

Deerfield Center Charrette

A Vision for a Mixed Use, Pedestrian Friendly Village

October 26, 2013



Sponsored By:
The Deerfield Planning Board
Deerfield, New Hampshire

Conducted By:
Mettee Planning Consultants
Dover, New Hampshire

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1. Acknowledgments

The Mettee Planning Team

Jack Mettee, AICP

Mettee Planning Consultants

M. Hunter Ulf, AIA

UK Architects

Jeff Hyland, ASLA

Ironwood Design Group, LLC

Roger Hawk

Hawk Planning Resources, LLC

Village Center Advisory Committee

Joe Dubiansky

Sherry Godlewski

Maureen Mann

Fred McGary

Jeanne Menard

Peter Menard

Deerfield Planning Board

Fred McGarry, P.E., Chair

Katherine Hartnett, Vice Chair

Lisa Wolford

Alan O'Neal

Peter Schibbelhute

Richard Pelletier, Alternate

William Perron, Alternate

Deerfield Town Planner

Jerry Coogan, AICP

Deerfield Board of Selectmen

Stephen Barry, Chair

Alan O'Neal, Vice Chair

R. Andrew Robertson

Richard Pitman

Rebecca Crosby Hutchinson

Charrette Participants

In addition to the Mettee Planning Team the following Deerfield citizens participated in the Charrette.

Joe Dubiansky
Joe Dubiansky
Maureen Mann
Robert Mann
Fred McGary
Penny McGary
Jeanne Menard
Katherine Hartnett
Lisa Wolford
Howard Maley
Sylvia Maley
Denise Grieg
JoAnne Bradbury
Kathy Berglund
Erick Berglund, Jr.
Herb McKinney
Gerald Coogan (Town Planner)



2. Creating A Vision for a Mixed Use Village Area

Deerfield received a Community Planning Grant in June of 2013 from the New Hampshire Housing Authority to investigate the creation of a separate Village Center Zoning District in the Deerfield Center area. At present, land use change and development is controlled through current zoning which is Agricultural-Residential with a 3-acre minimum lot size. Many of the existing lots in the village are less than 3 acres. A Commercial-Industrial Overlay District does allow business and industrial activities in Deerfield Center as well as throughout the town if the project meets specific criteria. Much of what exists in the Center today—multi-family residential, business, religious, municipal, etc.—is not permitted by right under current zoning. For example, in addition to the 3-acre minimum lot size, the current zoning requires a minimum frontage of 200 feet, front setbacks of 40 feet and side/rear set backs of 37.5 feet. The Center area has lots ranging in size from 0.25 acres to over 22 acres with almost half being less than 3 acres. Frontages range from 73 feet to over 1000 feet. Almost 35% of the lots have frontages of less than 100 feet.

As the Planning Board began to further consider this “new” village center zoning, it also felt that it would be easier for the citizens of Deerfield to “see” what such a district might look like in 20-30 years under revised zoning—that it could reinforce the existing uses, dimensions and historical character. After some discussion, the Planning Board decided to apply for an additional grant to undertake a design charrette to develop a graphic vision for Deerfield Center. This vision would help citizens visualize how zoning changes could encourage greater opportunity for a mix of uses—residential, retail trade, professional offices, and small businesses—that would mirror a traditional New England village. The Town was awarded the grant and began the process of holding a design charrette to be held in late October of 2013.



3. The Charrette Process

The Planning Board decided that the best way to conduct a charrette was to have a one-day workshop to craft a graphic vision for what downtown Deerfield could look like in 20-30 years. This charrette would bring together Deerfield citizens with a group of design professionals including architect, landscape architect and planner to create the vision. This graphic vision would complement the written vision that was derived from the ongoing community outreach efforts—a pedestrian friendly environment with buildings and public amenities that are consistent with traditional New Hampshire village character. Both the written and graphic vision would provide the basis for a Village Center Zoning District.

Pre-Charrette Activities included meetings and interviews

Prior to the charrette, the Planning Board and consultant team engaged Deerfield citizens and stakeholders in order to come up with the initial vision and to determine what these citizens “would like to see” in Deerfield Center in the future and what they would “not like to see”.

This effort involved meetings and interviews with various groups and individuals including:

- The Planning Board
- Town department heads
- Deerfield civic groups, such as the Heritage Commission and the Deerfield Community Church
- Senior citizens
- Business owners
- The Village Center Advisory Committee

Based on these meetings and interviews, elements to refine the present character of Deerfield Center were identified. From all of the comments several common themes emerged that included:

More pedestrian friendly

- ❖ Create an atmosphere for pedestrians—walking, biking, etc.
- ❖ Install sidewalks/paths/trees
- ❖ Provide connection from town ball fields and GB White Building to the gazebo/library/Church Street area



Consistent building design/aesthetics

- ❖ Emphasize/conservate historic building character
- ❖ Add street lighting with historic design
- ❖ Separate certain civic functions from village area—fire and highway departments
- ❖ Utilities underground—no towers

Allow a mix of uses

- ❖ Retail; small shops
- ❖ Restaurants

- ❖ Bed & Breakfast
- ❖ Antique shops
- ❖ Residential—Housing Diversity
- ❖ Café
- ❖ Tavern
- ❖ No fast-food franchises

Ensure safety on Route 107 (North/Raymond Roads)

- ❖ Better speed controls on Route 107 entering village from north and south
- ❖ Add traffic calming techniques—especially along Church Street
- ❖ Safe crosswalks on Route 107 and Church Street

Encourage parks; green spaces

- ❖ Town green with gazebo & looped pathways
- ❖ Farmer's market

Provide more, better signage

- ❖ Gateways for warm welcome to village
- ❖ Consistent with historic village character

Encourage more cultural activities

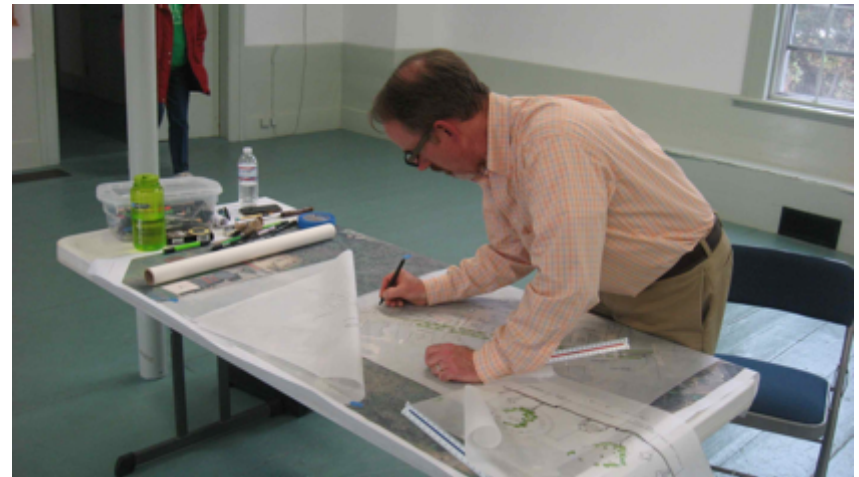
- ❖ Arts, music, craft events
- ❖ Cultural center

The Charrette—converting citizen ideas into a graphic vision for Deerfield

“Charrette” is a term from the French Beaux Arts tradition that involves an intensive, compressed design effort to solve a particular problem. In this charrette, the design professionals came from the fields of architecture, landscape architecture and community planning. The design effort was complemented by an active effort to include community ideas and opinions about the problem to be solved. Numerous ideas and opinions that were generated by the citizens of Deerfield came from meetings, workshops and stakeholder interviews prior to the Charrette.

On Saturday October 26, 2013 approximately 20 citizens (including three planning board members) and the design team met at Town Hall for a listening session to kickoff the Charrette. This session lasted for about an hour and a half. The design team then gathered to discuss how to best capture the themes and ideas from the listening session and the previous community outreach in a graphic format. Each team member took on a specific design element representing one of the key themes such as creating a pedestrian-like

village environment along Church Street, connecting the village with other town activity centers such as the elementary school; or creating a gateway into the village along Route 107.



Conceptual plans, renderings and project recommendations were then prepared by each of the designers. These were presented to the citizens of Deerfield late in the afternoon.

Section 4 that follows summarizes the vision and recommendations resulting from the design Charrette.

4. Charrette Recommendations—to enhance sense of place

Land Use/Building Strategies—aim to encourage mixed-use New England village environment

Issues

- Current 3-acre zoning and large setbacks do not encourage a more compact, historic village type environment.
- No standards for building design, landscaping and layout.

Strategies

- Encourage mix of uses and activities—civic, commercial, diverse residential and recreational
- Maintain/encourage compatible civic uses along Church Street—library, churches, etc.
- Encourage commercial mixed use along Route 107 in Deerfield Center.
- Connect civic uses on Raymond Road with those on Church Street.



- Modify land development regulations within a Village Center Zoning District:
 - ❖ Dimensional standards—building setbacks, heights
 - ❖ Parking standards—require on-site parking to be at side or rear of building.
 - ❖ Sign standards—more compatible with historic village character of Deerfield



Future Village Concept along Church Street.

- Adopt design guidelines that affect both the public and private realms and:
 - ❖ promote connections to activity nodes or centers, i.e., trails/paths, etc.
 - ❖ provide visual interest
 - ❖ include a mix of uses—variety of housing, retail, institutional, restaurants, etc.
 - ❖ incorporate architectural elements that reflect the distinctive character of Deerfield.



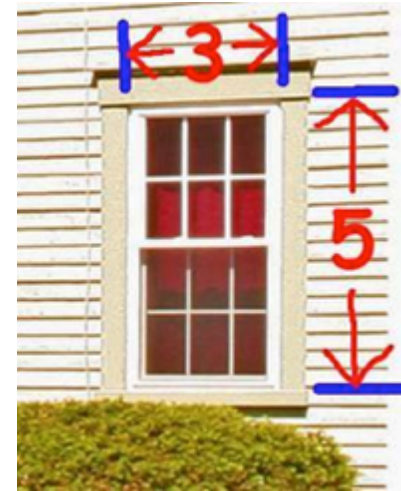
Traditional clapboard construction with architectural highlights

- Adopt landscape and circulation guidelines that address:
 - ❖ Pedestrian and bicycle access and ways
 - ❖ Site furniture
 - ❖ Buffers
 - ❖ Parking areas



- Adopt building design guidelines to encourage consistency of building character through:

- ❖ Roof style; pitch
- ❖ Windows proportions
- ❖ Building massing
- ❖ Materials
- ❖ Storefronts



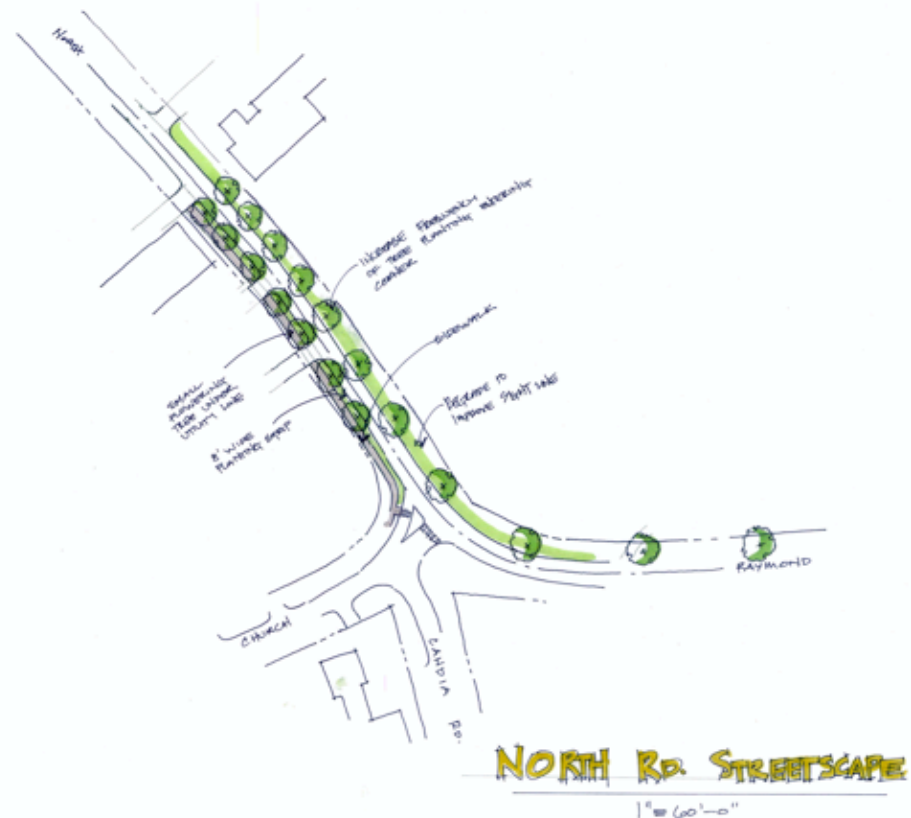
***Circulation Strategies*—aim at creating more pedestrian friendly, safer environment and connecting community activity centers**

Issues

- Fast moving traffic on NH Route 107 (North and Raymond Roads) especially during commuter hours
- The unsafe condition of the Deerfield Center intersection at Route 107 and Church Street.
- Unsafe pedestrians along Church Street and Route 107.
- Pedestrian crossings do not exist
- Lack of safe pedestrian path/trail connecting town activity centers, e.g., Town Hall/Gazebo/Church Street with GB White Building/town ball fields

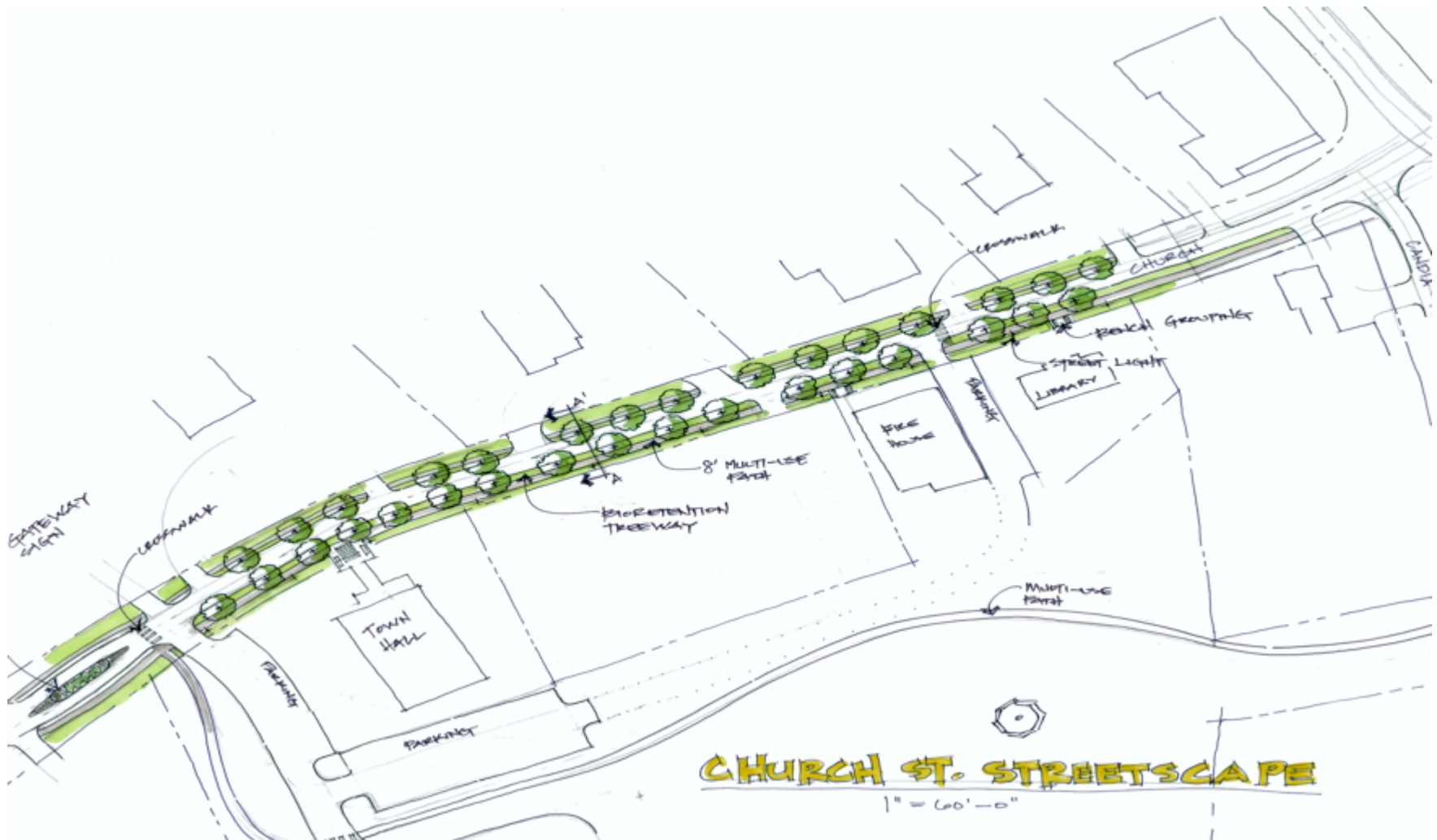
Strategies

- Create continuous path/roadway to connect Town Hall/Gazebo/Church Street with GB White Building/town ball fields.
- Create welcoming gateways & a more pedestrian type environment along Route 107.



- Upgrade Church Street with trees, walking paths (sidewalks) and safe pedestrian crossings.

- Connect Senior Housing with Church Street civic areas—library, town green, etc.



5. Next Steps

- ❖ Put results of October 26, 2013 Charrette onto the Town of Deerfield Website.
- ❖ Present Charrette findings to local boards and organizations.
- ❖ Work with Deerfield Center businesses, landowners and community organizations to:
 - implement simple physical changes in village area, e.g. gateway signs, pole banners, flower beds
 - create pedestrian friendly village walkways and tree plantings, especially along Church Street
- ❖ Amend current Zoning Ordinance to add a Village District and accompanying Design Guidelines Manual or revised Site Plan Review Regulations. These should encourage:
 - Pedestrian friendly environment;
 - Multiple uses with building massing that is consistent with current building size and form;
 - Dimensional standards consistent with current traditional village layout;
 - Limit height of buildings to 3 stories;
 - Allow for flexible parking arrangements;
 - Encourage architectural consistency – windows, roof pitch, facades, etc.; and
 - Context sensitive signage.