**Form Based Code Committee**

**Meeting Minutes**

**October 15, 2014**

**DRAFT**

Attendees: Diane Lehouillier, Scott Meyer, Jollie Parker, Brad Moore, Charles Galanter, Paul Dreher, Abby Mattera, Kim Dunkley.

Paul opened the meeting by introducing a form based code exercise. He encouraged everybody to participate and said that this exercise will impact, if Johnson adopts any kind of zoning, how Johnson is going to grow.

Paul provided an overview of a map of Newport which he called a transect. The Newport transect identities to what degree different areas of the town are built out, i.e. urban, less urban, rural, empty etc. There is a zone called T5, which is an urban center (which Johnson may or may not have – it is up to us to decide). A typical T5 does not have a minimum lot size as the buildings are tightly stacked next to each other. T4 is also an urban zone but it is less intense; perhaps the areas we visited at the walkabout could be a T4. T3 zones are neighborhoods with houses at the front of the lot, garages at the back, driveways and mailboxes. A T2 zone is rural and T1 is empty. Different zones typically have different street types. In T5 for example, the street type has a certain feel. Sidewalks have certain dimensions, there is a green strip next to the sidewalks, bulb-outs are a certain way, etc. This street type is typical for a T5 area and is not usually seen in neighborhoods. In a T3 neighborhood area, there may be a sidewalk and it only may be on one side. Paul said that tonight the group will not focus on street types. However, defining these will be an important part of the process that will identify Johnson’s needs for future street types.

Tonight, Paul said, the group will look at lot sizes and building sizes, and how they relate. In a neighborhood, for example, a building may cover 30% of the lot. In a downtown area, the building may cover 80% of the lot. The group will also look at frequency of public entrances. In Newport, public entrances are 12-24 feet apart. In an area of Montpelier that Paul showed, public entrances are 36 feet and that, in Paul’s opinion, does not as much encourage people to stop by. Without public entrances, the downtown loses its feel. The group will also look at what portion of a building’s frontage is covered with windows. A store front in a downtown typically has 80% of the front covered with windows. A residential house has more like 30%. Finally, the group will look at the number of stories. In Paul’s opinion, which he stressed people may not agree with, the number of required levels should be a minimum of two in a downtown. In Johnson, perhaps as many as four levels would be appropriate.

 Next, Paul read detailed characteristics that define each of the transect zones. (Note: These characteristics are available on power point.)

Kim relayed the Planning Commission’s thought about the need to ensure that new development is accessible, for example to fire trucks, in case of emergency. Paul responded that the code will include clauses to that effect.

As an example of what the end product of the Steering Committee’s work will look like, Paul shared the form based code document developed for Huntington. Paul said that in Huntington, the community decided to only code their village center and not the whole town. The community said that the outskirts of the town do not have enough development pressure and decided that green fields and outlying areas did not need to be coded. Charles asked to clarify that the areas of the Huntington map that were not colored were not coded. Paul confirmed. Next, Paul showed one of Huntington’s building envelope standards.

A question was raised about introducing form based code street standards to State owned highways. Paul said that during Douglas administration, an enabling legislation was introduced that gives towns with designated village centers a lot more flexibility in the process of altering standards of streets located within the State’s ROW.

Paul asked the attendees to split in small groups and, on the maps he brought, identify which areas of Johnson people think are T5, T4, etc. He asked that people think not only about what Johnson is now but how Johnson could grow. The groups worked for app 30 minutes. For the next meeting, Paul will take the groups’ ideas and put them in a comprehensive map. Then the group can begin discussing what happens to a district that has been identified as a T5, T4, etc. The group will talk about dimensional requirements for each district. It is possible, Paul said, that some of the assumptions the group made initially about the districts may change dramatically as we introduce the dimensional requirements for each district. The process will be a back and forth approach between building envelopes, street types and the maps.

Scott asked how the State’s new flood plain requirements may impact this process. A project currently considered on School Street is being impacted by these new requirements. . Paul said that he intended to collect the flood plain information from the Lamoille County Planning Commission. Our maps will get more informative fast.

Next meeting will be on October 29th.

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.