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DATE March 30, 2013

APPROVED

### HUNTINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of March 11, 2013

**PRESENT:** Dana Cummings, Everett Marshall, Julia Austin, Gordon Miller, Knox Cummin, Heather Pembrook

**ABSENT:**

**OTHERS PRESENT: MINUTES:** Heidi Racht

#### Agenda

- 6:30 pm Site visit - Village Hill PRD
- 7 pm MEETING BEGINS
- 7 pm Public Comment
- 7:15 Town Plan
- Land Use section - discussion with Conservation Commission members
- 8:45 Minutes of February 25, 2013
- Mail
- 9 pm Discussion of upcoming business / agenda requests
- March 25 - Village Hill Final Subdivision Review
- 9:15 Member Business
- ECOS Update
- 9:30 Adjourn

The meeting began with the election of the chair and vice chair.

**MOTION:** Julia Austin nominated Dana Cummings to be the HPC chair; seconded by Knox Cummin.

**MOTION:** Knox Cummin nominated Heather Pembrook to serve as vice chair; seconded by Everett Marshall.

**The slate of officers was approved unanimously.**

The meeting was called to order at 7:16 pm, chaired by Dana Cummings

Public Comment	No public was present.
Town Plan: Land Use	<p>Knox Cummin passed out a draft of the section on Land Use. He explained that it was shorter "with not as many goals," which the HPC had as an overall formatting goal of the Town Plan.</p> <p>The format that the Commission is following is Goal, Action (Implementation), Policy.</p> <p>Dana Cummings read comments from the most recent Town Plan survey which indicated strong support for protecting open space (69%). He asked if</p>

there was distinction between people who view the section as land use and those who wish to conserve land.

Knox Cummin said that he "really wanted to address in this section the large landowner. Some have bought land to conserve, but for others, "it's money in the bank," to be used for retirement or as an investment.

He then went on to suggest rural PRDs, which would be set up so all buildings are clustered. He gave an example of 30 acres with six houses on five acres. He wanted to Land Use section that meetings their needs. He suggested mandated clustering that also included avoiding scenic area.

Heather Pembroke noted that State land is in the high elevations. People want to conserve open farmland and land by the river. But, Cummin disagreed, stating, "If all was in-filled, it wouldn't be great. He suggested a RPRD (Rural Planned Residential Development). Everett Marshall responded that the regs "already have this in place. We need to encourage this type of density." He pointed out that big landowners with agricultural fields and existing houses are already meeting this model. "Our regs do this mildly and we need to encourage this."

Dana Cummings talked about progressive density bonuses. Pembroke warned that this "would encourage condos." Marshall again stated, "We need to encourage this." Cummings talked about needing to create a strategy for putting houses closer together.

Knox Cummin read his proposal. He talked about assessment, which promotes development. He said, "It would be great if we could figure out a way to change this." He then went on to talk about Economic Depreciation, based on adverse conditions, noting that a planning hurdle could help listed values be less.

Julia Austin said that the concept of a view shed can be very subjective. Pembroke talked about the Scenic Overview study that had been spearheaded by the Conservation Commission a few years ago. The study presented a methodology to be used by the town to identify valuable view sheds. However, the methodology was never implemented to create a list in Huntington because, as Pembroke noted "people have shied away from identifying the most important" views due to the implications of it. Marshall noted that it is difficult if you have competing values. He proposed putting houses closer to the road, so nothing would be in the view. Knox Cummin expressed a preference for a cluster of housing at the end of a driveway. Marshall disagreed.

Cummin said that it is hard to look at this [RPRD] without a specific field. He suggested a point system. He said the system should "reward people for doing something that's good for everyone else."

The discussion then went on to the impacts of clustering on the transition areas from farmland and forestland. Marshall said that as a result of subdivision projects going through Act 250, there were long roads through fields that brought development to the edges of the forested area. There was concern with impacting forestland. He noted that there are criteria for ag and wetlands that are not being emphasized for forestland. Knox Cummin replied, "We have a lot of forestland and we don't have a lot of farmland. I would rather have it possible for the Tafts to lease a hayfield from someone's 40-acre cluster development located on the edge of the fields." In response, Marshall then went on to discuss the diversity of the forestlands, observing that it is "more diverse at the lower elevations."

Dana Cummings said that there were different ways of looking at land development. He said it would be interesting to do a GIS build-out. Knox Cummin added that he liked the part about doing an overlay. When someone wants to develop a piece of land, the "lawyer sees the constraints and knows where [the property owner] can build." Heather Pembroke said that there should be a balance for the person who currently owns the property. There needed to be background and research to see if there is supported by the inventory. Dana Cummings replied that the Commission should not try to figure out the details now. He suggested looking at the ECOS. He added that the HPC should apply for a Municipal Planning Grant to develop mapping.

Knox Cummin talked about the conflict between large land owners whose property is their bank account and suggested a tax break. Pembroke said she wasn't supportive of giving wealthy landowners a tax break.

Several conversations ensued. Everett Marshall then spoke in support of Current Use and advocated for fully funding the Current Use program. Knox Cummin talked about resentment of the CU program. Marshall said, that "it gets into the funding of education. For middle income families, an increase would be a hard sell." Pembroke said that the HPC or Knox Cummin should consider engaging a land use planner to help the Commission with the issue on a local level.

Heidi Racht talked briefly about large tracts of land. She questioned that every piece of land should be viewed as house lots and noted that some towns, like Hardwick, have worked hard to create a community of agricultural entrepreneurs. In some places, there is a movement to creatively match buyers with property owners, so everyone wins. This visionary approach to

planning. Marshall then went on to talk about land trusts creating a holistic view.

Gordon Miller offered that GIS mapping took out the land in Huntington that is conserved, wetlands, flood plains, etc., noting "there isn't a lot to play with." Knox Cummin asked about the view shed. Miller responded that it "should be done in the regs." He asked who should pay for it, adding that the Current Use program will "never be fully funded." The State is running a deficit. He noted that there is resentment of CU landowners who post their lands and the program often subsidizes wealthy landowners.

Miller went on to talk about expanding buffers around water bodies. The Town of Strafford wanted to have the Legislature protect these areas. Marshall concluded the discussion around Current Use by noting that it has been "so critical for keeping working forests going."

Knox Cummin said, "The reason I got into this quagmire is Huntington still has rural character. We have open land with farms that are still open. If you fill the spaces with houses, it would change the character of the town."

Julia Austin said that this seems to be in conflict with Village Code (VC). Cummin said he had a problem with VC and couldn't get traction when he met with the VC Committee. He explained that he did not like the concept of building to the road. "I have a problem with this. Maybe people like this, but they're [the town] not ready for it."

Pembrook proposed calling CCRPC and engaging a land use planner. She said that the HPC should say, "These are the things we love and we would like to protect them" and then develop a method with them.

Discussion then went back to Knox Cummin's draft on the Land Use section. Racht suggested that he start the paragraphs differently, working with the language he has proposed, and pick up language from the consolidated implementation recommendations.

**ACTION ITEM: Cummin will develop a new draft.**

Other suggestions include:

1. utilizing the ECOS mapping (Pembrook)
2. engaging Aaron Worthley to develop a map (Miller)
3. adding GIS layers to the ECOS maps (D. Cummings)
4. referencing the Natural Resources inventory (Marshall)
5. a density bonus for building in a "desirable area (Miller)
6. looking at the Uplands Grant for mapping (D. Cummings)

	<p>7. encouraging development to occur in certain areas, i.e. Village Code (Pembrook)</p> <p><b>ACTION ITEM: Knox Cummin's second draft will be sent to Racht to send to the Conservation Commission.</b></p>
<b>Minutes of February 25, 2013</b>	Everett Marshall moved to approve with changes; seconded by Dana Cummings. Minutes approved with changes; Knox Cummin and Heather Pembrook abstained.
<b>Mail</b>	None.
<b>Member Business</b>	<p>1. The HPC is looking for a new member as there were no conclusive write-ins at Town Meeting. Dana Cummings asked the Commission to think about people who might have the time and disposition.</p> <p>2. Heather Pembrook asked about the timeline that she and Ginger Lubkowitz had presented to the Commission in January – and the Commission had endorsed - for completion of the Town Report. The topics still to go through a review of the first draft include: Economic Planning, Energy, Population Data, Housing/Elderly Housing, Child Care, Natural Resources. Second drafts to be reviewed include Land Use, Transportation, Facilities, Historic Features, Schools and Recreation/Open Space.</p>
<b>Discussion of upcoming business / agenda requests</b>	<p>Town Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. review second draft of Land Use section</li> <li>2. first draft Child Care Section – Dana Cummings</li> <li>3. first draft Population Data – Everett Marshall</li> </ol>

**Adjournment:** Heather Pembrook moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Julia Austin. The Commission adjourned the meeting at 9:22 pm.

**UNAPPROVED MINUTES TO THE HPC:** March 18, 2013

**MINUTES APPROVED:** March 25, 2013

**APPROVED MINUTES TO THE TOWN CLERK:** March 28, 2013

**March 25, 2013 Proposed Agenda**

**6:30 pm**      **Site visit – Village Hill**

7:15 pm      Final Subdivision Review – Village Hill

8 pm      Minutes of March 11, 2013

Mail

8:20 pm      Public Comment

8:30 pm      Town Plan – Land Use, Child Care, Population Data

9:20 pm      Member Business

9:30 pm      Adjourn