

Site Walk Notes  
Saturday, February 11, 2023  
Traditional Business Overlay District

Present: George Sioras, Elizabeth Robidoux, John O'Connor, David Granese, Jim MacEachern, David Nelson, John Morrison, Randy Chase, Rich Malaby.

No members of the public attended.

The site walk began in the parking lot of the Derry Municipal Center at 9:00 a.m. Conditions were partly cloudy, windy, and cold.

The purpose of the walk is to view the existing conditions of lots in the Traditional Business Overlay District (TBOD). It was noted the current regulations call for zero front lot setbacks, mixed use, single family residential is not a permitted use, residential use is not allowed on the first floor and the buildings are not allowed to be less than two stories.

Mr. Nelson provided background on the original visioning that took place when the TBOD was created. The intent was to have the downtown look like an old New England mill town, similar to downtown Manchester.

The walk proceeded to the corner of Franklin Street and Pearl, so that the Board members could view the existing conditions at 16 Franklin Street. Comment was made there should be room for a sidewalk so that people can walk to Broadway. The sidewalk is sporadic on Franklin Street. When the buildings were originally constructed, they were constructed with residential use in mind, not commercial or retail as one moves away from Broadway. The Board suggested looking at ways to allow people one block off of the original TBOD to have a business use if that is what they wanted to do.

The walk continued to Broadway and then proceeded west toward the Opera House. It was noted Manning Street and Martin Street will likely not be changed and will retain their commercial uses. The residents and landowners along Maple Street have been slowly improving their properties. The Board members stopped at the Opera House. There was a short discussion regarding the height restriction in the TBOD which is that no building shall be taller than 350 above sea level. The original vision in the downtown was to not have high rise buildings as it would ruin the aesthetic the Board had wanted to create and maintain into the future.

Mr. Chase commented that Franklin Street and Maple Street are like bookends in the district in that there is similar occupancy along the streets. The lots which currently contain houses on the opposite side of Rollins Street are not suited for commercial development. However, 35 Maple Street will look good as a commercial use as aesthetically it will match the building across the street.

The Board discussed amending the TBOD with conditional use permits or separating it into two different districts. It may be a very different environment as one moves away from Broadway into

the district. For this amendment, it may make sense to not use the streets as the boundary (as the Board does traditionally), but instead use the lots themselves.

The Board progressed down Central Street into the Abbott Court parking lot, and discussed continuing the existing boundary on this side of the district back to South Avenue. The townhomes will continue to remain in the MHDR district.

The Board walked the Rail Trail to South Avenue, then walked up North Avenue to Wall Street. The buildings are a mix of commercial, mixed use commercial, and multifamily residential with some single family residential. Railroad Avenue is a very unique street, as is Wall Street. There is potential for the slow progression to commercial and multifamily along these streets.

The Board walked back to the Municipal Center parking lot.

The site walk ended at 10:15 a.m.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

Date: February 14, 2023