

Minutes of the Comprehensive Planning Committee  
March, 17, 2011 7:00 pm  
Copake Town Hall

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

Members Absent: George Beneke

Mr. Dodson reported that the CDBG application process is continuing.

Ms. Mettler said she had received correspondence from Edgar Masters saying that he was pleased that we were supportive of the CRC report. She has also asked Margaret Irwin if we should recommend a Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) in the comp. plan. Ms. Irwin said some issues could arise, and the rezoning committee should frame the guidelines for a CAC.

Ms. Mettler also received correspondence from Danny Thomkins regarding the West Copake fire house. He thinks it should be sold and wanted to know if we were going to address that property in the comp. plan. Mr. Dodson said he has had calls from other Town Board members about the fire house and the comp. plan. He said he has no strong opinions but thought we should come up with a general recommendation. If the fire house ceases to be used as a park, the deed says it must revert back to the family. The issue has been in court twice to try to straighten out the deeds. There has been some confusion regarding Town properties, but this one is in the worst tangle.

Ms. Becker said we haven't taken the time to figure out whether we should make recommendations on Town properties and that maybe we should. Ms. Mettler reminded us that our next meeting with Ms. Irwin is on April 12 and that we need to stay on track to meet our timetable. She noted that the VFW has been talked about lately on various Copake blogs and there was mention of an exchange with the firehouse property. Someone said that the VFW is still planning build on the land they currently own. Mr. Davis asked if the firehouse deed issues have been resolved. Mr. Dodson said it is a moot point. Mr. Davis asked if it could be sold. Mr. Dodson replied, yes, if they get the deeds resolved by the state legislature. Ms. Mettler asked if we want to talk about specific pieces of property. Mr. Dodson said the whole idea of selling the firehouse property came during a bad deficit year. Also, there is concern about it becoming a playground, as it is too close to the road and traffic. Mr. Davis said perhaps we should make a recommendation to evaluate Town properties and dispose of those that are not useful. Ms. Becker said replacement cost should be considered. Mr. Peteroy said that there will be a sheriff's substation opening at the old Town Hall in Hillsdale. We don't need a fire dept. or police in West Copake, and storage (which is what the firehouse is being used for now) can go elsewhere. Ms. Roll said although a general recommendation such as Mr. Davis proposed would be useful, she saw no reason to make recommendations on specific properties in a comp. plan. Mr. Davis asked if we might list the Town properties in an appendix. Mr. Dodson said there are 36 acres of Town property valued at over \$3.7 million. We agreed to recommend evaluation of the properties. Ms. Becker said we should note that evaluation should be based on long-range planning.

Ms. Mettler handed out the draft of the letter to Mr. Crowley regarding the rezoning committee, which was approved. Mr. Dodson said he has had a verbal commitment from Mr. Crowley for matching funds of 4-8K for the CDBG.

Ms. Becker noted that the Town public meeting is scheduled the same day as Copake clean up day - May 21. Ms. Mettler said she had spoken to Ms. Irwin about this. Ms. Irwin said that June 4 would work for her and would not delay our work substantially. We agreed to change the meeting date if Town Hall is available.

We then continued our review of the Goals and Actions. Ms. Mettler showed us the format Ms. Irwin has been using to write the plan - an initial paragraph of context for each goal; catalysts; and actions. She will frame the actions in the language of "the Town will..." We discussed Goal II- Farming. We decided that action b. (support community events) could be eliminated, and discussed whether there were catalysts in any of the actions. Possibly c. (buy local), or h. - which prompted the discussion about the HR land. The Town does not own this land; should we make a recommendation for the Town to buy the land.

We went on to discuss Goal III - Healthy, Natural Environment. We discussed forests and wondered how much is not protected by the NYS Park. We will rewrite the context paragraph so it is more inclusive and not so heavily weighted toward water issues.

Goal IV - Scenic Rural Landscape. We noted that the CAC recommendation will be made here and that the rezoning committee will set guidelines. Mr. Davis asked why there should be restrictions on when the CAC would be asked for guidance during a planning process. Shouldn't they be asked for advice any time it is needed? We decided to let Ms. Irwin give us input on this issue. Mr. Davis asked if the zoning ordinance sets up the planning board. Ms. Becker said it is set up by Town law. Mr. Dodson said every standing board and commission is defined in the Town administrative code except for the zoning board. Mr. Peteroy said the municipal laws authorize zoning and planning boards, and that originates with the State.

Goal V - Thriving Economy. We noted actions f, h, i, j as catalysts (biking, HR land, "green shovel ready" sites, historic preservation village. We also thought that a wind study should be conducted before any plans for attracting wind power were made. Ms. Mettler asked us to read the corrected and edited Farmland Protection Profile, which she will email to us again.

Mr. Dodson said that he attended a GIS course under the auspices of the DEC and taught by people from Cornell. We now have a new computer and will have an office in the Youth Courtroom for the GIS work. Before the year is out, we will be able to generate maps.

Ms. Mettler asked if we should meet on March 29, and it was agreed to. We will review the Farmland Profile then.

Mr. Dodson made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Haas seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Roll