gallanter asked a question about glazing. He wanted to know how one measures the percentage of the glazing area. Paul said that doors are considered a part of glazing. Otherwise, the measurement goes from sash to sash. Walter talked about the floor to ceiling height standard. He said that we have three nice steeples in the downtown and that he didn’t want new buildings to overpower the steeples. If the new buildings had 3.5 levels they would cover the steeple view. In order to preserve the village’s character, Walter would like to make sure that the steeples are going to stand out. Charles said that if we want to cap the height of the building that is fine. However, he wouldn’t want to be told how many stories within that capped height he can build. Paul said that typically, the standards do include the number of stories. The reason for this - especially in the downtown area - is to maximize land use potential. Having a one story building with one use in downtown Johnson or in the proximity of downtown Johnson is a waste of land. Charles said that it is not the government’s role to tell people how many stories they can build. Paul said that he thought our role was to come up with ways to maximize land use potential so that adjacent green spaces could remain what they are, fields can remain fields, etc. Paul said that this is one of the things that form based code does best; it focuses development into a concentrated area where utilities are already in place. Walter said that there are a lot of studies that say that low income affordable housing is needed. Two or three story buildings in the downtown increase the availability of housing stock. Brad said that he thought that the affordable housing Johnson needed was single family houses and not rental apartments. Lea added that we may need affordable apartments that are owner occupied rather than rented. Walter said that he would love if the old mill building behind Johnson Woolen Mills turned into a condo complex. Right now the building is empty.

Paul said that the topic he would like to discuss today is street types. Many things happen in the streets. Typical users/uses that we think of include cars, trucks, school buses, deliveries coming in. Some people think of dining and pedestrians. They almost never think of mailboxes or a play as street uses. Paul said that he would like to encourage the group to think about street types we would like to see in Johnson. He would like the group to pick out a few streets and envision what these streets could become while accommodating for their various uses. Walter said that his biggest goal is to make sure that we have a pedestrian-safe way to travel. It does not always have to be a sidewalk, it can be a shoulder. A recent example includes the Clay Hill paving project where the original width of the road was extended to include a walking shoulder. Walter said that the Village has a grand vision for sidewalk improvements. For example, the vision includes Main Street sidewalks from Katy Win to Wescom Road. The federal grant we received for the Main Street Project was not enough to extend the sidewalks that far. Right now, the next project on the books is the redevelopment of sidewalks on School Street and College Hill Road.

Lea said that in her view School Street and Railroad Street could use a different layout. On Railroad Street, she would like to see accommodations for bicyclists heading from downtown to the Rail Trail and back. Ideally, there would be a bike lane on both sides of the street. Kyle added that she would like to see sidewalks on both sides of Railroad Street. Charles asked whether the snowmobiles could use the lanes to travel to the downtown. Kyle said that she would like to see a bike network all along Railroad and Main Street. Walter said that, along Main Street, the Main Street Committee decided against a bike lane because it would make the road look like a super highway. The Committee preferred to keep the road narrow. Glenn said that bike lanes do not have to be on the traveled portion of the road, they could be incorporated into sidewalks.

Along School Street, which feels very wide, Lea and Glenn said they would also like to see accommodations for bicyclists, including children biking to school. Having room to park along both sides of the street is also important. Paul suggested that angle parking rather than parallel parking would make sense along School Street. Walter mentioned that ideally, pedestrian network would extend along School Street, past the intersection with College Hill Road, to the covered bridge and then along Stearns Street to the intersection with Route 15. That way we would have a complete loop. This sidewalk is envisioned in the Pathways Plan. Lea said she would forward the plan to Paul. Paul said that he will draft a proposal for a cross section of the roadway on School Street and Railroad Street. Street types will not be included in the code in form of a regulatory tool but will be there to provide a vision for a future street layout. Paul mentioned that there is a great online tool for a street design called street mix.

Next meeting will be on January 7th.

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Minutes taken by: Lea Kilvadyova