

Planning Board Zoning Update Working Committee Meeting - May 10, 2007

Meeting held on May 10, 2007 at 3:30 p.m. at the Swanzey Town Hall. Present were Planning Board Members Steve Russell, Glenn Page, Scott Self, June Fuerderer and Victoria Barlow. Town Planner Sara Carbonneau and Conservation Commission member Steve Stepenuck were also present. Russell served as committee chair; notes taken by Victoria Barlow.

Steve's agenda for May 10, 2007 first meeting:

1. Review goals for group:
 - Examples:
 - A. Review issues that have come before the planning board that are not addressed through the ordinances.
 - B. Review issues that are related to the Master plan that are also not addressed through ordinances.
 - C. Make recommendations for the above to the full planning board so that changes can be brought before the public for a vote
2. Review List of issues that have come before the PB and see if there are any additions to the list

Current issues:

Match zoning with Open Space Plan maps to make sure development is directed to areas with low conservation priority
Determine the most appropriate location for new multi-family housing development
Reduce the permissible slope of driveways to keep development off hillsides and ridgelines
Reconfigure zones to replace strip zoning in business-commercial areas
Review setback requirements and determine whether parking areas and other "amenities" should be included within the setback areas
Eliminate calculations based on setbacks of adjacent buildings to determine permissible setback for new construction
Support housing for the elderly by permitting accessory housing units
Encourage home occupations as the new wave of small businesses
Explore assessing impact fees for emergency services

VRB suggestions for definitions of the group's mission, scope, deadline, approach, deliverables

MISSION: to bring Swanzey's land use regulations into agreement with the 2003 Master Plan Update. *This is defensible in public hearings—it is our job as planners – it is our overarching assignment.*

SCOPE: select the most critical deficiencies that can reasonably be addressed within the time available to us. Limit our scope to that selection. *We can't do everything, and we must set priorities. What are our pressing issues? We ALL must come to the next meeting with a VERY CLEAR understanding of our specific assignment, or else we will consume all of our time constantly re-defining our assignment.*

DEADLINE: One set of materials ready for public hearing by the end of August 2007, to take advantage of primary vote in January 2008. A second set of materials ready for public hearing by the end of November, to take advantage of March 2008 "town meeting" vote. *Some stuff we simply will be unable to accomplish within this time frame. What do we chose to defer? What is so pressing that we're willing to work extra-hard to accomplish, even though we have scant available time?*

APPROACH: Assign topics to subsets of the working group for researching and drafting proposed language that is e-mailed to members a week before the full group meeting. Research should begin with finding the applicable text/goal/recommendation/strategy in the Master Plan; the report should include this reference. Use full-group meetings for discussion of the drafts.

DELIVERABLES: Proposed text, ready for public hearing. Supporting information to help the public/SM/PB/CC etc. understand the proposed text.

VRB summary of issues and proposed strategies

Housing – Swanzey needs to provide for a variety of housing types, in the most suitable locations. Legally, morally, and economically, we must provide for housing – it’s up to us to chose the best ways for our community. *(I have not taken the time to find the original MPlan language for this statement.)*

Eliminate single-family housing from Business District? *(Top priority of Town Planner.)*

Eliminate multi-family housing from some areas of Commercial/Business District? *(Rescommended by Town Planner.)*

Decrease allowable density of multi-family housing development per acre by removing impermeable surfaces from the setback areas? *(Potentially a quick and easy fix to the consequences of the way we calculate density.)*

Determine most appropriate location for multi-family housing? *(Endorsed by many; explicitly recommended by Master Plan.)* Match zoning with Open Space Plan maps to make sure development is directed to areas with low conservation priority. *(With our new working maps in hand, this will be easy to assess. Per VRB, since the Open Space Plan is an official chapter in the Master Plan, the OSP maps are a guiding document.)*

Explicitly provide for accessory housing units? *(Encouraged by Code Enforcement Officer, tacitly encouraged by ZBA. Simply put into writing the ZBA’s practice, and this is accomplished.)*

Encourage housing growth along existing roads, and in existing developed areas, rather than Rural/Ag District? *(Endorsed by ConCom.)* Match zoning with Open Space Plan maps to make sure development is directed to areas with low conservation priority. *(With our new working maps in hand, this will be easy to assess. Per VRB, since the Open Space Plan is an official chapter in the Master Plan, the OSP maps are a guiding document.)*

Business – Swanzey needs to support business and commercial uses, where they are most appropriate. *(I have not taken the time to find the original MPlan statement.)*

Eliminate single-family housing from Business District? *(Top priority of Town Planner. Prevents future conflicts, preserves commercial land for tax income generation.)*

Eliminate multi-family housing from some areas of Commercial/Business District? *(Rescommended by Town Planner. Prevents future conflicts, preserves commercial land for tax income generation.)*

Do we need to do more to encourage desirable the home occupations? Define “desirable,” fine-tune to allow different kinds of home occupations. *(Recommended by “small business incubator” model of village settlement.)*

Eliminate calculations based on setbacks of adjacent buildings to determine permissible setback for new construction? *(Recommended by PB Chair. Potentially a quick and easy fix.)*

Reconfigure zones to replace strip zoning in business commercial areas? *(Scott thinks this may be too hard to un-do, or too challenging within our time frame.)* Match zoning with Open Space Plan maps to make sure development is directed to areas with low conservation priority. *(With our new working maps in hand, this will be easy to assess. Per VRB, since the Open Space Plan is an official chapter in the Master Plan, the OSP maps are a guiding document.)*

~~Explore impact fees for emergency services. *(Not recommended as priority by Town Planner; possibly a duplication of CIP Committee effort.)*~~

Road standards update *(Lee’s task to prepare materials for PB review)*

Design roads for 100-year flood, not 10-year flood? *(Endorsed by ConCom)*

Lower culverts by 20%, and oversize them? *(Endorsed by ConCom)*

Reduce the permissible slope of driveways to keep development off hillsides and ridgelines? *(15% slope currently is permitted; anything greater than 10% requires engineered drawings. Streets are limited to 8%. Endorsed by Dave Osgood.)*

Steve’s next step for the working group: Spend a meeting looking at making housing accessible in villages. Begin by looking at existing multi-family housing.

On June 14, meet at Haley Heights. Go to Evergreen Knolls, Riverbend, SCS housing, Forest View Estates.

VRB suggestion: for each development, have on hand

Number of units/acre as built

Number of units/acre permissible with underlying zoning

Percentage of lot covered with impermeable surface

Provided amenities