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MEMO

DATE: August 13, 2024

TO: Windham Town Council
THROUGH: Barry Tibbetts, Town Manager
FROM: Steve Puleo, Planning Director
Cc: Council Ordinance Committee

RE: **South Windham/Little Falls Master Plan Update.**

The Towns of Windham and Gorham have recognized the two villages of South Windham and Little Falls in Gorham are important “crossroads” between the past and present. On [March 28, 2023](#), the Director of Planning provide a South Windham/Little Falls Master Plan Presentation to the Council. The two communities funded a joint Master Planning effort to understand and identify the “Villages” defining character and are working together to implement the plan. This report is provided an update on the progress of implementing the Marter Plan, to discuss rezoning progress, and obtain Council support for authorize the Director of Planning the schedule joint ordinance planning meetings with the Town of Gorham standing Council Ordinance Committee to agree on the future zoning parameter for the “Villages.”

South Windham/Little Falls Master Plan

Key recommendations aimed at revitalizing the area and preserving its unique character. Here are some of the main points (see attachment; SWLF_MasterPlan_Zoning_Recommendations.pdf):

- **Streetscape Improvements:** Narrower travel lanes, wider sidewalks, and the addition of trees to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment.
- **Conservation Efforts:** Focus on preserving natural resources and farmland.
- **Public Transportation:** Efforts to seek and improve public transportation options.
- **Mixed-Use Development:** Allowing a mix of businesses and increased residential density to create a vibrant community.
- **Public Art and Recreation:** Incorporating public art and increasing access to the Presumpscot River and other recreational areas.
- **Parking and Infrastructure:** Parking behind buildings and paving the Mountain Division Rail Trail to Westbrook.
 - These recommendations aim to create a more walkable, community-focused environment that balances growth with the preservation of the villages’ historical and natural assets.

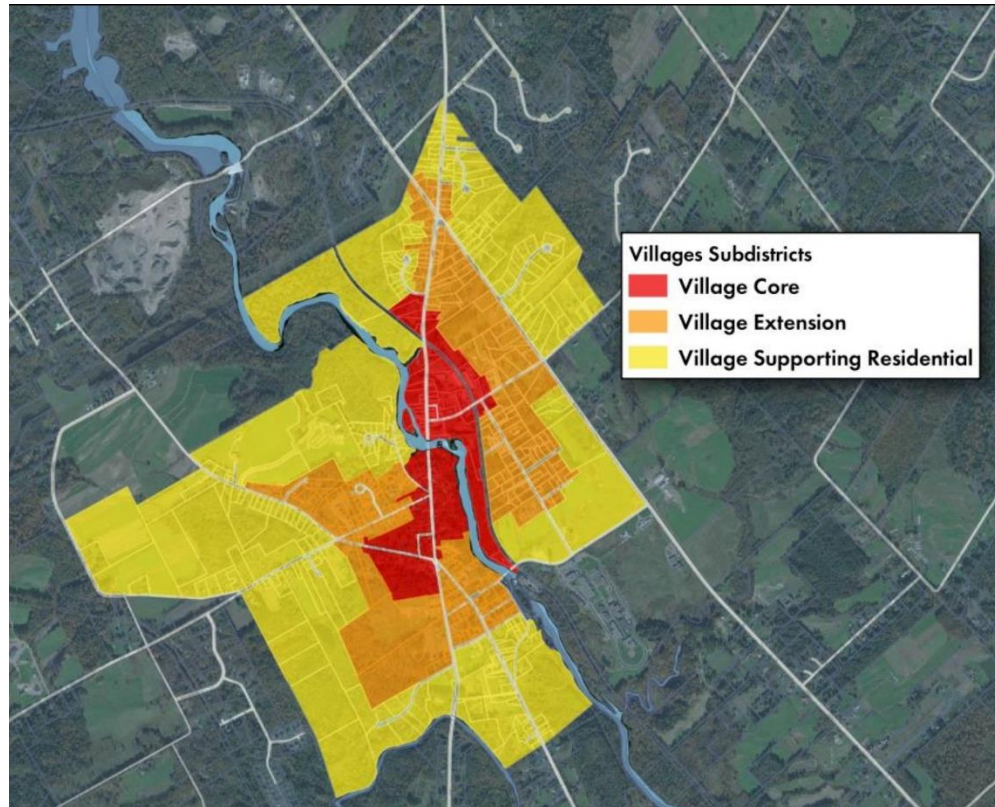
South Windham/Little Falls Village District (SWLFV).

NorthStar Planning has been contracted to develop implementation of the proposed zoning for the “SWLFV” District (see Attachment; NSP_VillageProgressMemo_May2024.pdf)

- The three proposed new zoning districts:

- **Village Core (in red)**. To create a dynamic, pedestrian-friendly downtown village including a mix of development.
- **Village Core Extension (in orange)**. To create walkable residential neighborhoods , which will sustain the Village Core district.
- **Village Supporting Residential (in yellow)**. To preserve existing neighborhood character, while allowing for infill residential development.

Zoning Map



Proposed Dimensional SWLFV District

- The zoning approach proposed by the consultants is to strike a balance between flexibility and creativity in development design and use. This includes promoting a higher level of quality urban design and attractive appeal.
- The proposed standards are targeted at private development that will be attractive, consistent, and pedestrian friendly with less reliance to the automobile.
- The dimension standard (see below) being proposed will specify building heights, setbacks, and requirements that support the cohesive village characteristics between the two municipalities.
- The design specification will allow for variations and alternatives, and zoning and performance standards will minimize undue burden on developers.
- The dimensional and district standards were created from the visioning work developed through the Master Planning process.

Villages Zoning – Dimensional Standards			
	Village Core	Village Extension	Supporting Residential
Lot Size (min.)	no minimum.	5,000 sq. ft. (sewer/water) 15,000 sq. ft. (septic)	20,000 sq. ft. (sewer/water) 25,000 sq. ft. (septic)
Net Residential Density (min.)	750 sq.ft. / DU	2,500 sq. ft. / DU	7,500 sq. ft. / DU
Front Setback (max.)	10 ft.	15 ft.	20 ft.
Side Setback (min.)	None	None	10 ft.
Rear Setback (min.)	20 ft.	20 ft.	20 ft.
Frontage (min)	25 ft.	50 ft.	100 ft.
Height (max.)*	4 stories	3 stories	2 stories
Lot Coverage (max.)	None	None	80%

The Draft Village Zoning Language (see Attachment; Village Zoning Language Draft 07-03-2024.pdf) :

- Draft zoning language goes a step beyond just writing new dimensional and district standards.
- By amending the LUO regarding the applicability and classification of projects by allowing:
 - The division of new or existing structures with 3 to 12 dwellings to be classified as a Minor Site Plan/ Minor Development.
 - The division of new existing structures with 12 dwelling units be classified as a Major Stie Plan/ Major Development.
 - Developments up to 10,000 square feet of total new construction or building additions shall be classified as a Minor Site Plan/Minor Development.

Zoning Amendment Process

Please note the Town has no specific standards in the Town ordinance by which to judge the proposed zoning change, but State statute requires all proposed zoning to be consistent with the goals and objectives of the [Comprehensive Plan](#).