

Minutes of the Comprehensive Planning Committee
Jan. 21, 2010 7:00pm
Copake Town Hall

Members Present: Jeanne Mettler, Roberta Roll, Dan Haas, Harvey Weber, George Beneke, Rus Davis, Frank Peteroy

Members Absent: Bill Kiernan

Member of the Police Dept. Focus Group: Robert Lopez

Members of the Young People Focus Group: Lilly Becker, Johanna Becker, Adam Reznikoff

Ms. Mettler began the meeting by asking for introductions and then gave an overview of the comp. plan process and our work thus far. We first talked with Mr. Lopez about the police dept. He told us there are currently 8 part-time officers; there are on average, 10-15, occasionally up to 18. He has been with the dept. for 20 yrs. Their mission is to protect life and property, to enforce laws, and prevent and deter crime. He said Copake is changing. The dept. does community outreach, assisting the EMS and fire dept., e.g. the fire at the Miller farm recently. They provide a function at large community events, such as Copake Community Day, the 50's block party, TH athletic games and Pow Wow, and Halloween, as well as funeral details. They patrol during storms and power outage alerts. He said they need the cooperation of residents and the town board. He has a concern for their existence in the future. Strengthening ties to the community will help, but they need funding. 15-20 years down the road, it's hard to say where Copake is headed. They do have a problem with losing officers to full-time positions elsewhere.

Mr. Dodson asked what the shift schedule is. Mr. Lopez said the dept. has eight 8-hour shifts a week, which they vary based on call volume. They can occur any day, but they always cover weekends. He didn't want to say the exact days..."for us to deter crime, we have to keep people on edge." Ms. Mettler asked about the volume of arrests. Mr. Lopez said there are 58-150 per year - this includes vehicle, traffic and other criminal arrests. Ms. Mettler asked if this included speeding - answer was no, only criminal. DWI would be an example. Ms. Mettler asked if he could break down the arrests into categories and Mr. Dodson asked where he gets the figures. Mr. Lopez said he didn't have the breakdown. Some of the crime data is on the NYS VCR website. The town police report does not show it, and town law arrests don't show up on the website; that information is only in "our" data. Ms. Mettler asked how many investigations or incidents there are per year. Mr. Lopez said he would have to look that up - probably 250. Mr. Dodson asked if that is what is called criminal complaints in the report. Mr. Lopez asked what data he wanted. Mr. Dodson said he was interested in the trends over the past 5-6 years - what types of investigations there are. Ms. Mettler asked if the 58-150 was for Copake only - answer was yes. Ms. Becker asked if he had been hearing talk of consolidation. He said yes, for the past 8 months or so, especially in the area of grant application. Ms. Becker noted that Ancram and Hillsdale don't have town police. Mr. Beneke said that Ancram has an arrangement. Mr. Lopez said they have a satellite station from the county sheriff.

Ms. Mettler asked what the officers do when they are not on the job. Mr. Lopez said that he is the dept. director, another is a county corrections officer, one works for Berkshire Farms, another is in insurance, one in a family business, another is an auto mechanic. Ms. Mettler asked what happens when one starts investigating an incident and then he is off duty. Mr. Lopez replied that the officer would be allowed to come in and keep working if it is a "hot" investigation. Mr. Peteroy asked how he deals with untrained officers. Mr. Lopez said they have on-the-job training. Mr. Peteroy asked for how long - answer was six months. Mr. Peteroy asked if the state requires training and accreditation. Mr. Lopez replied that the officers attend the Police Academy, then have on-the-job training. Copake police dept. requires 21 hrs. in-service training annually. Ms. Mettler came back to Mr. Lopez's comment in the beginning, asking how he thinks Copake has changed. He recounted how when the Copake Inn (the "zoo") was operating, there were fights every night. Now the bar scene is quiet and activity around the clock has subsided. Ms. Mettler said she thought he would have said the opposite; aren't there drugs now? Mr. Lopez replied that drugs are always here and Rt. 22 is a big transit route.

Mr. Davis asked what the police force needs from the town. Mr. Lopez said a budget that will allow them to replace aging equipment; in three years one vehicle will need replacement. They are always looking for grants. Last year they got a computer with grant monies. Mr. Davis asked who makes the budget. Mr. Lopez does. Mr. Dodson asked for details, citing a \$120-130,000 figure he'd seen. Mr. Lopez said it is less. Mr. Dodson asked how much he thought he would need in 15-20 yrs. - answer was \$140,000. He said last year's budget was cut to \$90,000, this year's is \$102,000. Mr. Davis asked if there was a capital expenditures fund. Mr. Lopez said it gets cut every year. Mr. Peteroy asked if there was a canine division. Mr. Lopez said there is on the state and county level. Mr. Dodson asked about communications. Mr. Lopez stated that communications is with the county; they have a 3-phase system which is hooked into the CC sheriff's office. The FCC is mandating narrow band by 2013. It is a concern now, but most of the radios are up to date. Mr. Peteroy asked what is the purpose of narrow band. Mr. Lopez said it will get more people on the same band. It doesn't really affect the police dept. although they will have to relicense. EMS and fire dept. have a problem, as they have low band. 750 megahertz or higher is high band. Copake has a base radio at Austerlitz. The fire dept. has a higher budget for conversion than EMS. Mr. Dodson asked about dead zones and transmission towers. Mr. Lopez said there is only one, near the NYSEG power station in Craryville.

Mr. Davis asked how many vehicles they had and how long was the lifespan - answer was 5 cars, about 5 years. Mr. Davis asked how much would be needed in the capital expenditures fund. Mr. Lopez responded that they have been submitting \$2,500-5,000 per year. In about 2-3 years they will need to replace a car. Mr. Davis asked how much mileage is put on a car per year - answer was about 15,000. Mr. Peteroy asked if a hybrid car would help. Mr. Lopez said he thought that a hybrid had to use gas above 50 mph. Ms. Roll said she thought it might be 40 mph. Mr. Dodson asked if the building was adequate. Mr. Lopez said they rent from EMS and it is adequate now. He said they upgrade computers every 4-5 years, and they do face a hurdle which is that the DCJS [Division of Criminal Justice Services] wants electronic submissions for reports, fingerprints and arrests, which are done with a video camera with lighted display. Ms.

Mettler asked if the county has electronic fingerprinting - answer was yes, one machine. She then asked Mr. Lopez to discuss the issue of need - if there are state and county agencies, why do we need our own police dept.? Mr. Lopez said that they can offer services others can't. They work in Copake 64 hours a week. When the sheriff works this zone, they may only be here once a week, being in other towns the rest of the time. Copake PD knows where to look, whom to talk to. They cost less than the sheriff or state police. Mr. Weber offered that according to research by Mr. Danny Thompkins, the state troopers have barracks close to the river, the western part of the state, and not much presence in the eastern part. There is only one person in Ancram, so where would we go for services? Ms. Mettler asked about the cost difference. Mr. Lopez said the town police are \$13-14, the sheriff's officers are \$30. Ms. Mettler asked if Hillsdale pays the sheriff's office for their patrols. Mr. Lopez replied that when the sheriff and state put a car in the zone they cover several towns on any one day, e.g. from Ancram to New Lebanon. Copake has the ability to put a car on during the busy times. The differential in cost would be seen for the special details at the community events he referred to earlier. Ms. Roll asked what the arrangement was in Ancram. Mr. Lopez said a sheriff's officer works in an office in the town hall; he has a key to Hillsdale's town hall, as well. Mr. Dodson asked if Copake PD works with other agencies - answer was yes, with TSP police, sheriff, county, state. He cited the case of a robbery at Catamount a few years ago.

Mr. Dodson asked about computers and training. Mr. Lopez said the DCJS supplies software and training, equipment they must pay for. Mr. Weber asked if many members get training here and then leave for jobs in other counties. Mr. Lopez said yes, they go to NYC, Hudson, NYS, Sheriff. Copake PD is often the grounds for training, a big factor being that some agencies don't allow part-time officers. Mr. Dodson asked what could be done to decrease turnover if the dept. and budget grow. Mr. Lopez said that [lack of]pay and status drive people away. Chatham has full and part-time officers. The full-time officers get 1/3 less pay than the sheriff's office. Mr. Dodson noted that the town code provides for deductions for some Copake residents in town service and did this help? Mr. Lopez said no, as many officers don't live in Copake. Ms. Mettler asked which towns have their own PD's. Mr. Lopez answered, Germantown, Stockport, Philmont, Copake, Greenport and Hudson. Mr. Reznikoff asked if they were aware of all grant opportunities. Mr. Lopez said he does the grants and is "up" on all county grants. Ms. Mettler asked if we could get a record of all the calls and incidents. Mr. Beneke asked if we could get the information from the town, if they are filed there. Mr. Lopez said they are but he didn't know what the town did with them. He asked how far back we wanted them. We thought 5 years would be adequate. Ms. Becker asked if he had heard about the results of the survey regarding the Copake PD. Mr. Lopez said he had heard support of about 50%. Ms. Becker commented that it was good support. Mr. Lopez said he'd like to see it a lot higher. He asked when the comp. plan would be completed. We expressed our hopes of having it done by spring, although it could be summer or fall!

Mr. Lopez was thanked and we continued the meeting with the "youth" focus group. Ms. Becker said she spoke with four young people who said they would attend. Her daughters (Lilly and Johanna) told her that we should hold this group in the summer when everyone is around. She said she didn't know how to get in touch with young

families. Mr. Dodson said he contacted six people who said they would make contacts with young persons. He noted that the survey did not yield much response from young people and we were having the same situation here. Mr. Beneke said we should learn from our past focus groups that often the smallest ones have been the best. Ms. Becker suggested that we proceed and start with the three questions that were put forth at the vision workshop: What do you like best about Copake, what do you like the least and how would you like to change things? Johanna began by saying that she liked the police force and the sports facilities at TH, but would like more access to the latter. She would like a Pilates class there as well. She said she is 22, graduated college in Wash. DC in May, and is working part-time in Copake. Lilly said she is 26 and runs a horse farm which is growing so much that she has to hire help. She likes the community center, but there is nothing going on for her age group. She thinks it should be used more, but also likes it quiet and wouldn't like it to become crowded. She said if she lived in NYC, she'd like to have a house here; she likes the people. Mr. Reznikoff said he likes Copake because it is peaceful, quiet, friendly, the air is clean. He grew up in Long Island and this is therapy. Mr. Beneke commented that one could see the stars here. Mr. Weber commented on the difference in traffic. Mr. Reznikoff said that he works at home and then he needs to get out; we are 1/2 hour away from Hudson and Great Barrington which is doable. He would like to have more events here, places to gather. He knows there is a website and that events are listed in the Copake Chronicle, but he doesn't think about it and doesn't think that there are things going on. He would like an email about events and someone who could gather all the information. He would love to know about the horse farm. He thought the weekenders probably do not know about everything going on here either and assumes that people want more going on. The information should be pushed out more. Ms. Mettler asked what kinds of activities do the younger people want and what kinds of places to gather. Lilly said sports and fitness, commenting that people her age are more fit and want to stay that way. A soccer team would be fun. Mr. Weber said that the Berkshires and Hudson have a magazine that lists what is happening. Mr. Reznikoff said he heard there had been a music performance at a church in Copake Falls [St. John in the Wilderness], but "no one knew about it." Johanna said even if she hears about things, she might think that it's not for young people. Mr. Weber said there are many events flyers posted in the pharmacy. Johanna said people her age use websites, email, blogs - they are better ways to get out the information. Ms. Roll asked how would people get her email. Johanna said Facebook; also maybe a Copake blog would work. Mr. Reznikoff suggested that an email list sign-up be started at the post office. If there was more going on in town, people would come in more often and get to know about things. He said the ice cream window at Dad's Diner is the place to hang out in the summer. Also the laundromat - they did a great job just by painting it and having magazines there. Now people are more likely to want to gather there. He thought the ATC group was doing good things, he likes the community center and the park. He would like to go out and watch baseball. The skating rink is great; why not have a hockey team and different clubs, e.g. for rock climbing. Mr. Weber said that all the athletic games are open to the public. Lilly interjected: but it's at the school. She asked why we don't have a league; every other town has a baseball league or some other team. There were comments from all three that it doesn't even matter if the teams or groups are good -

it's having fun that matters. Mr. Beneke told about the Chamber of Commerce in Chincoteague. He received an email from them about all the walking trails. Although it's a tourist town, we could learn from them. Mr. Reznikoff said he would love to see the town become more involved with the school. He lived in a town where mentoring programs were set up at the local school to both train kids and help with the restoration of buildings in town. He said we have an opportunity to teach kids things they can't learn in school and to involve them in decisions and the development of the town. Ms. Mettler asked Lilly and Johanna if they went to TH and if their friends were still living here. They said they went to TH through the 8th grade and that most of their friends had left as they had no work and no affordable place to live.

Mr. Reznikoff spoke about the ease of having home-based businesses, citing media and marketing as examples. He thought if a few weekenders were interested in setting up mentoring programs, then young people might stay around. He commented that only a few people would take the step to open a business in a deserted building. Mr. Haas asked what brought him to Copake. Mr. Reznikoff said his parents were in Chatham, he wanted to be closer to them, and Copake was the place he could afford a home.

Ms. Peteroy (in audience) said that there is no place for people to meet. She noted Officer Lopez's comment that the "zoo" had fights - but at least it was someplace to go. Ms. Mettler asked the young members where they go for fun. Lilly said the T.I. [Taconic Wayside Inn]. She said if you are with guy friends, they want to go there because there are girls there. It's full and fun in the summer. She did not know if it was open in the winter -(it is). Ms. Mettler said: so you need a bar? Lilly said: someplace to go on Sat. with regular hours that has music, maybe a local band. Ms. Peteroy said there is live music and dancing at the Mt. Washington House and the T.I. But there are no internet cafes. Johanna said that in Wash. DC every Sun. afternoon there was a street closed to traffic where people could sell food and other things; it was a place to shop and socialize. A comment was made that there are movies being shown at the Copake park building the first Friday of every month. Johanna and Lilly said they didn't know about this. Ms. Roll brought up again the question of how we get communication going. Johanna spoke about the following ideas: a place for pizza and beer, sports games, music and dancing, high energy activities, New Year's tradition, St. Patrick's Day celebration, charity baseball event - young people want that kind of thing for a resume. Lilly said she has students at the farm who have to do community service to make the honor society. Mr. Weber said we need to have an apprenticeship program and pay them. Lilly said the kids want to do it. Mr. Reznikoff asked if it would be better to set up a program at TH or in the larger community. Mr. Weber said in the school; there are 1400 kids. He will try it again. There was discussion of setting up a career day, having adults in the community get involved, and Lilly said she would volunteer. Ms. Roll mentioned that there is a career day every year at Columbia Greene put on by TH. Lilly said it is far away and parents work. Mr. Dodson said he has tried to establish classes in Copake. Everyone seems enthusiastic, but the problem is economics of location. There needs to be a facility where one can teach and then leave. Johanna asked how one goes about organizing something in Copake. Lilly said she wants to set up a riding team; she looked on the website but found no help there. It was suggested that she contact Lisa deRocha with the parks commission. Mr. Davis suggested that we are

going about contacting the younger generation with “old” thinking and technologies. We need to use email and more web-based communications. It was suggested that Copake needs an I.T. person.

Mr. Reznikoff said people under 30 need to get together, and said he would be willing to work with the park and town to create a career day. Ms. Mettler asked for clarification on whether young people need career help; she had been hearing that what they really need is social events. Mr. Reznikoff replied that a way to get people together is through a job fair - it's an event, people gather for the day, you have a movie at night. Mr. Dodson suggested that there be a table at the next Copake Comm. Day with information about upcoming events. Johanna suggested that there be more frequent events like CCD, only smaller. Mr. Reznikoff cited the Irish Day in Long Beach, NY - streets are closed down, there is a lot of drinking, but there is much pride in the town. Also, there is a superbowl Sunday celebration and a polar bear club. This has grown into a big fundraiser for Make-A-Wish foundation. We could use Robinson pond and pick a charity. Get the community to work together on a project.

Johanna said she would like to see public transportation to Hudson, Great Barrington and Wassaic. She was told there are plans underway. Mr. Reznikoff said the focus group idea is brilliant and it should continue. There was a question of whether the survey was distributed electronically - (no). We decided that we should be using Facebook more.

The young people were thanked and the business portion of the meeting commenced. We all agreed that communication and community were the outstanding themes, a continuing thread in our focus groups.

Mr. Davis asked what we have lost here; in 25 years, not just the physical, but the emotional and human community has fallen apart. Communication can restore the community. Ms. Becker said she liked the idea of reaching young people through apprenticeship. Ms. Mettler said that when she was young, everyone went to one [their community] school. Now there is a central school and she wondered what effect that has. Mr. Beneke noted that there used to be 2 schools, now 1; it is more unified. Mr. Davis said the community has shifted away from the towns toward TH. We've lost part of our identity to the school. He also said Copake lags behind not only in ways of communicating, but also in relation to the rest of the country; he cited products that have been popular for months before Copake residents notice or get to know them. His vision is that the entire comp. plan has to teach the community how to rebuild community. Ms. Mettler asked him if he was involved in the school when his children went there. He said yes and he still is, coaching soccer. Ms. Peteroy remembered when her kids were here in the summer at the camps and at the ore bed, the population was 1/3 local, 1/3/ weekender, 1/3 campers. The only choices of career presented for schoolchildren were police, teacher, or nurse. Mr. Beneke thought that in looking at the Community Profile, the most significant figure is the decline in school pop. However, if we can build communication, this will lead to a stronger sense of community and a lot of things will happen. He recounted a project in Iowa, where some parents decided they wanted the best school for their children. They established their own academy and had to work together. He thought that Copake residents are generally not working together, but the kids here tonight have similar desires. Mr. Davis told of the annual Christmas tree lighting - in the first year they had 26 trees; at the end of the season, less than

10% of the lightbulbs remained. When they started the \$20 adopt-a-tree program (and each tree got a tag), the lights stayed there. There is a sense of ownership and community. Ms. Mettler recalled when the pastor Bob Charnin from the W. Copake Reformed Church was here, he spoke about the lack of moral fiber. Mr. Davis said he spoke of the community breaking down. Mr. Beneke commented that his previous church had been in the midwest, Michigan, where the whole town would get out sleighriding. They are very self-reliant; FEMA doesn't bail them out in a snowstorm, the citizens pitch in. Ms. Mettler commented on how people in this town do come together when there is a tragedy. Mr. Davis wondered if people have seen the vast number of cars in Copake on Wednesday night at the Methodist Church for the AA meetings. Why is there so much alcohol abuse in this community?

Moving on, Mr. Haas said he would do the minutes from the last meeting when he can. Ms. Mettler received, and will forward, a message from M. Irwin about her work on grant applications to Ag & Markets and the NYS Office of Community Strategic Planning and Technical Assistance. Our email list totals 250-260 names. She has communicated with Leslie Strom of EAB and ATC and we will meet with EAB on March 18. Next time we will review the Community Profile, and she will send out the reports from the focus groups. Mr. Beneke offered to have us send him an e-list of our contacts in Copake to expand the mailing list.

Our next meetings will be Feb. 9, Feb. 18 - with M. Irwin, Mar. 9, Mar 18, Mar. 30. Ms. Becker wanted more information about the data we heard about farms increasing in MA. We can get that; Mr. Beneke said that is a special situation (as noted in our meeting with the ag. focus group).

Ms. Becker made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Weber seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Roll