

Minutes from Comprehensive Planning Committee
Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2009, 7:30 pm
Copake Town Hall

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

Members Absent: Fiona Hutchinson

The minutes from the January 13, 2009 meeting were approved.

Ms. Mettler received a letter from Margaret Irwin regarding the relationship of River Street Planning to Housing Resources. Also, our contract with RS was revised and sent to Supervisor Crowley. Ms. Mettler received a copy today and will forward it to the rest of the members.

GIS - Mr. Dodson talked with Mike Lorenson, the tax map supervisor, who said that the Columbia County real property office will oversee the digitization of mapping. The CC Bd. of Supervisors will approve the digitization and it will be completed possibly by summer 2009, definitely by Dec. 2009. The Copake planning board purchased Arcview software 9.2; it will be installed in a Town Hall computer. Version 9.3 has been purchased. The goal is to have it up and running by the end of Feb. 2009.

Ms. Mettler had asked Mr. Dodson to look into transferring information from our comp plan website to the town website, which has been done. We will close down our website as no one has been using it.

Ms. Roll mentioned that comp plan meetings have not been listed in the Independent. Ms. Mettler has spoken with Vana and they will be listed from now on.

Membership - Bob Sacks is no longer our Town Board liason. The board has chosen not to appoint a liason. We agree that we do not need to have one, although we encourage Board presence at our meetings whenever they can attend.

Discussion of Surveys

Our first question was do we need a new survey? The Copake Economic Advisory Board did a survey in 2004.

Ms. Becker said that the 2004 was time consuming and created at considerable cost by a professional surveyor. It still gives much valuable information.

Mr. Beneke said this is the most important thing we will do. Issues to address are true representation. The 2004 survey had low representation of young people, and school importance was rated low. Also, we shouldn't have a motive in creating the questions.

Mr. Weber said the 2004 was designed to answer a problem (Housing Resources), and it is five years old. He suggested we obtain the other survey on this issue, done by River Street.

Ms. Roll said that perhaps the populations represented are those who are interested in the town more long-term. The survey should have a more detailed way of eliciting priorities and preferences - four or five categories in addition to a "don't know" box. This will give a sense of what kind of information or education people need.

Ms. Mettler said the 2004 is old and stale.

Mr. Dodson said we need a new survey, as this one is too narrow and too general. We need to look at the breadth of items which need to be addressed in a comprehensive plan. He noted the lack of questions on development of new energy sources (windpower, solar power, cell towers); cultural issues and the arts; library; radio stations; and medical needs. He also noted the possible importance of the major employers in the town - the school, Catamount, High Voltage, and summer camps, especially as it

relates to medical personnel and emergency situations. he also suggested we think about the various centers of Copake - Copake Falls, West Copake, Craryville.

We unanimously agreed on the need for a new survey.

We asked whom do we want to reach? In some way, everyone. Property owners, renters, every adult in a household. Children as well? We wondered if the voting rolls could be combined with tax rolls to obtain more representation. We discussed online surveys and the difficulty of maintaining the integrity of the results and concluded that paper surveys were preferable. Mr. Dodson suggested that double envelopes be used, with only the outside envelope signed; this would protect the integrity of the results as well as the anonymity of the participants.

Dr. Beneke volunteered to cook hamburgers at Little League games to get participants.

We should remember that comp plan will inform zoning, so perhaps we need to ask people who have been through that process.

We discussed what information we want to obtain and how do we ask the right questions?

We should obtain personal data on age, number of years in the town, full-time or part-time resident, whether they will retire here, whether they see themselves here in ten or twenty years.

Also we should ask some questions about the person - their likes and dislikes.

Mr. Weber suggested that gender might be a factor as well.

Mr. Beneke cautioned against getting too detailed and specific - at the end, we have to analyze the data.

Ms. Mettler said that separating information by weekenders and full-time residents may point out the differences and increase divisiveness. Mr. Dodson suggested "embedding" questions so we make sure we are getting accurate information. Ms. Roll said it was important to ask questions about how people felt about the town but also about their needs and desires, so as to get more authentic information.

We agreed on the importance of questions about personal data, thoughts on the current condition of the town, and thoughts on people's needs, desires and their vision for Copake and themselves in 20 years.

Ms. Mettler will forward our ideas on the survey to Ms. Irwin.

Our next meeting will be on Tues., Feb. 10 at 7:30 pm

Ms. Roll made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Weber seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Roll