

**IMAGINE AMHERST
MEETING NOTES**

JOINT
TECHNICAL and PROJECT WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING
November 21, 2016

Working Committee Attendees: Dal Guiliani, Chair; Ellen Banks, Duncan Black, Brian Kulpa, Carl Montante, Jr., Gary Palumbo, Ramona Popowich and Daniel Ulatowski

Absent: David Chiazza, Jim Cwierley, Steven Herberger, Frank Pasztor, and Bob White

Technical Committee Attendees: Rick Gillert, Gary Black, David Mingoia, William (Bill) Pidgeon and Mark Rountree

Absent: Brian Andrzejewski, Kelly Dixon, and Bart Roberts

Staff Present: Dan Howard, Kim Schueler, Amy Carrato

Code Studio: Lee Einsweiler

Dal Guiliani welcomed everyone. Dal asked if everyone agreed with the changes to the meeting notes from October 26, 2016 - Duncan Black had emailed changes regarding Pages 4 & 6. The notes were accepted with the changes.

In response to the Committee's request to consider the form and density allowed under current commercial zoning, Code Studio prepared an analysis of "form and density" under existing zoning provisions. Lee Einsweiler reviewed a model from the analysis for the West of the Village area under GB zoning using images.

Dan Ulatowski asked if the images represent current parking requirements.

Gary Palumbo asked if the explanation and images can be added to the Charette Report.

Lee Einsweiler stated that structured parking would be allowed in GB and yes the images and explanations will be added to the Charette Report.

Gary Palumbo asked if there could be buildings of different heights on the same lots. Lee answered yes.

Ramona Popowich stated that there needs to be a balance between height and setback to improve the zoning code.

Lee asked to clarify changes needed to accept the Charette Report and Precedent Report.

- The Precedent Report needs a better introduction – this will be added.
- The Charette Report concept images won't be changed. An introduction explaining the history behind the Charrette, its intent, and what a Charrette is will be added. Results from the "form and density" analysis by Code Studio will be added to the Report as well. Content from the Report will evolve as we move forward.

Gary Palumbo asked if the introduction will stand alone or be added to the overall report. Lee stated it will be added to the beginning of the existing Report. Gary Palumbo then asked if this will be adequate to explain the needed information, Lee stated yes.

Dal Giuliani explained these two reports are to fulfill the NYSERDA contract and are not binding. He recommended that these reports be sent to NYSERDA with the previously discussed additions (intros in the Charrette Report and Precedent Report). Everyone was in agreement that the reports could be sent to NYSERDA with these additions.

Lee said the next steps are:

1. Comprehensive Plan Amendments/mapping with various commercial center types
2. Code text with new commercial zoning districts
3. Possibly a proposed zoning map which combines the two above

Dan Ulatowski asked whether the Comp Plan map is going to be more general or specific. He stated that it is important to define geography on the map.

Lee stated that the map will show all the commercial and mixed use centers across the entire Town – this does not include residential, office or industrial. He stated that the Town Board may not want the Plan to portray uses at the parcel level.

Rick Gillert stated when the map was first done it was done parcel by parcel, then generalized later, and that the approach we are currently taking is consistent with that.

Lee stated we will be able to apply different levels of commercial to different sites depending on the parcel. He stated that the map could remain more general and the zoning would really get into the specifics.

Brian Kulpa stated he had concerns with the maps becoming too specific: that they may not protect adjacent property owners, and that it may look like commercial is spreading instead of transforming.

Lee stated single family zoning will remain single family zoning, and we will not be expanding commercial and mixed use areas in most cases.

Rick said once we get center designations correct, we can move forward to look more closely at adjacent areas, but that he is concerned about doing this now – the Town Board and residents think we are focusing on commercial sites to reach our goal and we should stay with these. He asked Lee when the public should be engaged and whether architectural standards will be included in this process.

Lee said to include the public again after the Committee has looked at these proposed changes. He said that architectural standards could be included to a degree.

Carl Montante, speaking on processes to be improved, asked if there are any municipalities who upload documents, such as plans from developers, to something the Town controls that could then be posted so the public can see.

Lee stated that there are some Building Departments in other municipalities who do have things submitted electronically and then post them for the public to see. He also suggested that possibly requiring a public meeting before a project submittal could be an option to gather more public input initially rather than after the submittal

Lee stated that hopefully the changes made during this project will require less variances and will encompass the public's vision.

Lee met with Town Board members during his visit, Ramona asked him to summarize his thoughts from the meetings. Lee stated it will be important to show Town Board members and the public what can be built today versus what is being proposed, and to clearly explain what this whole project intends to do: right-sizing zoning so that it is no longer one-size-fits-all; it is meant to modify zoning to make sure it is more contextual and fits in with surrounding neighborhoods. We also have to make sure we do not get hung up on the pilot sites – that the project goes beyond those – and that they are not set in stone/they are still evolving.

Public Comment:

- Anthony Marconi – asked if NYSERDA is aware that these Reports are non-binding. Dal responded that yes they are aware.

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.