**Form Based Code Committee**

**Meeting Minutes**

**October 29, 2014**

**DRAFT**

Attendees: Scott Meyer, Jollie Parker, Walter Pomroy, Ingrid Nuse, Kyle Nuse, Mark Nielsen, Kyley Hill Charles Galanter, Glenn Callahan, Cynthia Hennard, Paul Dreher, Abby Mattera, Lea Kilvadyova.

Paul reviewed form based code concepts introduced at previous meetings. He summarized transects ranging from T5 (urban) to T1 (natural) and said that, going forward, we will not call these T5, T4, etc. Rather, we will to develop a language that characterizes different areas of our town in a more natural language that fits our community. Other form based code concepts introduced at the last meeting included built-to lines (how far the building sits from the right-of way line); building breaks (how do you break up the mass of the building to make streetscape friendly); lot size and coverage; percentage of window coverage and the number of stories.

Next, Paul introduced five new principles that he thought contribute to a walkable community. These included enclosure (does it feel like you are in an enclosed space when you are walking the street?); transparency (plain walls at the front of the property make the place less desirable for walking than places that are inviting and open to the public); imageability (empty streets as opposed to streets with flower pots, banners, etc.); human scale and complexity.

How do these concepts apply to Johnson? Let’s take Johnson’s T5 or the “Village Storefront” area. Concepts to consider for Village Storefront would be a requirement for window frontage (anything can be at the back but windows are required at the front of a building); a requirement for a certain number of stories (perhaps up to four stories) and a requirement for a built-to line of 0-8 feet. If you look at Johnson buildings in the storefront area, they all seem to have a built-to line that fits the built-to line requirement. Walter Pomroy remarked that most of the buildings on Main Street are at zero built-to line as they sit right on the edge of the 5-rod right-of-way. Paul commented that in that case, we may want to consider a zero built-to line.

In a T4 area, which we could also call a “Village General” area, we are beginning to see that the buildings are scaled down (in Johnson, this area perhaps starts at the auto parts store), they have a front yard/door yard and the built-to line range is greater (0-12 feet). Like in Village Storefront, sidewalks are required.

In a T3 zone, or “Village Neighborhood”, the built-to zone is yet larger, typically 0-24 feet, and there are front yards. While in Village Storefront there typically is not a requirement for a minimum lot size, in Village Neighborhood there is a minimum lot size requirement. The lot size is not too big. The goal is for the neighborhood to retain its neighborhood feeling and its sense of enclosure. While in Village General and Village Storefront there is are limits on the number of units, in Village Neighborhood there is. Typically, an acre holds four units. Prior to development, the acre would need to be subdivided in order to accommodate four units.

Characteristics of a T5 zone continued:

* No maximum limit on the coverage of the lot
* No limits on the number of units (owners can put as many units on the lot as they want)
* 2-4 stories
* 0-8 feet built-to line zone
* 85% coverage of building frontage (this means that if you have a 100 foot wide lot, you have to fill up 85% of it). What we are trying to do with this requirement is to avoid the missing teeth and to give our downtowns a street edge. If you have a 100 foot wide lot and only want to cover 30% percent of it, you will need to subdivide the lot. This sounds strange, said Paul, but the purpose is to encourage incremental small development in our downtowns. Ingrid Nuse and Walter Pomroy asked how the idea of filling empty spaces with buildings dovetails with parking needs. Walter said that if we start mandating residential development, we will have to think about where those residents will park. Paul said that there are lots of ways to address this. Parking can be located at the back of a development, or there can be a shared parking provision, or ally access. As part of this process, we will address parking standards.
* If there is a requirement for 85% coverage of the building frontage, 75% of that has to be at the built-to-line. The remainder of the building can be set back to the secondary built-to line. This allows for things like café seating and pocket parks to happen.

In Village General, many of the same principles apply. The big difference is that, unlike in Village Storefront, there are no storefront requirements for the ground floor.

As far as the process to put a new development in place, form based code presents cut and dry rules for a developer to follow. Should the developer challenge the rules and wants to build a project according to different rules, Johnson will need to have a review board that will make a decision about allowing or disallowing the project developer to deviate from the form based code standards. As an example, Paul cited a case from Newport. Maplefields’ project proposed to only fill 40% of the property frontage with a building mass. The project went to the Development Review Board and the Board sided with Maplefields.

Next, Paul asked people to divide into small groups and revisit the small group exercise from the last meeting. He asked the attendees to think about what parts of our town could grow into Village Storefront, Village General and Village Neighborhood areas. At the beginning of the next meeting, small groups will report to the large group.

The groups worked for app 20 minutes and the meeting adjourned at 8:05pm. Next meeting will be on November 12th.

Minutes taken by: Lea Kilvadyova