

**IMAGINE AMHERST  
MEETING NOTES**

**JOINT MEETING  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY and PROJECT WORKING COMMITTEES  
June 28, 2017**

**Working Committee Attendees:** Ellen Banks, Duncan Black, David Chiazza, Carl Montante, Jr., Gary Palumbo, Frank Pasztor, Ramona Popowich, and Daniel Ulatowski

**Absent:** Dal Giuliani, Chair, Jim Cwierley, Brian Kulpa, Bob White, and Jane Woodward

**Technical Committee Attendees:** Brian Andrzejewski, Rick Gillert, and David Mingoia,

**Absent:** Kelly Dixon, Bill Pidgeon, Bart Roberts, and Mark Rountree

**Staff Present:** Dan Howard, Kim Schueler, Amy Carrato

**Code Studio:** Lee Einsweiler (via telephone)

Dan Ulatowski acted as Chair for Dal Giuliani and called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

Kim Schueler reviewed the following major themes from public comment given at the Planning Board Hearing on June 22, 2017.

- Density – concerned that higher density may alter the suburban character of neighborhoods.
- Building Height – concerned that higher density means higher building heights that may be incompatible with surrounding neighborhood context.
- Greenspace – residents expressed desire for more green space, not buildings.
- Form-based zoning – concerned that this type of zoning means less control over land use and approval of projects.
- The process of the committee – disagree with the formation of the working Committee and its membership.

Lee Einsweiler reviewed the DRAFT Plan Implementation Assessment and District Framework document that describes the Mixed Use Activity Center Plan and Zoning. He discussed the new zoning strategy, zoning districts, development standards, district framework, building frontages and transitions.

Ramona Popowich expressed concern with the building heights that would be allowed in the Low-Scale and Medium-Scale Nodes. She believes many residents prefer 1-2 stories for Low-Scale and 2-3 stories for Medium-Scale.

There was a lengthy discussion about building height that included the following points.

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- There are differing methods of construction for 2-5 story buildings, especially in a redevelopment situation
- The feasibility of building 2 story buildings is limited, often need 3 stories to make projects feasible.
- Use of set-backs and step backs and the form of roof can help to diminish the impacts of building height
- Many new drug store buildings use a false 2<sup>nd</sup> story on what are really single story buildings
- Duncan Black commented that this method was recently used on newly constructed buildings on out-parcels at Sheridan Dr. & Bailey Ave. WalMart at this location also uses faux second stories.

Lee reviewed the District Framework Chart on page 6 and the specified heights and set-backs. He noted that building height and number of stories listed represent the maximum that can be constructed.

Dan Ulatowski thanked Lee Einsweiler and asked the committee if they have any other comments or thoughts.

Dan Howard explained that the Comprehensive Plan encourages development of mixed-use buildings as a way of achieving vibrancy and sense of place in some commercial areas. He noted that mixing of uses in authentic 2-3 story buildings is a good approach to achieve that objective.

David Chiazza explained:

- In the past developers had difficulty in attracting branded retailers to mixed use buildings, but this trend is changing, and mixed use buildings are becoming more attractive.
- Developers prefer to have tenants lined up before constructing new buildings, but often most tenants won't wait for a long construction period. This means developers may have to build or redevelop with some speculation

Carl Montante, Jr. explained:

- Typically an anchor tenant is needed to start a new or redeveloped building
- Many retail and office tenants want to see a constructed building before agreeing to locate there
- Construction can take 18-24 months, most tenants won't wait and go elsewhere
- When height is limited so is a developer's feasibility to produce a nice building
- In many developments outside this region dense, mixed use, walkable areas are vibrant and successful

Dan Howard stated that this was a good discussion, a lot to think about and review before the next committee meeting which will be a workshop with the Committee discussing and refining the locations of zoning provisions.

The workshop schedule was discussed. The committee agreed to meet again on both July 11 & July 12, 2017 at 6 pm, location TBD due to parking conflicts with Old Home Days.

Dan Ulatowski asked if there were any changes to the May 25, 2017 meeting notes. The meeting notes were accepted.

Public Comment:

- Tom Frank
- Don Smith

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.