

Minutes of Comprehensive Planning Committee
Dec. 8, 2009, 7:30 pm
Copake Town Hall

Members present: Jeanne Mettler, Harvey Weber, Dan Haas, George Beneke, Marcia Becker, Bill Kiernan, Frank Peteroy, Charles Dodson.

Members Absent: Rus Davis

Members of Home Based Business: Patrick Doyle, Global Health Products; Frank Peteroy, architect; Leslie Wood, Leslie Wood Research; Roberta Roll, Health in Motion; Marcia Peteroy, Sunrise/Sunset B&B; Bob Sacks, publishing.

Ms. Mettler gave an overview of the comp. plan process and asked each business member to give a brief history and description of his/her business.

Ms. Wood said she has had two businesses, one with a partner; she went independent 12 years ago and has been in business for a total of 23 years. LWR is a consulting firm that designs ways of using data for the advertising industry. She designs analytics and builds metrics. There is a heavy focus on statistics, data mining and computers. She used to be focused on media, and now is more oriented toward understanding the effect of advertising and types of advertising. She has had 6 employees for 10 years and does not want to increase. She created Media Trust Co. 6 years ago and that could grow, with a potential for 10-15 more local jobs. She has 2 strong analytic computer employees. The others do "clean up" work - 2 1/2 in Copake, 1 in NYC, 1 in Monterey. About half her work is for Proctor & Gamble, the rest for Neilson, Arbitron, and other ad agencies, some in Japan. Mr. Dodson asked if she received grant money - answer was no. He asked why she was in Copake - answer is because she wants to be, the quality of life is good, her employees have great skills. Mr. Dodson asked if she has programmers - answer was yes.

Mr. Doyle said he went to the vision workshop and it made a lot of sense to him and pertained to his own challenges. He came here 4 years ago from Australia and produced a video in Tivoli. He likes this area as it is close to Albany and New York City - but not too close. He wanted to expand GHP, which makes specialized medical devices, but also wants to go into the cosmetic industry. His business is decentralized - he is all over the U.S. He has an office in Albuquerque, and in Copake he has one full-time employee to co-ordinate marketing and sales and one bookkeeper. He has a contract with Home Shopping. He needs a larger space; there was not much in Copake, so he looked in Hudson, where there is space, but not personnel. He does not need technical expertise, just desire, drive, enthusiasm. He inquired at TH but had no success. His medical devices, such as compression therapy devices, are sold through clinics and home health agencies, but he is trying to develop direct home sales. The devices are not commonly known, so they are difficult to home sell. The cosmetic devices, such as hair restoration, are subject to federal regulation. The challenges he faces in Copake are logistical - he said Fed-Ex and UPS pick-ups are not optimal. Mr. Dodson asked what is the size of the packages he sends - the answer was 12" x 12" and about 11 lbs. UPS is 1/2 the cost of US mail. Some of the devices are smaller and

can be sent via the P.O. His background is in understanding systems, not parts. This is hard to sell, but "once you are in, it's hard to sell against."

Mr. Peteroy is licensed in NYS to prepare architectural drawings. He said that until a few years ago, architects were persona non grata when it came to building; the builders made their own plans. After 9/11, people from NYC moved up here and brought their architects. He works alone, which gives him more flexibility. The business follows the economy, up and down. He worked also in NYC until last year. His background is in NYC building and zoning codes which are the toughest in the country except for CA. He does mostly residential but did a small insurance office in Chatham. Now the market is for additions. Banks are not giving "good" people loans and if they do, it is only for about 33%. AIA had a 20% cut in the office. Not many homes are being built; he has one job here now and the owners are struggling to obtain loans. Hands-on planning is very important to him; he can build what he draws. The trades have become more respectful of his profession, and good architects are still getting work in small towns. However, he has received phone calls from Philadelphia asking about work up here. He built his B&B in 1996-7 and had some problems with the boards and inspectors, but boards in general are getting more competent people. In NYS jobs over \$25,000 require architectural drawings. Mr. Dodson asked about computer generated design - Mr. Peteroy said he does not use it much and says he can do it by hand faster. Mr. Weber asked how the town could make his job easier. Mr. Peteroy said they are doing it now by having the building dept. ask for arch. drawings. The building inspectors have to take courses, and most towns are doing this now. He said architects are responsible for safety issues, wind, stability, etc. They discuss these things with the contractors. There is not much Copake can do to increase his business - it is a referral business. In regard to the idea of consolidation of services in area towns, he said he would not want to have to go to New Lebanon, for instance, to file forms.

Ms. Roll said she has been in business for a total of almost thirty years and in Copake since 1993. She is the sole proprietor and provides wellness services to adults and children with a broad range of problems, from pain, injury, stress, respiratory problems, M.S., digestive problems, musculoskeletal conditions, headaches, developmental delays, etc. She uses hands-on techniques; movement for alignment, strength and balance; breathing and body awareness. Hers is a referral business and her clients come from the Copake area, as well as from Millerton and Salisbury/Lakeville, CT. She also teaches yoga classes in Sharon, CT, Copake and Ancram.

Mr. Dodson then asked the members what the town could do to help them, and what it should not do. He asked specifically about computers.

Ms. Wood said that computer use is an issue. At the inception of DSL it was fast; now everyone is on and there has been no infrastructure change. Even at the highest level of service, it is getting worse and worse. Ms. Mettler asked what needs to be done.

Ms. Wood said we need broader bands access. Ms. Mettler asked who could improve this, and does FairPoint need competition? Ms. Wood said there should be competition; FairPoint could bring in more lines, but they are far away and there is no connection/commitment to the community. Mr. Doyle said this is a private industry problem. He spoke about Charter Communications as a possibility. He said the DSL problem is not in the central office, it's in the lines/cables. He suggested that Ms.

Wood's office is at the end of the line. She said no, the old Taconic Telephone office is. Mr. Doyle reiterated that Charter Comm. could be a possibility, but not another telephone company. Ms. Wood said that FairPoint should be pressured. We could invest in infrastructure. Ms. Mettler and Ms. Roll asked who is Charter Comm. - It is a cable TV co. Most companies provide the cable and TV bands together. We could get Charter Comm. to provide broadband over the existing cable. They can use coaxial cable. FairPoint uses twisted cable. Mr. Weber said this is a political issue and that the Fed and State gov't. should come in. Ms. Mettler asked if he meant the Fed. - he said yes. Mr. Dodson said we need broadband and this is a large concept. He asked if there were other things we needed. Ms. Wood said that occasionally large trucks and trucks with trailers come down the main street and take out the phone lines. Who is giving them permission to do this? Ms. Mettler asked how often this happened - answer was about twice a year. Ms. Wood said her electricity comes from Ancram. Mr. Haas asked about cell service. Ms. Wood said that since she refused an offer for a cell tower on her property, she does not complain. However, she does have a complaint about the phone co; if someone calls her on the trunk line, they get a message that she is out of service. The phone co. has been working on this, but can't seem to fix it. Her clients wonder where she is. She said Copake should have a higher standard and be like the rest of the country. She also commented that the town has been negligent about informing the citizens about stimulus money for tax incentives for developing businesses. She would like to know from Ken Flood whether this money is free and clear or if the town has to match the funds.

Mr. Beneke asked how many home-based businesses there are. Mr. Dodson replied, about 50. Mr. Beneke asked if they ever interact, directing his question to the members, and saying that in other focus groups we've seen the way that communication could facilitate networking and development. Ms. Mettler asked if this would be something like a Chamber of Commerce. She also asked Mr. Doyle if he was working out of his home. He said yes, but he needs to move to a commercial space and there is nothing here. Ms. Wood asked how much space he needed. He replied that he doesn't really know - perhaps 2,000 sq. ft. with specific storage and shipping requirements. There is nothing in Hillsdale either, and no amenities in either town. In Hudson, there are places to go out to lunch, etc. He has 20 people around the country; they use webinars. Ms. Mettler asked how many employees would he have at a local space. He replied, no more than 4, to process invoices, inventory and distribution. It is not light industry. Mr. Haas asked why the shipping is easier in Hudson. Mr. Doyle said UPS is there. Ms. Mettler asked what if there were space in Copake but he had to pay more. He replied that he would prefer to be in Copake. He thought about the store in Ancram but he would have to put \$100,000 into the building.

Ms. Roll said she wanted to refer back to the Chamber of Commerce idea. She has contemplated joining the Hudson and the Tri-State Chambers, but those populations are a little out of the way for Copake. She would like to see a Roe-Jan Chamber, perhaps including Hillsdale and Ancram. Ms. Wood said she joined Hudson's for the health insurance. She also said she would like to encourage Copake - that if a chamber included three towns, it might take away from Copake.

Ms. Peteroy said her business is in her home, it is her home. She said many guests grew up here but left because there was nothing to do. She belongs to the CC and

Southern Berkshire County Chambers of Commerce, which provide good advertising. She gets business from locals who need extra room for guests. Guests say they would like to see Copake cleaned up and have things to do, e.g. theatre. She says she would like people in town to recognize her as a business. Dad's Diner and the pharmacy do, but many others do not. She says she only requires one night's stay, but doesn't like to do that. Ms. Wood said there is a lot to do - TSP, walking tours, fall foliage, Rail Trail. Ms. Roll added the Audubon center. Mr. Peteroy said there is Dad's Diner and the Deli, but no real dining place. Mr. Doyle said there is not enough cash here. Ms. Wood said on the contrary, Key Bank in Copake is the fastest growing branch and they just redid the facade. Mr. Beneke said that the business owners need to get together and Copake doesn't encourage that. Ms. Peteroy said she does network at the gas station and other places. Mr. Weber said we have the Rail Trail but no bike trail. Ms. Wood said when the streets get redone, we will, but not on Center Hill Rd. Mr. Dodson brought up the role of town gov't., asking if a committee should perhaps take on the tasks that we have talked about. Mr. Beneke suggested the CEAB. Ms. Wood said that the town should recognize the value of all the different businesses here. Mr. Dodson asked if that would mean a written document. Ms. Wood said there is value of gov't understanding where the revenue comes from and what supports the businesses and the town. They know about manufacturing and building, but there are many businesses that are invisible that provide great value. Mr. Weber asked about the Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Becker said the Town could have a liason on the Chamber. Ms. Peteroy asked if she thought we'd have more clout.

Ms. Wood said that Dean Knox of DOT came to the CEAB to ask for an advisory committee to help design the area around from Rt. 22 to the clock to Center Hill Rd., taking into consideration sidewalks, curbs, lights, furniture, etc. She asked if the CPC would be interested in being a part of this. Mr. Beneke thought we should definitely be involved. Ms. Mettler asked when this committee would be set up. Ms. Wood said soon, and she thought that if a committee had been formed 2 years ago, the project might be underway now. She also thought the CPC needed to talk to the CEAB now, saying that both groups could benefit from each other sharing information.

Mr. Sacks came in from another meeting and gave a brief picture of his business, saying that over many years he has cobbled a successful career in publishing. He didn't think there was anything that the town could do further his business, however, he does need broadband. He has two companies, one of which is an international consulting firm. He uses Skype 1-3 times a week. He does analytical research for the publishing industry and publishes the world's oldest electronic newsletter (since 1988); he writes 50% and uses 50% from writers around the world. He doesn't need to have a connection to other businesses here but needs a pipeline to the world. He travels widely to lecture on publishing and the distribution of information and how people are going to read in the future. He is a journalist, writing about publishing and magazines. He travels out of Albany and said it would be nice to have a bus to the airport and the train. Mr. Weber asked how we could get broadband here. Mr. Sacks said he had been talking to Assemblyman Marc Molinaro, and also to Scott Murphy, Kirstin Gillebrand and Sen. Saland. We can't do anything locally. The pipes are adequate, but the graphics world can't do well here, as they use big high resolution files. His business is thriving, but it doesn't have much to do with Copake. Mr. Dodson asked how could Copake

help. Mr. Sacks said start a magazine. Mr. Dodson asked if it would be helpful to have a session on broadband to collect all the information we've heard discussed. It was mentioned that NYS has 2 million in stimulus money to collect data and 1/2 million to look into possibilities. He doesn't think all the information is known or the possibilities understood. Mr. Sacks said it has to be done on the county level and above. We can have a "think tank" here, but we need a link to the county. He had a meeting in Tagkhanic recently; there is no broadband there, so they will have no home-based businesses.

The group was thanked and the business portion of the meeting commenced.

Ms. Metter mentioned Ms. Wood's request to meet with the CEAB, as well as the idea of having a focus group on broadband. Ms. Roll said she thought our role was probably not to facilitate broadband, but we should emphasize that this is an important issue to pursue. The minutes of Oct. 26 were approved with an amendment to the discussion of posting the survey results at the Nov. 7 meeting. - "The group agreed to table the discussion until the Oct. 27 meeting."

Mr. Dodson gave an update on the survey, saying everything is online except the written answers to questions, which will take 7-10 days to complete. Ms. Mettler will put out an email to all residents saying the information will be available in Jan. but they can get the results by going to River Street's link.

Mr. Beneke said the map for Ag. is done; Ms. Becker gave him the map that shows all the open land and what it is being used for. He will call Harry Dodson and ask what narrative is needed. Ms. Mettler said she will ask Ms. Irwin if she needs further information. She also asked if Mr. Beneke, Mr. Kiernan, Mr. Dodson and Ms. Becker could come at 6:45 for the next meeting to talk with Harry Dodson. She has also got Ancram lined up for a meeting and has the name of the person in Hillside. She asked that we talk about the role of second home owners at the next meeting. She then brought up Ms. Wood's request that the CPC be involved in the design committee for the road project. She asked if we want to do this, or make recommendations to the town board, or meet with the design committee when it is formed. Mr. Dodson thought we should not be a part of the committee. Mr. Beneke said it will be an important part of the future planning for Copake. Ms. Roll agreed. Mr. Peteroy said that he has been attending the Around the Clock meetings and they are moving along. He is providing maps and they are trying to make things happen quickly. We have to be connected. Ms. Mettler said that it is Dean Knox for whom Ms. Wood is talking about forming a committee. Ms. Roll said yes, with DOT. Mr. Peteroy said at the last ATC meeting, they had small focus group discussions. Ms. Mettler said we need to be involved, but how detailed do we need to be? Our plan will be done by next summer. Mr. Beneke said some of that will be the town center planning by H. Dodson. Mr. Dodson said he has attended 4 CEAB meetings and the town should have the opportunity to redesign the entrance to town. Mr. Weber said that the bridge and dam on Rt. 7A will be redesigned; Taconic Shores should have a representative and so should we. After some more discussion, it was decided that Ms. Mettler would tell the CEAB that although we are interested in a dialogue with the CEAB and the road committee, we are not inclined to sign onto a letter to the town board about the road design. We also decided that we did not need to send a letter to the board saying we support a committee for the roads and we will be in communication with them.

New Business - Mr. Weber said he has been asked to write a paragraph about the environment committee for the CC Environmental Management Committee.

The next meeting will be on Dec. 17.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting, seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:50.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Roll