

**Montpelier Planning Commission**  
**May 9, 2011**  
**City Council Chambers, City Hall**

*Subject to Review and Approval*

**Present:** Jesse Moorman, Chair; Kim Cheney, John Block, and Tina Ruth; Anna Hartman, Youth Member.  
Staff: Gwen Hallsmith, Planning Director; Clancy DeSmet, Planning & Zoning Administrator, and Isaac, AmeriCorps Volunteer

**Call to Order:**

Jesse Moorman, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

**Comments from the Chair:**

Mr. Moorman said since the last meeting he had thought a little bit more about the schedule ahead. He thought it would be good to invite different “think tanks” to the meetings, such as the Conservation Commission, Housing Task Force, Montpelier Alive and the Historic Preservation Committee. He has been in touch with the Conservation Commission and they have agreed they will join us at the June 13<sup>th</sup> meeting to discuss rural districts. For July 11<sup>th</sup> where they are just talking about residential village districts he thought either the Housing Task Force and/or the Historic Preservation Commission could join us. They are on the agenda for the City Council meeting on May 25<sup>th</sup> to provide an update. He wants to reach out to Montpelier Alive for August 8<sup>th</sup>. They can invite some businesses associations as well.

Planning Director Gwen Hallsmith said the neighborhood development standards are not the entirety of the zoning. They really encompass what is now Article 6 in the bylaws. They replace the existing pages and pages of town wide use schedule with more specific areas to make it more user friendly.

Isaac said they picked the Hill Street Rural District as a district. It is generally representative of our rural districts in Montpelier. They basically see each section of what the district is for and a small section on dimensional standards and street standards for each district.

Ms. Hallsmith explained there are five general districts – rural, suburban and undeveloped areas with sewer and water, residential village, village commercial, and the two gateway river arts district. Those are the five big zones and they would cover the vast majority of what the development standards are. The goal of organizing this around neighborhoods wasn’t to make it easy to write but easier to use. There are certain types of standards that aren’t confined to neighborhoods that will be more citywide.

The Planning Commission reviewed the draft boundary maps and the criteria for each district boundary.

Planning Director Hallsmith said the existing civic district has changed a bit. They included the major state institutional properties which is the State House, the Pavilion building and the DMV building and Transportation building. They are handled differently in our zoning and the regulatory scheme than the rest of the town because they don’t have authority of design. The National Register District is what the Master Plan calls to be the Historic Design District. The Historic Downtown area they tried to make an area that is dominated by the commercial downtown area where the standards will be consistent. Crossroads is a small district but it does constitute the part of the town that is the service center for transportation infrastructure. College Hill was too big and constituted too much of the town and wasn’t coherent. Sabins Street is one of the biggest developable parcels in the community and it might make sense to have it in a district. The River Arts District is an area characterized by proximity to the river and its historic development has been driven by the river with the railroad, granite sheds. It has been an industrial area of town. There is a big potential for the arts to come back there in much the same way they have in Burlington with the South End Arts

District. With Lamb Abbey there was an attempt at that and that is something they might like to encourage in that area. There is a lot of potential for some redevelopment in that district and a redeveloped district will demand its own set of standards. If there were any part of the community right now that she would recommend form based codes it would be here. Stonewall Meadows and Berlin Street they have worked on a bit as its own district.

Mr. Bloch asked what happens with the development of the Carr Lot. It is in the Civic District.

Ms. Hallsmith replied it is in the historic downtown. This is where the energy plant is going off of Taylor Street. Her philosophy of how they are going to achieve their goals of increasing housing in the city really relates to engaging the neighborhoods in the dialogue about how to develop in their area. What they are faced with every time a new proposal is brought in is enormous opposition to any change. New housing might be a welcome thing if it is developed so it maintains the spirit and sense of place your neighborhood has now. To do that on a broad swath of the community misses the opportunity of really what makes our neighborhoods special and what makes everybody passionate about their neighborhoods and why they don't want them to change in a way that detracts from their essential character.

Mr. Moorman said he would like to point out three different ways that the river seems to be intersecting with zoning boundaries. On one hand there is Barre Street going across the river but Crossroads go across the river to Barre Street, and then in the middle of the river is the zoning district.

Mr. Cheney inquired what the regulations for Sabin's would say.

Ms. Hallsmith said it is currently included in its entirety in the growth center.

The Planning Commission went over the draft maps showing the boundaries for the zoning and discussed boundaries with Planning Department staff.

**Adjournment:**

Upon a motion by John Bloch and Kimberly Cheney, the Planning Commission adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen Hallsmith, Director  
Planning & Community Development

Transcribed by: Joan Clack