

CONWAY PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES
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Master Plan

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A meeting of the Conway Planning Board was held on Wednesday, March 19, 2003, beginning at 3:00 p.m. at the Conway Town Office in Center Conway, NH. Those present were: Chair, Sheila Duane; Vice Chair, Robert Drinkhall; Secretary, Conrad Briggs; David Robinson; Planning Director, Thomas Irving; and Recording Secretary, Holly Meserve.

MASTER PLAN – PUBLIC MEETING

Jim Hicks of RKG Associates appeared before the Board. Mr. Irving stated that the purpose of this meeting is to obtain input from stakeholders. Mr. Hicks stated that the second draft has been distributed and does need some further corrections. Mr. Hicks stated that after corrections are made they would be submitting a public hearing copy. Mr. Irving stated that he has asked Town Staff and Department Heads to review the Master Plan and provide Mr. Hicks with any comments by March 26, 2003.

Mr. Hicks gave a brief presentation for the public in attendance: Lianne Boelzner, Conway Village Fire District; Thomas Steele, Conway Village Fire District; Gary Webster, Conway Board of Selectmen; Paul Pinkham, Conway Conservation Commission; Margaret Marshner, Conway Public Library Librarian; Janice Weinraub, Conway Zoning Board of Adjustment; Peter Benson, The Nature Conservancy; Bill Hounsell; Bayard Kennett; Stephen Swenson; and 2 others.

Mr. Hicks asked the public if there were any concerns regarding the proposed zoning districts. Mr. Kennett asked in the rewriting of the zoning ordinance is there any consideration given for the rights of property owners on what was originally there and what is proposed. Mr. Hicks stated that this is not a clean slate, it won't change the density, but encourage it and will allow clustering. Mr. Hicks asked if you look at Conway over time does it make sense to look at how to use your property differently. Mr. Hicks stated they wanted to draw on the uniqueness of the villages and not draw everything out of the villages. Mr. Hicks stated that the key is beginning to recognize that development patterns are going to change due to the bypass.

Mr. Hicks stated that the land use changes are needed to have some focus on density issues. Mr. Hicks stated where would you allow higher density. Mr. Hicks stated that it also discusses interlinking some of the existing recreation trails. Mr. Hicks stated one key issue regarding housing was trying to find places that have greater density. Mr. Hicks referred to page 2 of the handout and stated the Board is looking at the villages, allowing houses at a greater density and allowing housing above commercial facilities.

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Mr. Kennett asked what are the solutions to address infrastructure. Mr. Hicks referred to page 4 and stated they are trying to establish a working relationship with Conway Village Fire District and North Conway Water Precinct for interconnection and determine where sewer and water should go for residential and economic development. Mr. Hicks stated that the Planning Board is looking to have some cooperation with the precincts.

Mr. Kennett asked if it should be under the Town rather than the precincts. Mr. Hicks stated that the Planning Board did not make that recommendation. Mr. Hicks asked Mr. Kennett if he would rather see sewer and water as an element under Town government control or under what it exists today. Mr. Kennett stated that there are certain benefits of having it under Town Government. Mr. Kennett stated that he sees a benefit with tying these systems together and would be more efficient under one authority rather than having separate authorities. Mr. Kennett stated that fire protection also needs coordination, plus capital coordination is critical. Mr. Kennett stated if it was under one authority, maybe not the Board of Selectmen, the expansion into rural the areas may be achieved more quickly.

Gary Chandler, North Conway Water Precinct Superintendent and Earl Sires, Conway Town Manager, joined the audience at this time. Mr. Hicks stated in the recommendation the Planning Board discusses a feasibility study, however, the Planning Board did not recommend that type of authority or grouping together, but they do see it as necessary. Mr. Hicks stated that they made the same recommendation in regard to education. Randy Cooper of Cooper, Dean and Cargill joined the audience at this time.

Peter Benson asked if there as been any thought given to a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) for open Space. Mr. Hicks answered in the affirmative and stated that the Town Planner looked at that. Mr. Hicks stated that the Town has a lot of open space and the Town should provide some more and try to connect the spaces.

Mr. Hounsell stated that the Town should take an active role in finding funding solutions and facilitating water and sewer extensions beyond the precincts. Mr. Hicks stated that there is a federally funded program that allows the use of money for several different items including economic developments. Mr. Hounsell stated that it should be moved over from to chapter 5. Mr. Hounsell stated within the precincts they are moving forward on their own quite nicely, the Town needs to move forward beyond the precincts.

Mr. Webster stated that the economic council already has a group and to put the Board of Selectmen with the School Board for the location of a new High School is not appropriate; it should be with the Planning Board. Mr. Hicks stated that we discussed these issues with them and they wanted to expand the information process, but not necessarily make a decision. Mr. Hicks stated there are other implications with the school other than an education.

Mr. Kennett stated you are discussing what is now and the goal of the Master Plan is to discuss change and how to make those changes in regards to land planning and facilities. Mr. Sires stated that a committee was started last year with the school and the precincts to

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discuss health insurance and now to try to start capital improvements to look at the future. Mr. Irving stated that there is an alternative to the RSA to take the CIP from the Planning Board and give it to the governing body.

Mr. Hicks next discussed economic development (pages 2 and 3 of the handout). Mr. Sires stated under Chapter 5, the Economic Council has already done that and asked if they see a different role for another committee. Mr. Hicks answered in the negative and stated that it is not to replace, but encompass a lot of different groups. Mr. Hicks stated that they would be listed. Mr. Kennett suggested removing that it could be full-time, etc. Mr. Hicks stated if the Planning Board agrees it could be removed. Mr. Hicks stated that this was for direction and guidance and not directed towards one group. Randy Cooper stated when the Economic Council was created it was an attempt to replace the North Country Council.

Mr. Benson stated that the community is a tourist-based economy, but there is a root cause why we are a tourist-based economy. Mr. Benson stated that it is not just the town, but also the natural resources around us. Mr. Hicks agreed and stated that he would change the wording from tourism based to natural resources and recreation based. Mr. Benson stated that it better defines the area as we have a lot of hidden economies such as forestry, which is not tourism defined. Mr. Hicks stated with approval from the Planning Board he would change that.

Mr. Housell stated that he would like to see something in regard to the water systems with second homes and development that cannot get it with the best buck approach. Mr. Cooper stated in regards to economic development we are going to have a bypass at some point and we are seeing effects without knowing what the future will bring. Mr. Cooper stated that the strip is an important part of our recreation based economy and limiting what occurs on the strip is shooting us in the foot. Mr. Cooper stated that he is concerned that we have a lot of empty lots on the strip.

Mr. Benson asked what is the legal basis of this document. Mr. Hicks stated that under RSA if you are going to have zoning or land use regulations you have to have a Master Plan, which needs to be updated every five years. Mr. Hicks stated that a Court decision in New Hampshire is that the Master Plan is a guidance tool where in other states it is basis. Mr. Hicks stated that the Master Plan is a supporting documentation. Mr. Cooper stated that the court did say you had to have a vision statement and a land use chapter before adopting any land use regulations

Mr. Chandler asked if there would be a time line. Mr. Hicks answered in the affirmative. Mr. Chandler asked if critical paths were necessary. Mr. Hicks stated that the Planning Board would review it on an annual basis. Mr. Chandler asked if it should have a critical path. Mr. Sires stated that we do need to prioritize the projects and have a time line and it would be contingent on funding. Mr. Swenson stated that it is important for the connecting and interconnection of the schools with trails to encourage children to walk and ride their bikes.

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Mr. Hicks stated that the land use regulations need to be rewritten. Mr. Hicks stated if you try to develop a community under those regulations it is doomed to fail. Mr. Hicks stated that it would give the Planning Board more flexibility to work with a developer. Mr. Cooper stated that there should be more flexibility, as there currently is a lot of difficulty where they cannot negotiate a solution. Mr. Cooper stated that the Town should be setting aside the money to take the grandfathered signs to bring everyone into the same regulation.

Mr. Chandler stated that he would like to encourage the Planning Board to focus on watershed protection. Mr. Chandler stated there needs to be a plan for the future, as we need to protect the water systems and aquifer. Mr. Cooper stated that a private organization and the community could acquire zone rights to the community. Mr. Cooper stated we should be identifying areas that should be saved for wells. Mr. Hicks stated that the town cannot buy everything, but they can work with other groups. Mr. Cooper stated the large commercial area falls within the Special Highway Corridor District (SHCD), which doesn't allow anything over 5,000 square feet. Mr. Hicks stated that he would look at that.

Mr. Chandler stated that we need to purchase land to have an adequate water supply in the future and you need to look at a broad area. Mr. Hounsell asked if there is anything from the precinct that the Planning Board would like to see. Mr. Glynn stated that the lack of a CIP bothers him and he doesn't know what the plans are for the precinct. Mr. Hounsell asked if the facilities plan is not clear enough. Mr. Hicks stated that he has the facilities planned and he doesn't know if the Planning Board has seen it. Mr. Chandler stated that the CIP is part of the Precinct's Master Plan. Mr. Chandler stated that they are setting up a process, as the Master Plan doesn't get into the cost things.

They next discussed a CIP and impact fees.

Meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Holly L. Meserve
Recording Secretary

Tom Irving

From: "Locust Hill, Cynthia & Conrad Briggs" <locusthill@adelphia.net>
To: "Sheila Duane" <sheila.duane@verizon.net>
Cc: "Tom Irving" <tirving@conwaynh.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 08, 2003 8:52 AM
Subject: master plan

Hi COMMISSIONER ! (AND CHAIRMAN)

Here's Cindy's draft - with a few of my additions
 A VISION STATEMENT (preface)

Conway is set in the Saco River valley. It is an old community, founded in 1768. As we grow we want to remember this tie to the past and encourage the preservation of our older landmarks.

Conway is a town made of villages, each with its¹ own identity. But Conway is still one town; including the villages and the rural areas. This single identity should be strengthened.

Conway lies in an area of the state where much recreational activity takes place. These uses are both active and passive; sightseeing, skiing, mountain climbing, fishing and canoeing. The scenic beauty of the mountains and the valley is the backbone of this. All efforts should be taken to preserve the beauty and, when possible, to enhance it.

Conway has always been a year round community. The first activities were farming, then, logging, manufacturing and now tourism. In general , at each stage we have had a one-industry economy. Tourism, the present industry, needs to be augmented with other compatible industries.

The purpose of this master plan is to preserve and enhance the beauty of the Valley and enhance the lives of its residents.

It should set forth a unified approach to the shaping and developing of Conway's future. It should promote the public health, safety and welfare of its citizens by encouraging sound land use and a desirable pattern of stable, long-term growth and development of Conway and the surrounding Valley.

MISSION STATEMENT (cover)

RECOGNISING THAT OUR NATURAL BEAUTY IS OUR GREATEST ASSET, OUR
 COMMITMENT IS
 TO BALANCE GROWTH WITH THE NEEDS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY.

4/10/03