

**Town of Greenfield  
Neighborhood Heritage District  
Draft Ordinance  
12-09-13**

I. Purpose

The purpose of the Neighborhood Heritage District (hereinafter referred to as NHD) is to protect the unique characteristics of the village area, maintain the rural beauty of the town, and guide new investment to stabilize and strengthen our tax base. The preservation of the cultural and historical attributes will help maintain the features of Greenfield that have contributed to the quality of life for present and future enjoyment.

II. Authority

Authority to establish the NHD is granted by the enactment of the Innovative Land Use Statute, RSA 674:21. The statute provides a method for Planning Boards to apply flexibility in the zoning process.

III. District Boundaries

The designated boundaries for the NHD shall include the Business District and Village District as shown on a map entitled (*insert map name*):

IV. Neighborhood Advisory Committee

A Neighborhood Advisory Committee shall be established to provide a review for proposed changes to properties within the NHD boundaries. The Neighborhood Advisory Committee shall provide a written report to the Planning Board on each proposal reviewed. The report shall include a summary of the features that are considered to be character defining, as well as a recommendation for action based on the Standards for Review. The report should also include any other information that the Neighborhood Advisory Committee deems relevant to the decision making process of the Planning Board.

The Neighborhood Advisory Committee shall be a committee appointed by the Board of Selectmen, of 3 to 7 volunteer members of the community and should include: one or more residents or business owners of the district, a Planning Board member and those with an interest in preserving community character and/or expertise in related fields such as history, architecture, land use, etc.

## V. Actions to Review

Actions or changes within the NHD boundary that meet any of the following criteria shall require review by the Neighborhood Advisory Committee and the Planning Board:

### ***New Construction that is visible from a public way***

- Introduction of new buildings, structures or objects that are greater than 200 s.f. of floor area.
- Additions to existing buildings and structures that are more than 200 s.f. of floor area.
- Relocation into the district of an existing building or structure that is more than 200 s.f. of floor area.
- Any exterior alteration that requires a variance or special exception under the zoning ordinance.

### ***Demolition that is visible from a public way***

- Dismantling, tearing down, or relocating all or part of any building or structure that is visible from a public way.

### ***Parking Areas and Accessways***

- Any new paved parking area or expansion of an existing parking area, that renders the cumulative square feet of paved parking area to be 1000 sq. ft. or greater.

### ***Fences and Walls***

- Stone walls that define a boundary may not be removed per RSA 472:6.
- Removal of any portion of a fence supported by granite posts.
- Installation of any new fence that is constructed of material other than wood or stone, or is 4 feet or greater in height.

### ***Mature Trees***

- Removal or significant alteration of a mature tree that is more than 15" in circumference at a height of 4' above grade unless removal of such tree(s) is necessary for safety reasons as determined by a professional arborist or other qualified professional.

## VI. Standards for Review

The following criteria are the guiding standards for the Neighborhood Advisory Committee to consider in their recommendations of all applications requiring review.

### ***New Construction or Major Additions***

- New construction should be compatible with the distinct characteristics that define the NHD.
- Setback, height, scale, and mass of new construction should be compatible with adjacent buildings and the context of the district. Buildings should be sited and

spaced in a manner that is consistent with the character-defining features of the streetscape.

- Architectural features in new construction or additions should be used to enhance visual interest. Details that reference, but do not necessarily mimic, traditional buildings are encouraged. Creative, contemporary design that acknowledges or references the district's character-defining features is also encouraged.
- Building materials for new construction should contribute to the visual continuity of the district. Building materials for major additions should be consistent with, or similar to, those already on the building or structure.
- New construction should preserve the character-defining landscape features of the district.

#### ***Demolition or Removal of Structures that are visible from a public way***

- Demolition, partial demolition, or removal of buildings and structures that are visible from a public way will be considered only under the following circumstances:
  - Replacement structures or other use of the site meet the intent of the design guidelines and do not have a negative impact on the character or cohesiveness of the district; or
  - The applicant of the demolition permit has demonstrated that reasonable, feasible alternatives to demolition have been considered, and that alternatives included renovation of the resource or adaptive reuse of the building or structure proposed for demolition; or
  - The applicant has demonstrated that retaining the resource would constitute economic hardship due to unavoidable, quantifiable, and verifiable expenditures; or a fiscal loss that would ensue should the resource not be demolished; or
  - The building or structure has been determined structurally unsound, based upon a written technical report prepared by a professional engineer registered in the State of New Hampshire (or other certified building inspector) that clearly demonstrates that the building or structure presents a risk to public health, safety and welfare; and the structurally unsound condition has not been caused by willful or negligent acts by the owner.

#### ***Parking Areas and Accessways***

- Parking in the business district should be to the rear of the front wall line of the building whenever possible. If parking is to the side of the building, there should be a strip of lawn between the parking area and road or sidewalk. Whenever possible, trees and shrubs should be introduced to parking areas to provide shade and greenery. Shared access and parking within the business district is encouraged.
- Parking in the village district should be set back from the primary front wall of the building whenever possible. Garages should maintain a setback that is at least halfway back from the primary front wall and farther whenever possible. Driveways that are double wide are discouraged.
- A raised landscape buffer should be utilized between the road and parking areas that exceed 1000 square feet.

### ***Fences***

- Fences, gates or enclosures that are 4 feet or greater in height are discouraged unless the applicant can demonstrate that the design will not detract from the character of the NHD.
- Chain link, stockade, and vinyl fences are discouraged.

### ***Removal or Significant Alteration of Mature Trees***

- The removal or significant alteration of mature street or front yard trees that are more than 15 inches in circumference at a height of 4 feet above grade will be considered if it has been determined by a professional arborist or other qualified professional that removal is necessary for safety reasons.

## VII. Procedure

- For any application that comes before the Planning Board that is located within the NHD boundaries, the Planning Board shall make a determination whether an application meets the requirements established under Section V *Actions to Review*.
- If an application has been determined to require a review, the Planning Board shall make a referral to the Neighborhood Advisory Committee.
- Upon receipt of the referral, the Neighborhood Advisory Committee must hold at least one duly-noticed public hearing within 30 days of receipt. Application and notification fees shall be the responsibility of the applicant.
- The Neighborhood Advisory Committee shall provide written comments to the Planning Board after the hearing; comments should explicitly reference those standards that apply to the application; Section VI *Standards for Review*.
- The Planning Board shall consider the recommendations of the Neighborhood Advisory Committee in making their decision. If the decision by the Planning Board is contrary to the recommendations of the Neighborhood Advisory Committee, the Board shall state the reasons for their decision. A written letter of decision shall be sent to the applicant and copied to the Neighborhood Advisory Committee.
- Any ambiguities to this ordinance shall make reference to the report by Elizabeth Hengen titled: Greenfield Village Neighborhood Heritage District (August 26, 2013)

### **Also add to Sec III of the Zoning Ordinance:**

**Paragraph 2-** *add Neighborhood Heritage District to this list of Special Districts Under “Notes” – add 3.* In 2014, the voters in the Town of Greenfield voted to create a new Special Purpose District called the Neighborhood Heritage District. When conflicts emerge between this district and other districts, the Neighborhood Heritage District regulations, or the stricter of the two, shall apply.