

MEETING SUMMARY
1st MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE TO
UPDATE DENNING'S LAND USE CODES
October 29, 2007 from 7:10 to 8:35 p.m. Town Hall

Attendees: David Gilmour, Town Comprehensive Planner; Jennifer Grimes; Carl Landon; Lester Milk; Katherine Parr; Kevin Smith; Alden Thayer.

Supervisor Bruning welcomed the group and thanked everyone for volunteering service to the Town. The work that this group does is important to the community's future.

The attendees introduced each other and identified a land use story or memory. People mentioned the history of settlement, where they were from and ways that the landscape has changed over time (centuries). A tentative project schedule was set. Members not attending will be polled by David whether Monday eves are acceptable for routine committee meetings.

The group discussed the purpose of subdivision control. It reviewed State enabling 'Town' laws and identified goals for the development of the subdivision codes:

- Clarity
- Natural preservation
- Built environment: aesthetic; safe; meaningful; private property.
- Consistency/ fit: replicability
- Affordability
- Fiscally appropriate

The adopted comprehensive plan provides goals and a framework for a subdivision code upgrade. Mr. Gilmour noted that some organizing concepts for considering the code objectives are: 'Use'; 'Design' and 'Impact'. While all codes involve aspects of all three of these features, subdivision codes are oriented more towards achieving design and impact. Zoning is oriented more to use. Ms. Grimes thought that some preferred land use management techniques could be presented in guidelines.

Carl asked if there will be an overhaul of the subdivision and zoning codes or a piece by piece retrofit. The discussion gravitated to the need for significant overhaul (the code is 30+ years old), but Mr. Gilmour

asked the group to continue this discussion using the subdivision diagnosis he provides. He acknowledged that time we have set for this project initially is limited (about a year) but he is optimistic we can make a lot of progress within this period. Typically it is recommended to have 18 to 24 months for a code update. The schedule and process will be reviewed frequently going forward.

Project Organization:

- The group thought Mr. Brooks is an excellent candidate for Chair; he will be asked if he will serve in that role. Ms. Parr will be Vice-chair. The Chair and Vice-chairs help run meetings.
- Ms. Grimes will be scribe. The scribe helps develop the project meetings record, such as producing brief meeting summaries that document key topics covered.
- Public participation program – will be refined going forward. There was discussion about ways to keep the interested public abreast of project development. Meeting agendas and summaries posted on the web page (latter within about 10 to 14 days of meetings). ID meeting in the Townsman. It is unlikely the Committee will have draft codes during early outreach, but rather facilitate discussion about tools and options. Committee likes small groups to get feedback on key topics.

Research - Gilmour said the next step for subdivision codes work is 'diagnosis'. Taking off from the comprehensive plan, it will discuss history (patterns of settlement, building, land use, ownership), goals, and techniques to help Denning manage land use according to design, impact and use.

Interviews: Mr. Gilmour ID'd people that will likely be contacted for background germane to code work: Building Inspector; Town Clerk; Fire Chief; Highway Superintendent; DEP; County Health Department; County Planner. If there are others, mention these to Mr. Gilmour.

Mr. Landon identified the need for an electronic version of Denning's codes. Mr. Gilmour has scanned the existing subdivision regulations and zoning ordinance and started quality checking these scans in the MS Word document that he developed -- it is 90 to 95% ready. The product could be posted on the Town's web page. Mr. Gilmour is helping the Town administer a request for an extension to the grant; after that the e-code should be delivered within six weeks, probably much sooner. The next meeting is set for Monday, November 26, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall.