

Minutes of the Comprehensive Planning Committee
May 25, 2010 7:00 pm
Copake Town Hall

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

Mr. Dodson reported that Greenway and Rheinstrom Hill have met, but we haven't heard from them regarding our grant application. The Hudson River Valley Greenway will have an open board meeting June 7th and he volunteered to attend. He also reported that we received one more CPC survey.

Ms. Mettler read the letter she wrote to the Town Board regarding possibility of funding from the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for land purchases and the importance of the land behind Town Hall. We approved the letter. She also said we are confirmed for our July 31 town action plan workshop at the Park Building. We briefly discussed the vision statement, agreeing that the substance is good and fits with the survey results. We may tweak it a little in a couple of weeks as we review our action plan.

Ms. Irwin distributed copies of our Sample Goals and Actions. These are the goals, and ideas for bringing them into being. The goals are simple and taken from the survey. They are the organizing framework for the comp. plan. They "zero in" on the issues. Under the goals are the actions - these are the things the Town commits to, so they need to be within the Town's control. They are carried out with money from the Town or other sources. It is assumed that the goals and actions will not violate state laws which affect planning. If a goal might go beyond state law, we need to discuss it. She said we should not delve too far into land use and zoning - otherwise it becomes difficult to keep the focus away from that. Large land use issues may be addressed, but only generally; we should not get specific. Specifics are the next step, and that is what we should tell people if they ask questions about how the plan will affect their property. Mr. Dodson noted that there is nothing in the action plan which states that zoning will be revised later. Ms. Mettler said that it also should be stated somewhere in the comp. plan that it will be reviewed every two years. Ms. Irwin agreed. She then said that we should go into the action meeting with some suggestions designed to spark ideas and conversation by the public. Dr. Beneke asked if the general idea of the meeting was to go in stating that this is a draft action plan and that we want people's input. Ms. Irwin concurred, saying she did a meeting recently where they broke into small groups with an assigned goal and facilitator for each group. The attendees rotated through the groups. We will introduce the goals at the workshop and also send out information on the e-list prior to the meeting. Ms. Mettler said that she would like to see more specificity; she said that the current action plan does not seem to be much different from what people already told us in the survey and at the public vision meeting. Ms. Becker asked if we want comments and suggestions from the citizens at this workshop. Ms. Irwin replied that we should whittle down this list of goals and actions so it is not

overwhelming for people. Mr. Dodson suggested we list only a few examples of actions. Ms. Roll suggested that we first focus on the goals and see if they “fit.” Ms. Irwin agreed this should be the first step. Mr. Kiernan asked if we would be getting input from the public about goal priorities. Ms. Irwin replied that all the goals have to go forward together in order to implement the plan, but we could give people a chance to rank the actions. Ms. Roll asked for examples of what people might talk about in the groups, e.g. economic development. Ms. Irwin gave an example of the action of attracting business - we would ask what types of businesses people want. She then asked us to turn our attention to the goals. Mr. Dodson asked if there would be one table for each goal. Ms. Irwin said that would take a long time - perhaps we could have two goals per table. There are several ways to group people. One is to ask people to go to a particular group that interests them and then have them stay there. Another possibility is to stay in a large group, but she said she prefers having small groups, as it gets people talking more. Mr. Dodson said he would like to see a “government” goal. Ms. Roll asked if “smart growth” should be a separate goal and also wondered what exactly that means. Mr. Dodson said communication and community have been prominent themes. He also asked if we should introduce controversial subjects. Ms. Irwin asked if that might include the idea of consolidation and said that if we do that, we might want to consult the Town Bd. Things like that will come up at the meeting, but it is up to us as to whether we want to introduce them. She asked what other topics might be controversial. Mr. Dodson said the police dept. - there is about 50/50 support for maintaining our own dept. Ms. Irwin said that in another town she worked with, affordable housing was an issue. They posted the information, saying that was an issue with many opinions, and asked for comments. Mr. Dodson said he didn’t want to derail the workshop. Ms. Irwin said that the small group format prevents that from happening to a large extent. Mr. Dodson asked if we as members of the committee need to be unified at the meeting. Ms. Irwin said that if we are facilitators of a group, we have to be neutral.

Ms. Becker asked if code enforcement was a goal or an action. Ms. Roll commented that it seems to be an action for many goals. Ms. Becker said some of the code is fed. and some state. Ms. Irwin asked us to go back to the goals and address the “smart growth” issue. Dr. Beneke thought we should avoid “cookie cutter” words like these. Ms. Irwin agreed. We talked about community and perhaps combining the 1st (hometown community) and 8th (attractive community with character) goal. However, the 1st is more about people and the 8th is more about the look of Copake. Ms. Mettler said she would like to add a government goal. Ms. Irwin said we want to be careful of being critical and asked us what the actions of this goal might be. Dr. Beneke asked if we thought the plan would produce better government. If the govt. sees that there is a game plan which has evolved from the public, then they have a direction. We agreed that if they have the vision and the guidelines, then they need to figure out how to make it happen. One of our goals should be to make the community feel that the plan is their own. We had a discussion of govt. elections. Ms. Irwin asked if we have elections this year. No. That is a good thing. We talked more about community, and Ms. Becker commented that there are the different communities of Copake Lake, Copake Falls, etc. Ms. Irwin said we could ask for input from them as a group. We discussed the sense

of separate identity and the idea of unity. It is important to celebrate the differences within the unity. Mr. Dodson mentioned the action of a grants office. He said there are many actions that could be govt. actions. Both Ms. Irwin and Ms. Mettler spoke about the fact that all of the comp. plan will be carried out by govt. action. Ms. Irwin mentioned tax incentives given by govt. There was some discussion about actions coming from various citizen groups and individuals, as opposed to govt. Ms. Irwin asked us to review and edit the goals and actions and asked if we wanted her to revise the current list based on our discussions during this meeting. Ms. Mettler said yes; then she would distribute it to us for further editing. Ms. Irwin asked us to look at goal #1. We talked about where Arts and Culture belongs. Also Housing - we want to acknowledge both year-round and part-time residents, but not create a divide. There was a long discussion about the different needs of the two groups, just as farmers and seniors have different needs. Ms. Becker wondered if housing belonged in #8. Ms. Irwin asked is it more about people? Design is under #8. Dr. Beneke brought up the issue of taxation causing people to leave because they can't afford to live here anymore. Ms. Roll asked about hamlet actions being under #1 or 8. Ms. Irwin said we will have a paragraph explaining each goal. She then asked where safety should be. Ms. Becker thought under govt. She wondered about #1d - what social programs existed. Ms. Roll mentioned the Chow Night at the Methodist Church. Mr. Dodson mentioned the transportation available for seniors. Ms. Becker said there is no mention of the many churches in the area. Ms. Irwin said perhaps that would come under volunteerism. Ms. Mettler said that Mr. Weber thought we should have some kind of outreach for disasters, suicide, etc. Ms. Roll mentioned Joan Spencer, who is setting up events around suicide education and prevention. Ms. Irwin asked if there is an organized volunteer group. Mr. Dodson said the Town has a "help" list in the Town Clerk's office. It is for people who need food and other kinds of help. None of the rest of us knew about this list. This brought up the issue of communication again. Ms. Roll mentioned that the young people focus group mentioned wanting emails from social networking sites. Ms. Irwin said maybe we could have a discussion group around the action of having a networking list for Copake. Mr. Dodson said the seniors have a strong social network. It was noted that it is not via internet. Ms. Mettler mentioned that she had received a group email from Catamount which lets people know they can partake of events in Berkshires and CC, listing some specific ones in Copake. Ms. Irwin turned to medical services, saying that it is likely we won't get a hospital, but maybe it makes sense to focus on having a state of the art medical information system for EMS, Fire, Police. Ms. Mettler turned to farming, asking how the Town would encourage a diversity of farm businesses. Ms. Irwin gave an example of allowing certain businesses, such as farm equipment repair, on farms. Mr. Peteroy brought up the person who was interested in starting a hops cooperative. He was looking for investment from farmers and from the town - the town declined. Dr. Beneke said NYS gave \$500,000 to Chatham Shepherding. He also talked about Ag./commercial districts. Mr. Kiernan said you have to consider certain distinctions. - e.g. farmstands - are you promoting crops from the Hudson Valley or only your own? Ms. Becker said that Ancram wants to be able to butcher on-site. This is prohibited to a great extent in the Hudson Valley. Most beef goes to Penn.

Ms. Irwin said she would revise the goals and actions and asked us to look at the Greenville matrix. Dr. Beneke asked what other information we would supply to the public at the action workshop, e.g. ATC maps, focus group reports. Ms. Irwin said she would supply the community profile, and we decided we could post the focus group reports on the website. Ms. Mettler informed Ms. Irwin about our discussion with Mr. Haas at the last meeting, regarding the CRC and the list of resources they plan to have categorized and prioritized by the action workshop. Ms. Roll further explained that the CRC had thought it would be helpful to have public input. She then said that she thought the ATC maps should not be presented at the meeting; they did not come from the CPC, and the idea of a fairgrounds seem to come from the ATC and no one else. Mr. Peteroy confirmed this and said the maps were mostly concerned with gateways, infill and parking. Road improvements from DOT will take 3 years. Ms. Irwin said the ATC will not be part of the CPC; they might be done by the time the plan is implemented. We can state in the plan that they (or another group) will continue to advocate for walkable sidewalks, streetscapes, etc. We could have the CEAB report as an attachment to the plan. Ms. Mettler said she would send that report to Ms. Irwin. We noted that our next meeting is on June 8th at 7:30 pm. Ms. Mettler made a motion to adjourn, Ms. Roll seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Roll