

To: John Kiefer, Chair of the Town of Dryden Planning Board

Cc: Town of Dryden Planning Board, Ray Burger, Town of Dryden Planning Department, Dryden Town Board

From: Craig Schutt

John and Planning Board, I am unable to attend the public hearing for the Comprehensive Plan on March 24 so I am submitting my comments for your review and for the public record.

First, I would like to thank the Planning Board for all the time and hard work you have dedicated to this project. I know it has been exhausting and frustrating at times as you have worked through this process. That said I do have concerns with the "final product" that we as the general public may be left with to try to understand and navigate. I believe you will agree that I personally attended as many or more public meetings as a private citizen as anyone as you were developing and reviewing the plan. It makes me think if I am still confused after all the time I put in how is this not going to be confusing to the majority of the public? One of the most glaring confusions is how the 2005 plan and this new plan are connected. I listened to the explanations, but I still fail to see any cohesive connections with these two documents. It appears someone trying to make sense will need to study both documents and then compare them and decide for themselves what is what. That to me is too much to ask of the general audience that this document needs to guide. Unless I'm wrong believing this plan is for guidance to the general public. I feel the 2005 plan is a much better plan as it reads better, and with some effort the new concepts introduced in the new document could be inserted and added to that plan making it a better plan that is much easier to navigate. That was my opinion when the process started but then that seemed to change and now we are left with two plans that really have no cohesiveness. I would ask that you as the Steering Committee reject this plan and continue working to bring these two plans together into one plan for the town. I have other comments that I will explain below.

Other problems:

Sitting in on several meetings I heard you as group discuss and at times debate specific items in the plan. Several times these discussions were ended with a vote of your committee and when changes were decided by a majority the consultants agreed to make the changes. Some were made but some were not. I can say this because I was in attendance and saw you vote, so why were these changes not made and why would you accept a document without them?

Then I think you should consider the other Boards and Committees that were asked to review and provide comments to you on the plan. It appeared that these groups spent time and energy doing just that but it seems very few of those comments got included in the final draft. For example the Ag Committee asked for a map of the Ag District in the town instead of an overlay with the County ARFA map which in their words is confusing and really has no place in the Dryden plan. You as the Steering Committee agreed to this yet it never changed in the final

draft. There were comments about some of the agencies listed in the implementation section for agriculture. Very few changes were made here and honestly some of the information is lacking and some instances just wrong. There is no excuse for these incorrect statements if the comments were taken seriously. The Conservation Board had a long list of suggestions, yet very few were incorporated. Example: (Conservation Board asked for a Watershed map and a updated UNA map, neither were added. Why did the boards even bother if their expertise were so easily dismissed? There are many more examples but I have concerns if I go on too long many won't read the entire letter. I will say there were many concerns expressed on maps and you as a Steering Committee agreed with many of the suggestions, while some got corrected, others did not. I ask again why would you accept this plan in its current condition? I understand your desire to get this moved on off your agendas but why not stick it out a little longer and end up the plan we can all be proud of?

I have just one more point to make. The process in general was lackin in engaging the public, in my opinion. I understand the challenges during a pandemic and that is precisely why more time needs to be given for public meetings and input. There is a segment of the town's population who don't have reliable internet and some who just don't feel comfortable doing zoom and speaking up on it. Is it fair to disenfranchise this segment? It just isn't right. All will be expected to live under whatever future laws and regulations are developed from this flawed plan developed under a flawed process.

Again, I want to thank the Planning Board for all of your time and effort put forward on this process but I still believe with a little more effort you can do better. Dryden residents deserve and expect better. Mediocrity should not be accepted.

Thank you for your time and indulgence

Craig Schutt, Concerned citizen