

Planning Board  
January 22, 2015

**Members Present:** Marty Hatch (Vice -Chair), David Weinstein, John Kiefer, Craig Anderson, and Tom Hatfield

**Liaisons:** Craig Schutt, Conservation Board, and Joe Solomon, Town Board

**Staff Present:** David Sprout, CEO and Supr. Sumner @ 7:30

**Guests:** Mike Cutler, Office Manager from GrassMasters, 1922 Dryden Road

The meeting was called to order at 7PM.

1922 Dryden Road: Mike Cutler

Mike Cutler, Office Manager, brought an overlay of the changes they are making to their plans which encompass some of the comments from prior meetings. They are hoping to get permission to bring a drawing to the meeting next month with the proper stamps to be approved as the final drawing. Basically everything is the same but shifted so the driveway is straight, some of the parking places have moved and the overall plan allows for an even flow of traffic and pedestrians than the previous plan.

M. Hatch offered the following resolution:

*Resolution # 1*

*Whereas, the planning board has previously approved a site plan for GrassMasters at 1922 Dryden Road; and*

*Whereas, the applicant has made changes to the plan that are consistent with the Planning Board's prior request; and*

*Whereas, the applicant agrees to provide finished and stamped plans to the Planning Department;*

*Therefore, the Planning Board approves the revised plan as an amendment to the prior Site Plan approval dated December 9, 2014.*

D. Weinstein seconded the motion which was passed unanimously.

**Review and approval of minutes from December:**

D. Weinstein moved to approve the minutes, J. Kiefer seconded motion and the minutes were unanimously approved.

J. Leifer sent an email which M. Hatch read to the Board regarding the New York Rural Water Association and Steven Winkley.

The Planning Board agreed that John Kiefer will be their representative.

**Liaison Reports:**

**Town Board** - Joe Solomon

J. Solomon did not attend the last Town Board business meeting. As he understands from the Agenda meeting, the Town Board is interested in seeing the Planning Board goals for 2015.

**Planning department** - Dave Sprout

D. Sprout said that the Planner position is still open; at this point there hasn't been any interest. The position has been posted through the Tompkins County Civil Service.

**Ag Committee** – John Kiefer

The farmers are moving forward with the Farmland Protection Plan. Debbie Teeter and Monica Roth attended the last meeting to help the farmers set up the timeline and structure of the process. There will be a meeting of farmers in March and in February the survey will be sent out.

**Conservation Board** - Dave Weinstein

The Conservation Board is working on revising the land acquisition/protection criteria after which it will be sent to the Town Board for approval. A proposal has been sent to Design Connect requesting their assistance on the rail to trail project. They also generated goals for the coming year.

C. Schutt added that Supr. Sumner had received a letter in August 2014 regarding the Varna to Ithaca part of the rail trail. The DEC recommended changing the route of the trail. Instead of staying on the rail bed, they have suggested an alternate route that will avoid having to rebuild two bridges and the DEC is willing to pay for the development.

The Town of Dryden and Ithaca, Cornell and the DEC all have interests in the game farm area and the trail that need to be considered.

**Unfinished business:**

**Meeting time and dates:**

The Planning Board members discussed changing the time and day of the monthly meeting. C. Anderson's suggestion is to hold the meeting directly before the Town Board's agenda meeting the second Thursday of the month which will allow staff to simply go from one meeting to the other thereby cutting down on staff time.

T. Hatfield expressed his concerns based on history. The fourth Thursday has always worked and he reminded the Board that it isn't about them or staff but the members of the community that are required to go through reviews.

M. Hatch attended an "Alternatives to Expanding Fossil Fuel Infrastructure" lecture in Ithaca. There were three speakers, each of whom explained an alternative to increasing the gas use in the County.

M. Hatch is interested in using his attendance as part of his Planning Board training because he feels it was a very useful presentation. Supr. Sumner told the Board that if they know of a situation, like this one, where they believe it is worth PB credit, then they need to write a letter to the Town Board explaining their justification. Prior notice is necessary if the members want to guarantee the credit.

M. Hatch shared an announcement from L. Lavine regarding the above mentioned lecture. The same three presenters will be at the Town Hall on February 19<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 - 7 PM in the Public Assembly/Court Room.

**Planning Board Goals 2015:**

Supr. Sumner highly recommends that the Planning Board members review the 1968 Comprehensive Plan. It is fascinating to review.

The Board reviewed the three "2015 Goals" that were exchanged via email. M. Hatch has taken the first two (from J. Laquatra and C. Anderson) and combined them. The only thing missing was the first part from J. Laquatra. That part states "decide on the

best use of land and protect Town residents” – M. Hatch doesn’t think this is a goal but rather almost the mission statement for the Planning Board.

M. Hatch has reworded some of the goals in regard to open space and preserving the rural character of the town but believes all of the information is included.

T. Hatfield expressed his concern regarding some of the language. He feels the Planning Board’s job is to take the box that we work in and apply it to applicants as they appear. We also have another hat that says “long term look” – where do we see things going. He is concerned that the Board is confusing the two roles.

T. Hatfield disagrees with the concept of helping the Town Board in regard to the Planning Department. If they ask for recommendations, that is ok but simply telling the Town Board what the Planning Board desires as the Planning Director is not within the Planning Board’s purview.

M. Hatch responded by pointing out that the best land use and protecting the residents doesn’t have to be at the top of the Goals since it is simply part of what the Planning Board does. He feels that the Planning Board is not here just to rubber stamp things but if the Planning Board has ideas then they have an obligation to share that with the Town Board who then has the power to take it or leave it. C. Anderson stated that as it is, the Planning Board offers resolutions to the Town Board but it is up to the Town Board to act on the resolutions. He believes that until the Town Board requests assistance from the Planning Board, the Planning Board doesn’t have the right to work on projects.

M. Hatch said that from email conversations, it was agreed that a recommendation is considered assistance.

Supr. Sumner stated that a single resolution to the Town Board probably won’t influence much but multiple resolutions that explain the need for a particular action is more likely to see action. She would like the Planning Board to assist her to explain why we need planning.

T. Hatfield said that the notion that we need planning is one thing and how we go about obtaining that planning is another thing. For years, it was done with a code enforcement officer and outside consultants. It was a perfectly legitimate way to obtain planning, with a finite contract and a given set of fiscal constraints. We, the Planning Board, should not be in a position to be making those decisions. The Planning Board should be in position to help the Town Board implement those decisions.

Supr. Sumner asked if the Planning Board had an opinion about the relative cost of having a full time planner versus a series of consultants. Her experience has been that consultants have not produced the same quality work as Town of Dryden planners.

C. Anderson said he is having trouble with the protocol. The Town Board has not asked the Planning Board to do this as a goal so how can it be listed as a goal for 2015.

Supr. Sumner asked why the Planning Board can’t have its own goals.

C. Anderson said that if the Board is allowed to have goals of their own, then he has a whole list: economic development, revitalizing the IDA, etc.

T. Hatfield said his original point has been lost. The Planning Board has two functions: to deal with “what is the zoning regulations, what is the comprehensive plan, what is needed to assist the folks coming to the Planning Department”. This is our primary function. Secondly is long term planning. Neither function includes lobbying for the Town Board to spend money. We need planning but how we acquire that, in terms of the resources, the Town Board controls the purse strings.

Supr. Sumner agreed but said that the Town Board lacks the motivation to move ahead. They don't all agree that planning is necessary and one of the members thinks that the volunteer board members should do the work. She is hoping for information to back up the previous recommendation from the Planning Board.

C. Anderson reiterated that "helping the Town Board" can't really be a goal since the Town Board has not asked them to. He pointed to his goal of reviewing the ZBA and the waivers that the Planning Board has permitted over the last few years. He has the goal worded so that the Planning Board is requesting permission from the Town Board to look at those. He believes that is the proper way.

Supr. Sumner said she sees the distinction he is making. She believes that the Planning Board could make the goal to be "Adequate Planning Resources" rather than making it about staffing and the budget.

T. Hatfield strongly recommends that the Board needs to start thinking about getting some public outreach including a survey, before getting too deeply into revising the comprehensive plan.

M. Hatch is in favor of adding the public outreach to the long term goals. The Town Board will need to authorize the survey.

C. Anderson questioned whether we should dig more into the plan before going to the public since we don't know whether it will be a complete rewrite or only an update.

T. Hatfield believes that getting the information first would be better since we may find that we don't have to change anything.

D. Sprout suggested that Design Connect could help with the survey but that won't be until next fall.

T. Hatfield said that last year the Board did some good work by looking at where the holes are. If we are doing aspirational goals, some may be more important like economic development, job development, and alternative energy. In reference to the recent talk regarding alternate energy, we need to accommodate the future but we also need to accommodate the applicant that walks in today who might need natural gas.

J. Kiefer reiterated the two broad goals that T. Hatfield has indicated:

1. execute a site plan review function according to the laws of NYS and the Town of Dryden

2. longer term review of Comprehensive Plan

There has been a lot of discussion about long term goals (which he believes will come out of the review of the Comp plan) and whether we are going to do a survey which will come out of a discussion we need to have in which we determine how we are going to review the comp plan.

Supr. Sumner suggested that the December meeting be used to develop a report of some kind. That will give the Board 10 months to work.

M. Hatch feels that October through December 2015 section of the goals are missing actionable items but they should emerge while determining if the current Comprehensive plan meets the 5-7 year needs, and whether it needs an update or complete rewrite.

C. Anderson pointed out that once the Planning Board makes a decision whether it is going to be an update or a rewrite, then it has to be presented to the Town Board (prior to the budget process) and it will be up to them what direction we go. There are two options and each one comes with a different budget and timeline.

Supr. Sumner said that if the Planning Board made a recommendation to the Town Board including budget thoughts in July or August, the Town Board responds rather quickly, then the Planning Board will have September to December to decide what path to take based on what budget the Town Board says is available.

T. Hatfield summarized what Supr. Sumner was saying – we should have a January to July timeframe, and at the end of the July meeting the Planning Board will adopt some goals, and present them to the Town Board with respect to the budget items (one of which could be to reinstate a public survey process). He recommends then using the survey – the public input – to determine where we are going with the Comprehensive Plan.

M. Hatch said he will rework the Goal worksheet and send around a revised copy. (The revised copy will be attached)

**New Business:**

**Liaisons:**

This was an opportunity for the current liaisons to step down and/or a new one appointed.

At this time, John Kiefer is working with the Ag Committee and David Weinstein is working with the Conservation Board. M. Hatch suggested the vice chair serve as a liaison to the Planning Department. A few years ago, the chair met with the Director of Planning for a few minutes before the meeting to keep the Planning Department and the Planning Board on the same page. M. Hatch would like to be that person to increase communication between the two groups, especially now that the Department doesn't have a Director.

**Site Plan and Sketch Plan Review checklists:**

The Board agreed that a standardized checklist for each review will make the process easier for the applicant and will give the Planning Board a more thorough and consistent process. T. Hatfield has a copy of the checklist used in Cortlandville, he is going to send a copy of it to D. Sprout who is going to use it to make a checklist for Dryden.

**ZBA variances and Design Guidelines review:**

C. Anderson suggested that at some point, the Board review the ZBA decisions and the waivers that the Planning Board has granted. By doing that, the Board should be able to determine where the guidelines might need to be changed. The Planning Department sends the ZBA decisions to Supr. Sumner. The group discussed whether they want to look at those decisions as they are made or review them all at the end of the year.

**Comprehensive Plan review process:**

M. Hatch recommended that the Board return to the work that Nick Goldsmith and Jane Nicholson did in terms of the Comprehensive Plan and Sustainability.

C. Anderson jumped in and asked the Board how they feel about letting a subcommittee work on the review process and bring their findings to the next meeting.

D. Weinstein, M. Hatch and J. Kiefer will be looking at the STAR analysis to bring to the next meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erin A. Bieber