

**TOWN OF ULYSSES
STEERING COMMITTEE FOR ZONING UPDATES
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, May 5, 2016
7:00 p.m.**

Approved: 6/2/16

Present: Chair Nancy Zahler, Rod Hawkes, Darby Kiley, Sue Ritter, George Tselekis; David West of Randall + West

Elizabeth Thomas was excused.

Public in Attendance: Roxanne Marino and John Wertis

Agenda Review; Minutes Review (2/27/16; 3/3/16; 4/7/16; 4/14/16)

Ms. Zahler suggested adding Privilege of the Floor to the evening's agenda. Ms. Zahler MADE the MOTION to adopt the agenda as amended, and Mr. Hawkes SECONDED the MOTION. The motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

Mr. Hawkes MADE the MOTION to approve the set of meeting minutes, and Ms. Ritter SECONDED the MOTION. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Zahler reported on the newly formed Town Ag Committee, of which Mr. Wertis is a member. Two weeks ago, the Town Board also created a Sustainability and Conservation Advisory Council, which Ms. Marino will chair. The Council's scope and charge has already been drawn up for this year and next. Members are still needed. The Council's function will be to outline sustainability issues and roles related to the State-outlined charter of the Conservation Advisory Council, Ms. Zahler said, adding that the Town Board stopped short of empowering the group to be an advisory board, which has more authority for reviewing land and carrying out other responsibilities.

Ms. Marino said she attended the evening's meeting since some of the Council's charges directly relate to zoning. Responding to a question from Mr. Hawkes, Ms. Zahler noted there may be topics – like solar farms – that may be on the agendas of several Town entities, including the Steering Committee on Zoning, Sustainability Council and the Ag Committee.

Agricultural zoning meeting recap and follow-up

Mr. West said there were a few takeaways from the focus group session, but it is difficult to draw many conclusions considering there were only 4 or 5 farmers who attended. Consultants want to value the feedback from focus group attendees but also understand there are larger goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, which reflects community consensus and input. Mr. West felt there was a concerted push from attendees for more future meetings with the Ag community, which is a possible under the consultants' contract, so long as presentations are focused.

Mr. Hawkes said he spoke with one farmer who attended the meeting and said most of the time was spent, for him, absorbing the information rather than considering specific options or strategies for zoning. The farmer suggested that another meeting would be helpful to get further details, now that he has had time to consider the consultants' presentation. Mr. Hawkes suggested at least one more meeting with the Ag community; it may spark more discussion once farmers have had a chance to consider options. Does it make sense, Mr. West asked, to hold another meeting before or after the initial draft proposal?

The sooner the Ag Committee has a draft, the better, Mr. Wertis said. It is much easier for everybody to respond to proposals, he said, and right now people are playing a guessing game. There are numerous questions concerning aspects of the Ag Farmland and Protection Plan – some of its schema are complicated, he said. For instance, the chart that portends to show lost farmland in the Town may not be as credible as first thought. This is where the Ag Committee is beginning to focus, he said.

Mr. Hawkes agreed with Mr. Wertis, saying it is easier to respond to proposals. Ms. Ritter agreed. Mr. West noted the Town's previous Comprehensive and Ag and Farmland Protection plans, which reflect community sentiment.

Another takeaway from the focus-group session, he said, is that the idea of conservation and unit yields to reduce development potential may need to be readdressed. He was surprised there did not seem to be a huge amount of concern about it during the session. In considering cluster development or density averaging, the group has been working on base assumptions – if you have 10 acres, and there is 2-acre zoning, you could do 5 units, he said. The group may want to reduce development potential by reducing the yield.

Mr. Wertis referred to the zoning option of conservation with incentivized clustering. What emerged from the Ag meeting is that the option would not be applicable in the Ag 1 District because the zoning is 2 acres. It would be more applicable in the Conservation District, which has 5-acre, large-lot zoning. There will be instances when zoning considerations concerning the Hamlet and Ag zones will spill over into other zones. There are elements of zoning, he said, that are suggested in the Ag plan that have application in other zones besides A1. Also, the Ag committee noted that clustering on 2-acre lots would be more workable and beneficial to the landowner in the Conservation zone than in A1. Mr. West said the lakefront and Conservation zones are outside of the consultants' scope of work.

A conversation concerning the Hamlet of Waterburg ensued. Ms. Kiley said the Town has two different Hamlet Districts – H1 and H2. Jacksonville is mixed used whereas Waterburg is all residential. The uses in the R1 and H2 are almost the same and the big difference is the lot size. Waterburg's lot sizes are .5 acres, and there are few properties that can be subdivided.

Ms. Ritter said she noticed attendees of the ag focus group were receptive to clustering and interested in the logistics of it, like how to pay for roads. Mr. West said he was surprised the consensus from attendees was that it is important to preserve the Town's rural character. He did feel density averaging could have been better explained. It seemed there was some aversion to

that option. Density averaging has the potential to allow incremental 1 or 2 lots at a time, which you cannot do with a cluster, he said.

Mr. Tselekis felt some of the graphics used in the presentation were misleading because the Town does not have big developers proposing large projects; in most cases, a farmer is trying to sell a single lot. With density averaging, which spreads houses out along a road, that row would take 100 years or so to develop, given the rate of housing development in the Town, he said.

Ms. Marino said road frontage was a point of discussion when zoning was redone. Stakeholders then had considered avoiding cutting up road frontage. Consultants, Town Board and Planning Board members all worked on it.

It seems, Mr. West said, there is a clear mandate to put forward a strong farmland protection proposal that might be stronger than what people want. Consultants could propose the strongest option, he said, as they did in the Town of Catherine, where they proposed a 20-acre minimum and ultimately ended up at 7.5 acres, up from 2 acres. Does the Committee want to offer another focus-group session prior to a draft proposal? he asked.

Mr. Hawkes and Ms. Ritter felt they wanted to see a proposal first. Ms. Zahler expressed concern that draft plans are sometimes presumed to be final drafts. She hopes the draft becomes an opportunity for more feedback.

After further discussion, the Committee reached a consensus for Randall + West to proceed with a preliminary draft that outlines uses – i.e. bulk regulations – for the Ag Zone. The draft would then be circulated to the Steering Committee for review, then onto the Ag Committee and Sustainability Advisory Council, before it is then circulated to the ag community at large. The question of communication between the various Committees still needs to be addressed, Ms. Zahler said. The option of one or more Steering Committee members attending meetings of the Ag and Sustainability committees was offered, though Ms. Ritter noted it is important for the Steering Committee to see things in writing.

Mr. Hawkes proposed that the consultants again make their presentation – but this time a more condensed version focused on larger concerns – when the second ag focus-group session is held. By then, the Ag Committee will have received a lot of feedback from the draft proposal.

Jacksonville zoning meeting prep

Ms. Zahler said the Jacksonville community had previously expressed interest in a second meeting to discuss zoning changes. That meeting will be held on Monday, June 6, at the Jacksonville church. Phil Antweiler had suggested a 6:30 p.m. start for dinner, with the meeting beginning at 7 p.m. The Town has access to the church from 6 to 9 p.m. The Jacksonville Community Association has a listserv that can promote the meeting. Plus, on Sunday, June 5, the Jacksonville community will host a festival, which would provide opportunity for timely promotion of the meeting.

Mr. West said his understanding of the meeting was to be more design-oriented. Apparent at the previous meeting was a lack of understanding about parameters of a hamlet center. He said walking through examples of good hamlet centers might make sense before jumping into zoning specifics. Zoning is a necessary focus of the meeting because zoning does not get homes remodeled or garbage cleaned up; we have to make sure we are being clear about the expectations of what we can do for them, he said.

Asked about what most concerns Jacksonville residents, Ms. Zahler said there are two. With older residents moving out of their homes, there are concerns those home would be sold and chopped up for affordable housing. Some residents associate affordable housing with absentee landlords and dilapidated properties. The other concern is the empty lots currently owned by Exxon Mobil. People in Jacksonville have expressed interest in a Park n' Ride location for TCAT service, she said. Mr. Hawkes added there may be community members who are fearful that their property values and taxes will go up, making their homes less affordable. Ms. Zahler said the Town is currently at work with an independent firm that is conducting an income survey of users in the Jacksonville water district, which could qualify for water improvement grants. She suggested the consultants' presentation focus on the hamlet, zoning and design standards.

Mr. West said the level of detail during the meeting is a question to consider. Consultants plan to have Noah Demarest speak about parameters. We need to think about at least two zones in the hamlet, and explore the possibility of changing hamlet boundaries, Mr. West said. Where and how does that boundary grow to allow hamlet cluster? he asked.

As for the meeting structure, Mr. West said the presentation portion could take 30 minutes, leaving 45 minutes for conversation and activity. He said he was under the impression design specifics would be a focus, considering potential for development in the hamlet is limited to 5 to 10 parcels, as opposed to thousands in the Ag District.

Committee members discussed dedicating part of its June 2 meeting to ironing out details of the second Jacksonville focus-group session. Mr. West agreed to discuss with CJ Randall an updated schedule for ag-related zoning matters.

Mr. Hawkes MADE the MOTION to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Tselekis SECOND the MOTION. The motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Louis A. DiPietro II on May 16, 2016.