

Minutes of the Comprehensive Planning Committee
April 13th, 2010 7:30pm
Copake Town Hall

Members Present: Bill Kiernan, Harvey Weber, Marcia Becker, Roberta Roll, Frank Peteroy, Charles Dodson, Jeanne Mettler, George Beneke
Members Absent: Rus Davis, Dan Haas
Member of River Street: Margaret Irwin

Ms. Mettler said she had spoken to Mr. Haas about the Jan. minutes and hoped he would stay on the committee. Ms. Roll said she would speak to him about his intentions.

The minutes from the March 18th meeting were approved.

Ms. Mettler reported that she had spoken at the Town Board meeting, requesting a resolution from the board for the Ag. & Markets grant application. (Many of the CPC members were also at the meeting). The board responded favorably.

Mr. Dodson reported that the grants subcommittee met after the Board meeting. The first draft of the Greenway proposal is done. He asked Supervisor Crowley to consider a resolution before the next Board meeting in order to make our May 1 deadline; Mr. Crowley agreed. Mr. Dodson is in the process of writing the application to Rheinstrom Hill. They require only a 1-2 page letter, recommending one. During the grants committee meeting, it was decided that we should apply for funds for planning and wait to apply for zoning revision funds. Ms. Becker asked if the Board could pass a resolution without a town public hearing and notices. Answer is yes. Dr. Beneke asked what the Rheinstrom Hill grant application is for. Ms. Mettler said planning. Mr. Dodson said we will do the implementation and zoning later. Dr. Beneke cautioned us that we may not be able to reapply soon to Rheinstrom Hill for further funds. He spoke about the history of the fund, saying they have been very generous to the community, but he did not know how their investments were doing. Mr. Dodson said the family who funds it awards 1/2 of their income to Audubon and 1/2 to Rheinstrom Hill. Ms. Mettler asked Dr. Beneke if he thought we would not get money again. Ms. Irwin said then perhaps we should not ask for a low amount. Dr. Beneke asked about the Hudson River Foundation as a source of funds. Mr. Dodson said he thought it was subsumed into First Niagara. Ms. Irwin asked how much we were applying for. She said there is \$25,000 left on our River Street account. She expressed concern that if we apply to Rheinstrom, we will run out of time before we get the money, and she suggested that we ask for some zoning funds. Mr. Dodson said that Greenway said we should apply for planning funds first. Ms. Mettler suggested we add an amount for zoning in our application to Rheinstrom. Mr. Dodson said he already had a draft written for that purpose. Dr. Beneke asked how much we had to match for Ag. & Markets. Ms. Irwin said the Board only has to commit about \$1,600, which can be fulfilled through in-kind donations. Dr. Beneke asked about funds for revitalizing downtown Copake. Ms. Irwin said that is the next step and that we need to hold onto the money that is committed. Ms. Mettler told her that we had asked the CEAB if they were going to apply for grants and they had said no. Dr. Beneke suggested that if we applied to Rheinstrom with a concrete project like downtown revitalization, we might be more likely to get funds. He also said that the

Town gov't. should be obtaining funds. Ms. Irwin agreed, saying that's why it's hard to find zoning funds. Mr. Dodson said that each year Rheinstrom gives to Taconic Hills School and soup kitchens, leaving about 25-50K for other groups, including gov't groups for zoning. Ms. Irwin said that zoning, which deals with commercial, residential, housing, ag. etc., is the next essential step. We could ask for funds for an economic plan and zoning revisions to implement it. The question was raised as to whether it was too much to add in a request for zoning funds. Mr. Dodson said another question is how much we need to raise for planning. Ms. Roll asked how much we originally told the Board we would raise. Ms. Mettler stated that we said we would raise \$15,000 for 2010. The Board is giving us \$20,000 and they commissioned us to raise \$10,000. Ms. Roll asked if we might apply to Rheinstrom then for \$10,00 for planning and \$5,000 for zoning. Ms. Irwin said our narrative could include statements of support for farmers and hamlet revitalization, closing with a line about being willing to reduce the scope of work dependent on resources. Ms. Becker asked about the timeline for the Ag. & Markets grant. Ms. Irwin said we will be into zoning by then, as we will have to wait about 18 months for the funds. Mr. Dodson said that if we don't receive funds from Greenway now (they award in June), we can reapply in Sept. Some more discussion was had on how much to ask for and we agreed on \$10,000 for planning and \$10,000 for zoning from Rheinstrom. Dr. Beneke brought up the fact that he knows a key member of the board of Rheinstrom. Ms. Mettler suggested that we put all our names on the application.

Ms. Mettler then handed the meeting over to Ms. Irwin, who turned the discussion to the steps remaining in our planning process. She distributed a list of tasks and noted that there were 6 meetings remaining with River Street. She also said that their fee was not dependent on time; we could have extra meetings if needed. We have enough money in the budget, but originally, to pare down the budget, the expense of the SEQRA was eliminated. We need to figure out a way to fund this. She also said that she couldn't figure out a way to complete the whole process by Dec., so we will take two or three more months. We looked at the list of tasks, which include the vision statement, implementation actions, public workshops, draft implementation matrix, the public hearing process, planning board review, county review, Ag. & Markets review and Town Board approval. The SEQRA costs about \$150 and is a long form negative declaration; it is fairly simple and we may be able to do it ourselves. We should submit the plan draft to the county 2 weeks to 10 days before their meeting. Submit to Ag. & Markets 6 weeks to one month before a meeting. Ms. Becker commented that it might take 3 months to get necessary approvals from all the boards. Ms. Irwin said yes, but the Town Board can accept the SEQRA and adopt the plan on the same night. Ms. Irwin then explained the action planning process, which is a meeting/workshop for the public. We will display the vision statement and the goals, which should be as few as possible - no more than five or six is optimal. At each table, we will display one goal. Groups of people will be assigned to each table to brainstorm action ideas. They will look at ideas that we have written down and add their own, prioritizing them as well. The groups will rotate to all tables. Through this process we will get an idea if we are on the right track. Then we meet and decide what is doable and realistic in the comp. plan. Dr. Beneke asked what would happen if there were a limited number of people who showed up and set different priorities from what occurred in the vision workshop

and survey. Ms. Irwin replied that we would then look at the comments and figure out why. We will use our expertise in filtering the information and deciding what is applicable to the comp. plan. Mr. Dodson asked if, considering we are 50/50 full time, part time

residents, we should have one meeting on the weekend. Ms. Irwin said yes, and if we need another one, we can do it. She said we will need a much larger space than the Town Hall. the park building was suggested, as well as the cafeteria at TH. Ms. Irwin said that it needs to be an open space so people can move around the tables. She then went on to say that we are on budget, except for the SEQRA. Mr. Dodson suggested he could put that in the grant application to Rheinstrom. Ms. Irwin then spoke about the adoption process, saying usually there are no more revisions by the time it gets to the Town Board. There is an adoption hearing, a vote, and then the plan is finalized by physically putting it together. The action plan will be bound separately. Mr. Dodson noted that in his experience, when comp. plans are presented to town boards in this area, 50% don't get passed because people say the zoning has to be done first. Ms. Irwin said that is patently untrue, despite what some local attorneys may say. We should talk to the Town Board about this well before the plan gets to them. She suggested we ask for a work session with the Town Board to discuss the plan, saying we need to stay in touch with them. She also said we should talk to the town attorney. Ms. Roll said that several plans in this area had been stalled by the town boards. Ms. Irwin said that she has never had a plan not adopted. She had one stumble recently, which was political, and now they are getting back on track. She said if we feel there is a big issue, sometimes it is better to compromise, to have a plan that is 95% rather than no plan. Some plans fail to pass because people get stubborn.

Dr. Beneke asked Ms. Irwin to explain the Draft Implementation Matrix. Ms. Irwin replied that it charts all the actions, funding implementation, narrative of plan and implementation. She also suggested that we move this to August. Ms. Mettler asked her if we should be reviewing the entire zoning ordinance, as well as the rest of the town code. Ms. Irwin said emphatically, no. The comp. plan should not make zoning recommendations; the zoning process/committee will do that. We will deal with general concepts, e.g. uncontrolled development and hamlet revitalization. She said if River Street did the zoning review, they would pull out all the pieces in the town code that relate to zoning, such as the land use chapters. It is usually too expensive to redo the whole code. Mr. Dodson asked if we would make recommendations in the plan to redo the whole code, as there are conflicting guidelines regarding junkyards, flood overlay zones, etc. Ms. Irwin said she would bring all that into zoning. Mr. Dodson said he would still like to see the whole town code redone. Ms. Roll expressed some concern about the timing of the public hearings; if this happened in winter, not many weekenders might be here. Ms. Irwin pointed out that the input of the second home owners would be in late summer and fall during the action plan workshop; since most of the work will have been done, the hearings are more of a formality. Mr. Beneke was worried that we would not be able to pull all the information together in 3-4 months. Ms. Irwin said she had complete confidence in us and that we should be confident in ourselves as we move into the goals and action planning. Ms. Mettler said we have to do it, otherwise we will lose all credibility. Ms. Irwin said she would send out the Greenville Action Implementation Matrix to us. Ms. Roll said that would be helpful to

see the breakdown of tasks. Mr. Peteroy said that since we have info. on wetlands, farming and water, why shouldn't we be definitive in our vision statement - e.g. say that we shouldn't develop a small business park in a certain area. Ms. Irwin replied that, first of all, a vision statement should not have a "shouldn't" in it. The vision is of what the community will look like in 15-20 years. The plan includes the goals and the actions, as well as the vision statement. She reminded us of the vision statements she had sent to us and asked if we had thought about the type of vision statement we wanted in terms of tone, length and style. There was some discussion and she recommended short-medium in length and fairly inspirational, which is generally what we agreed on. Ms. Mettler said that we had had some discussion of whether it was useful to do the vision statement at this time. Ms. Irwin replied definitively, yes. Ms. Becker noted that we need to synthesize the information from the survey - it is not our own vision. Ms. Irwin affirmed this. Dr. Beneke referred to Ms. Mettler's sample vision statement, saying that the line about Copake staying as it is might indicate that we want nothing to be done about downtown, etc. He also noted the ideas of community and communication being important. Ms. Irwin then gave us an exercise to help us start the vision statement process - we wrote one or two words expressing the most important visions on each of five post-it notes. From these we created categories: safety, working farms, healthy environment, public access, community, scenic beauty, open space, communication, hamlet revival., business and services. She noted that public access is more of an action plan.

We agreed that this was a very helpful exercise.

Ms. Mettler then said that our next meetings are April 29th, May 11th, and 20th. She noted that our next step seems to be to create our vision statement. Ms. Roll suggested that we each write a vision statement. Ms. Mettler asked if we could all do this by April 23rd, and she would send them around via email. We agreed, and Ms. Irwin suggested that as people speak them at the next meeting, we write down key phrases. She then gave us copies of the Mission Elements notes from Feb. 12, 2009.

Ms. Mettler said she had received a message from Marilyn Burch asking about the property owned and for sale by Housing Resources and if we had any recommendations. Mr.

Peteroy said she wants to know about density. Ms. Becker said we have cluster zoning regulations. There were comments made that we should probably not get involved.

Ms. Irwin said we should say nothing about it, but could suggest that she go to the website to look at the survey. Dr. Beneke said that it would be great for Copake to have that land, especially as there are water and sewage concerns for the town. Mr. Kiernan said that the existing wells, which give 100 gallons per minute, could supply the whole town. Mr. Weber said he has heard many comments from people who want the town to have that land, and also that there is a group that wants to buy it for ag. Mr. Peteroy showed us three maps from the ATC regarding the hamlets plan, including entrances and parking.

Ms. Mettler made a motion to adjourn, Dr. Beneke seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Roll