

Minutes of the Comprehensive Planning Committee
May 20, 2010 7:00 pm
Copake Town Hall

Members Present: Jeanne Mettler, Marcia Becker, Charles Dodson, George Beneke, Bill Kiernan, Frank Peteroy, Dan Haas, Roberta Roll, Harvey Weber, Rus Davis

The minutes from April 29th were approved.

Mr. Dodson gave an update on the grant applications. Both have been received. We ended up applying for \$6,500 because of how the budget was outlined - it included money already granted and spent. Ms. Mettler said that Sen. Saland and Assemblyman Molinaro have sent letters in support of the Ag. & Markets grant application. Mr. Dodson discussed future grant possibilities and the fact that we need to prioritize what we do and apply for, as well as coordinate with other organizations, such as Friends of Taconic State Park. There is money available from the NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, but it is difficult to obtain funds when several proposals are submitted. He received a note from Margaret Irwin about applying to that office for funds to purchase the land owned by Housing Resources. This requires a grants committee on behalf of the Town Board. Ms. Mettler said perhaps this would come under our action plan. The deadline for NYSPRHP is early July. If the town is interested, they need to act now. Ms. Becker wondered if we could make a request of the Town Board to find out who is applying for what funds. Mr. Dodson said the CEAB used to have a committee for this. Mr. Haas asked what the Friends of TSP is applying for and said that the Town could apply for funds for the Rail Trail. Mr. Peteroy said the CEAB could create a plan for grants. Ms. Mettler asked if the town is aware of the July 12th deadline. Mr. Dodson said no, and that there is not a good sense of what the town's needs are. Ms. Mettler said that the town needs to determine if they want to apply. Mr. Dodson said they will only get funds from NYSPRHP if they want the land for a park. Dr. Beneke asked if that office bought the Odyssey Farm land. Mr. Dodson replied that they bought it because they wanted it for the Rail Trail and Hillsdale wanted it for a park and ballfield. Mr. Haas said Jim Sponsable was responsible for that. He said the State now owns almost all the Rail Trail between Copake Falls and Hillsdale. Mr. Peteroy said Copake claimed they didn't know about the purchase of the park. Mr. Haas said that the CRC is a group that could go after the Housing Resources land for conservation. Ms. Mettler questioned whether it should be the CPC who determines the fate of that land. Ms. Becker said it is a short-term decision - the land is for sale. Ms. Roll said it is part of our task to see what can be developed and what should be saved as open space. Mr. Dodson said the Town owns 10-12 acres; he put out the question of how they should buy, sell and manage land they own. Mr. Beneke said it is the CPC which translates the public's wishes as to what should happen in the town. He also said that we are not going to get a communications tower except on public land. Mr. Dodson said it would be easy to compile what land the Town owns and the value. Mr. Weber said we need to consider water availability. Ms. Mettler said it seemed we have three issues - 1. grants to NYSPRHP - if there are too many applications it weakens our position. 2. July 12 is grant deadline - should we inform the Town. 3. Should CPC be

making recommendation? Mr. Peteroy asked what Friends of TSP is applying for. Mr. Dodson replied that the Ironworks is on their agenda but they haven't applied yet. He said the only three historic sites in Copake are the Methodist Church and cemetery, the Grange, and the Ironworks. Funds have also been requested from this office for the Park building expansion. He said Ms. Irwin knows people at NYSPRHP and she did work for Housing Resources at one point. We might be able to negotiate a lower price. Dr. Beneke said he thought that they spent \$2.4 million for Odyssey. Mr. Dodson proposed mentioning the matter to the Board as a private citizen. Ms. Roll suggested that we could as a committee recommend that the Board keep track of grant possibilities and applications. Mr. Peteroy said that Linda Gabaccia made a presentation about the proposed park building expansion, saying that \$400,000 was available. Mr. Weber mentioned three items - 1. Camphill Village needs more land. 2. ATC met with presenters from Bard College who spoke about organic farming possibilities. 3. Housing Resources did an archeological survey and found many Native American artifacts. Ms. Mettler asked if we thought we, as a committee, should alert the Town that there is money available to buy the land. She asked if we thought the town could get an application in by July 12th. We thought not. Dr. Beneke said that we want to do what is best for the town. The people want to keep the town scenic, but there needs to be planning. Ms. Mettler cited the example of opportunities and money lost in the transfer of properties between the state and private owners regarding the Rail Trail. Ms. Roll suggested that we not forget the need for housing. Ms. Becker said she was not in favor of making a committee recommendation. Dr. Beneke said we are going to have to have a water district. We should keep in mind groundwater issues, such as those raised by Steve Winkley. Ms. Mettler suggested we think about it, and decide at the next meeting. Ms. Becker reiterated that she thought we are not at the stage where we can make recommendations. Ms. Roll asked why we have to recommend - we could just write a letter saying that funds are available and list possible needs, including the purchase of the land. Ms. Mettler said she would write a letter to that effect, and we can review it. She suggested that the issue of coordination of grants could be one of the recommendations in the comp. plan. Mr. Peteroy said there is presently no one on the CEAB who is coordinating grants, although there used to be. Ms. Mettler asked him if he might address ATC on this point and ask CEAB if they could resume this task. Mr. Peteroy asked who will prioritize the projects. We agreed that the Town Board has to do this.

Mr. Haas reported that Edgar Masters is now the chair of the CRC. Each person has taken on a portion of Copake to drive it and look for possible sites for preservation. Now they will start to prioritize. The eventual outcome will be a committee decision, not with public input. They will try to have it done by Fall and they need to be on the same timetable as the CPC. Ms. Mettler, looking at the planning matrix, asked if the CRC could have the report ready by Aug. Mr. Haas wondered if there should perhaps be public input. Mr. Dodson suggested they take advantage of the public workshop on July 31 to get input. Mr. Haas said they could probably get something ready for discussion by that date. He asked when is the deadline for the final outline of the comp. plan. Ms. Mettler said it is 3-4 weeks after the July meeting. She asked if he could have a draft of

the CRC report ready for us to look at before the July 31 meeting. We looked at our timeline, and Mr. Dodson noted that the draft plan is due in October. Ms. Mettler said Ms. Irwin will be here for our May 25 meeting and our focus for June will be the action plan. A motion was made by Ms. Roll to adjourn, Ms. Mettler seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Roll