

Minutes of the Comprehensive Planning Committee
June 17th, 2010 7 pm
Copake Town Hall

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

The minutes of May 25 and June 8 were approved. The minutes of May 20 were approved with pending corrections from Charles Dodson of his remarks during that meeting.

Mr. Dodson reported that on June 9, we received \$6,530 from Hudson Valley Greenway, the total amount requested. With the Rheinstrom Hill grant of \$2,500, we have received a total of \$9,030. The Greenway grant is a vouchered grant, meaning we spend the money, then submit vouchers for reimbursement. Ms. Mettler asked if there were records that need to be kept. Mr. Dodson said Greenway will send the information about that. Ms. Irwin added that they would also send a contract. Ms. Mettler asked if Rheinstrom Hill required records, to which Mr. Dodson replied they do not. Ms. Mettler asked if we could use in-kind funds for the matching funds for Greenway. Ms. Irwin said yes, and that we should start keeping track of our hours. Ms. Mettler said that it's simple to keep track of some time e.g. the minutes, but other hours are more complex. Ms. Irwin said that the hours will need to be tracked after the contract is signed. The RH grant will serve as a match, so we need to keep track for the remaining amount. Mr. Dodson said that Greenway handed out only 5 grants this year, in the amounts of \$5,000, \$7,000 and \$10,000. Ms. Irwin said we obviously did a great job on our application. She then said that Ag. & Markets is reviewing our application. They have requested further information, which has been provided. She doesn't know if they have the funds; some past recipients still have not received their grant monies. She then spoke about the NY Housing Trust Funds - Office of Community Renewal grants. The Community Development Block Grants are planning grants which were created in the 1960's by the state and distributed to smaller towns. They now offer up to \$40,000. River St. did one for Greenville and received \$24,000. There are three national objectives: 1. Benefit low and moderate income people - 80% of Copake residents qualify. 2. Mitigate slums and blight - downtown Copake hamlet qualifies with the empty buildings and rundown condition. 3. Imminent threat - e.g. where a water or sewer system is about to fail. We will pursue funding to help update zoning relevant to the issues of Main St., downtown revitalization, broadband and economic development. Zoning deals with land - commercial, residential and open space, so the approach will focus on the issues of concern in relation to land use. There is one million dollars in the program, with 1/2 set aside for Main St. and hamlet concerns, which includes design standards. The matching funds requirement is 1/3; we will ask for \$40,000, bringing the project total to \$60,000. Other grants and in-kind funds may be used. Ms. Irwin said the Town should expect to put something into it. Ms. Mettler asked if Ms. Irwin would be doing all the paperwork. Ms. Irwin said yes, and the forms are mostly

completed. Two public hearings must be held - one special hearing and one Bd. meeting would suffice. The first hearing is to tell the public that the grant is available, what it is, and how much they might award. The second hearing is to tell them what we are applying for and how much. Ms. Mettler said there would be a special meeting with Supervisor Crowley soon; the second hearing could be before or after the July 8th board meeting. Ms. Irwin reminded us that hearing notices must be listed in the newspaper 7 days ahead of time. She said River St. would prepare a narrative for the application as well as the budget. They will ask for funds in three categories: 1. Approximately \$25,000 for zoning revisions related to housing in general, explaining the issue of ag. and second home owners affecting the price of housing. The focus will be to work on residential districts and affordable housing regulations, density and character issues. Ms. Irwin stressed that citizens need to be made aware that "affordable" means what is affordable for Copake citizens. "Housing" can mean built homes, housing programs, or tax incentives. 2. Economic development - green industry. This includes standards and development and deals with issues of agriculture, commercial development and hamlet density. (Current zoning won't allow us to build density in the hamlet). Examination of and education about the scenic overlay will need to be addressed. Mr. Weber asked about cottage industries. Ms. Irwin said that standards can be addressed with those, as well. 3. Zoning for hamlets ("Main St."). We will need to address whether the zoning is appropriate, as well as design standards, so we can create business and jobs but keep the scenic character. One thing we could do is develop illustrated design standards; these are nice to have but cost money. Ms. Irwin noted that ATC is very active and suggested that we think about having a mini-design workshop - a half-day with architects and landscape architects to develop a plan for what the hamlets might look like. She said that a "Main St." program is funded by the DHCR (Dept. of Housing and Community Renewal - same as above), and we could apply for this in the next phase. She said the other design area we should look at is the land around Town Hall (Housing Resources). We could think about what it should be used for and develop a plan for it, so that whoever comes in to buy it knows how it is to be used. She said design workshops (charettes) would be a good thing to emphasize in the DHCR grant. Mr. Dodson noted that there is an education component that needs to happen and asked if this could be written into the grant application. Ms. Irwin replied that she did this in Peekskill, asking for volunteers to be trained by the professionals who came in for the design charrette. They then conducted the subsequent workshops. This is easier to do on a small project like the hamlet or the HR land, than on a whole conceptual plan. Mr. Dodson said he participated in a workshop for the design of the riverfront in Marlboro and was very impressed. Ms. Irwin said the education piece happens in the workshop; participants learn about the land, the soil, water, etc. Mr. Weber spoke about Boston Commons as a public open space. Ms. Irwin reminded us that it was conceived as a commercial, residential and agricultural center. Mr. Kiernan said his vision for the HR land was to have shops, agriculture and a road/pathway connecting the hamlet center to the town hall area. It was suggested that housing could be included as well, and that the area was large enough to support all those uses. Ms. Irwin asked if there were other significant areas that might warrant in-depth design/use study. We said probably not at this time.

Mr. Dodson asked, regarding the grant application, if planning comes before zoning. Ms. Irwin replied that more than 3/4 of the funds would be for zoning. The design charettes are smaller planning sessions which will inform zoning. There were some questions around planning and zoning - what it is and who executes it. Ms. Irwin explained that the zoning committee will look at how zoning serves the comp. plan. One needs to know what is in the plan before zoning is created. She said it normally takes a few months for a zoning committee to get "settled" into the work; the laws need to be right and with clear intent. Often there are questions about who will be on the committee, and she said there should be many interests represented. Also, there should be a charge from the Town Bd. to revise zoning. She said she would hope there would be some overlap of our committee members with the zoning committee to provide experience and familiarity with the plan. Also, there should be some people who have had experience with zoning regulations. The committee should not be too big - the size of our CPC or smaller. There could be other volunteers for focus groups, e.g. ag., design, etc. Mr. Weber said he hoped that the zoning would be rewritten legibly (in language comprehensible to a "layperson"). Ms. Irwin agreed, but said that some of the language is just standard terminology. She also said another issue we need to consider is whether larger lot zoning protects ag. Ms. Mettler asked if we should sit down with the Bd. and discuss the transition between planning and zoning. Ms. Irwin said yes - when the action plan is complete, we are 80% done. By the time the formal reviews happen, we want the Bd. to be behind it. Plans are usually not controversial, but zoning can be. She said the Bd. should make a resolution to support the comp. plan. Mr. Dodson said he was concerned about the timeframe. Are we ready in Aug. to meet with the Bd? He thought the action plan would be a good thing to lay before the Bd. Mr. Davis said he was concerned about waiting too long to get zoning started. We discussed the timing of zoning and elections next fall. Ms. Irwin said that the grant money needs to be used within one year. Mr. Dodson asked when the funds would be distributed. Ms. Irwin said probably Jan. or Feb. She said we could start on zoning sooner with our other funds. The last three months of zoning are taken up with hearings, forms, etc. The whole process will take longer than 6-7 months, so if we start in Jan., we will run into the election, unless we have a committee with a lot of drive. The only thing we can control is the timing of the transition from planning to zoning. We agreed that we should meet with the Bd. to discuss the transition. Ms. Irwin said she would reread our zoning laws and let us know what the big zoning issues are that will need to be addressed.

Ms. Mettler turned our attention to the next meetings. We will have an "extra" meeting on Tues. June 29th. July meetings will be the 13th and 20th, with an "extra" meeting on Thurs. July 29th, provided we can have meeting space. Aug. 10th and 19th will follow. Ms. Mettler then suggested that Ms. Irwin talk about the Copake "catalyst" projects. Ms. Irwin related that Dr. Beneke had asked what is unique to Copake, what are the big ideas for Copake. This was the underlying question as she started to think about Copake's future. These catalyst projects were also based on two other issues. One is that she was responding to the person (Bob Sacks) in the visioning workshop who suggested having a fund for Copake projects and the person who then stood up and said he would donate to the fund. Ms. Irwin said there is wealth in this community; she

asked if that person has been asked for money and if they have given [not that we know of], and if there is a way to capture the talent and cash that exists here. The other issue is the HR land. It could be a valuable anchor with mixed use serving many needs - housing, farming, shops, greenhouses, etc. It could contribute to the town economically and serve tourism as well. She said we should include these items in our action planning workshop. She also said that a mixed use commons is unusual and would be fundable (through grants). Mr. Peteroy said that even though there is a vocal opposition to HR, housing on a reasonable scale is probably acceptable to many people. Mr. Weber said we have to remember that there is a very high water table on that land. We then spent some time discussing the hamlets and how to support their development. Mr. Dodson brought up the idea of creating an historic district for Copake Falls and putting together a 19th c. style historic village. They have the Ironworks and schoolhouse. He cited an example of this in Ontario, where they brought in various buildings and artifacts to create an historic village. Mr. Weber spoke of similar projects in Richmond, Staten Island and in Austerlitz. Ms. Irwin then talked about the catalyst project for biking, saying that competitive bikers would love Col. C. We could also be a training area for Ironman competitions. This has low environmental impact and is compatible with tourism, B&B's, etc. Ms. Mettler said biking also appeals to all levels of income. Ms. Irwin said if we have this as part of our plan, it will allow us to advocate with DOT for wider shoulders and signage. Mr. Dodson noted that Copake has the largest bicycle auction in the country (Copake Auction).

Green industry was the next catalyst project discussed. Windmills are a possibility. We already have a green library. The county could help do shovel-ready sites for green light industry. She spoke about finding out what second home owners do - what businesses they are in, whether they would move a business here, or attract a business.

Ms. Mettler then said we would finish up the action matrix at our next meeting and asked what else we should be doing before the July 31st workshop. Ms. Irwin said we should work on a few of the catalyst projects. She suggested biking, HR land, and hamlets. Decide what is important to get out of the workshop. Maybe we will not address all the actions in detail, especially since many, if not most, of them will be included in the plan anyway. She would like more information from us in relation to the catalyst projects, e.g. regarding biking, information from Grant Herman at Bash Bish Bicycle, the name of the person who organizes the Bike NY ride in Millerton, and information from Marcia Peteroy about B&B's. She would also like to talk to Mr. Kiernan and anyone else about the HR land. Mr. Weber mentioned that there have been American Indian artifacts found on that land and that a museum could be considered. Ms. Mettler wondered if we should perhaps publish the action plan, have it available at the July 31st workshop and then spend most of the time on the catalyst projects. Ms. Irwin said we could do that; we will need to present the vision statement, then the goals and some of the actions, and then discuss what is unique to and good for Copake. Mr. Dodson said that the survey had many remarks about the old movie house; we could link that with the HR land issue. He also mentioned that there are many people in the arts here. Ms. Irwin said we could certainly consider a community-based performance organization. Mr. Peteroy asked about publicity for the July 31st

workshop. Ms. Mettler said we have a pretty extensive email list now. Ms. Irwin suggested we send out a preliminary “save the date” email soon. Ms. Mettler said that at the beginning of July we can post flyers, as we did for the first public meeting. She then made a motion to adjourn, Ms. Roll seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Roll

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