

Minutes of the Comprehensive Planning Committee  
May 31, 2011 7:30 pm  
Copake Town Hall

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

Minutes from May 19th were approved.

Mr. Dodson reported that the CDBG application is still with Margaret Irwin.

Ms. Mettler reported that the updated maps for the CRC report have been emailed to us. Mr. Dodson had made some copies from the Town's GIS equipment.

Dr. Beneke said he doesn't quite understand purpose for the open space, scenic vistas designations, saying that from the designated sites, the whole of Copake is included.

Ms. Haas replied that the CRC lists everything. Some prioritizing may need to be done.

Dr. Beneke asked if these designated sites will restrict building and development. Mr.

Haas said, no, the designations are only meant to advise and to make sure that the information about scenic viewsheds is available. Decisions about building will take that information into account.

Ms. Mettler said she has sent out a press release about the June 4th meeting to the Columbia Paper and the Register Star. She has sent another group email and will send one more tomorrow. Some people have told her they want a hard copy. She will ask Vana to make some copies.

Mr. Dodson said there have been 181 views of the website plan posting, and 107 people downloaded it. Ms. Mettler said that the Copake Lake photo somehow got left out in the last version, but Ms. Irwin has put it back in.

Ms. Mettler suggested we brainstorm a bit about the final plan and summary. Mr.

Dodson asked if there was a need for anything beside the full plan on the website. We discussed the option of putting the summary online as well. Mr. Davis asked for confirmation that people are going to get the summary at the meeting. Yes. He said if we put the summary online, people might read only the summary and take things out of context, since it is such an abbreviated form of the plan. He thought people should read the whole plan. We all agreed.

We then revisited Goal G. - Government. Action "d" regarding the tax exemption process. Dr. Beneke said it is an important issue, affecting land use and taxes. If there is a committee, they can review each exemption. Mr. Davis said the "process" is set by the State and the Town Bd.

Ms. Roll said the State sets the guidelines and the Town Bd. grants the exemptions. Ms. Becker said the Town Bd. grants them in a discretionary way. Ms. Roll said that, since the process is set, we are really referring to the validity of exemptions granted. Dr. Beneke said we hurt ag. when exemptions are granted inaccurately - when people claim exemptions and don't use the land for ag. To claim it, they would have to get someone to farm it for them. Mr. Dodson reminded us that there are all sorts of exemptions, including cemeteries, hospitals, non-profits - not just ag. Mr. Davis asked if they all require yearly applications. Mr. Dodson said no, they have various time limits. After more discussion, Ms. Mettler suggested we reword the action to read "Appoint a committee to review the tax exemption process."

Ms. Mettler then asked if people had been talking to us about the plan. She said she had received a few questions about the 2% transfer tax idea and who would pay it - buyer or seller. The buyer. It is an investment in the Town. It is also just a proposed action, one that the people will have to vote on. There would be more information and discussion before any such vote. We discussed the fact that the fund would serve not only open space protection, but historic preservation and other "compelling public purposes." Mr. Dodson said we should remember that there are two other large pieces of land for sale - Alice Belt's property and the Ackley farm. We discussed the old Roe Jan school and the fact that the Town does not own this property.

Ms. Mettler reiterated from last meeting the point that at the June 4th meeting we should be there to listen and not to comment. [Several members were not at our last meeting]. We reviewed Ms. Irwin's power point presentation and made a few edits. We discussed the item Future Land Use and the issue of water and sewer. Ms. Becker noted that if the Hamlet of Copake is to grow it will need public water and sewage. The plan states that we will be dependent upon private water and septic for some time into the future. We discussed the fact that developments would install a community waste treatment septic systems that are privately owned. Dr. Beneke commented that the Fed. and State govts. will not have money for public systems for a long time. We reread sections of the plan; there are references to both private and public water and septic/sewer on pages 9, 24, 25 and 46. We will ask Ms. Irwin to make sure the issue of the need for a public system is put into the power point and that it is adequately stated in the plan itself. We made a few further corrections and approved the power point.

Ms. Mettler said we will make final corrections at our next meeting on June 14th. She has sent an invitation to the Town Bd. members to attend a special presentation with us on July 12th. She also asked Ms. Irwin for a cost of doing the SEQRA. She reported that our finances are in good shape. We have paid Riverstreet about \$5,000 thus far and will owe them another \$8,823. We had \$22,500 as of January 2011. Any remaining monies will go toward the rezoning committee. Mr. Dodson said we can begin vouchering for the Greenway grant as soon as the plan is formally approved and adopted by the Town Bd.

There was a question as to whether the plan had to be approved by Ag. and Markets. Mr. Dodson said that, according to law, it does.

We scheduled another meeting for June 22nd. Ms. Mettler said that Ms. Irwin had said she would like to be at the July 12th presentation to the Town Bd. Ms. Becker asked if Ms. Irwin will guide us in the process of integrating the final phase of public input. Yes. There was some discussion of recording the June 4th meeting. Ms. Mettler said that Ms. Irwin will be making an audio recording.

Mr. Davis made a motion, Dr. Beneke seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 9 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Roll