

**TOWN OF ULYSSES**  
**STEERING COMMITTEE FOR ZONING UPDATES**  
**JACKSONVILLE FOCUS GROUP**  
MEEING MINUTES  
Monday, June 6, 2016  
7:00 p.m.

Approved: July 7, 2016

**Present:** Chair Nancy Zahler, Darby Kiley, Elizabeth Thomas, and George Tselekis; CJ Randall of Randall + West, and Noah Demarest, STREAM Collaborative.

Rod Hawkes and Sue Ritter were excused.

**Public in Attendance:** Chuck Hooper, Amanda Kirchgessner, Kathleen Brahney, Dave and Jean Schurman, Tim Reynolds, Ed Gatch, Michael Boggs, Heath Ness, Deb Perkins, Vincent Soderholm, Greg Grodem, Sue DeCotiis, Bridgid Beames, Scott Dolphin, Phil Antweiler, Paul Ginalski, Nancy C., Anne Koreman, Beckie Cardina, Sara Stickane, Dick Coogan, Beth and Don Hickman, Jim Boyer, the Loureys, Barbara Bristow, Cail and Laura Butterfield, Geri Judd, Lorna Close, Diane Hillman, and George Hertzler.

Ms. Zahler called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. She started by saying the zoning update project is in its early stages, and nothing has been decided. She then congratulated co-sponsors of the previous day's Jacksonville community picnic. Taking an informal survey of the audience, Ms. Zahler asked those in attendance to identify, by raising their hands, how long they have lived in Jacksonville. Most have lived in the community between 6 and 15 years or more than 20 years. She then asked how many in attendance regularly walk from their homes to the hamlet center, to places like the post office or church. Roughly 15 raised their hands.

Ms. Zahler then gave updates on Jacksonville-related news. Through the Jacksonville Community Association, the Town was made aware of a need for improved code enforcement. The Town Board is currently considering a draft law to make code enforcement successful, she said. First review of the draft law is slated for the next Town Board meeting on Tuesday, June 14. A copy of the draft law would be made available via the community's listserv.

On the subject of the income survey underway in Jacksonville, Ms. Zahler said everyone in the water district should receive one. Those surveys will help the Town when applying for grants to support improvements. She urged those in attendance to send in their surveys and stressed that information contained in the surveys is confidential.

Lastly, Ms. Zahler referenced the recent for-sale signs posted on properties long owned by Exxon Mobil, which she said has satisfied the DEC's requirements for clean up and has expressed interest in divesting of those properties. In some ways, the availability of the properties and the current zoning project are related, she said. The Town is interested in preserving the church, adding the Town commissioned a small study to trace the history of the gasoline spill. That study is publically available, she said.

Asked if the Town is interesting in pursuing a historical landmark designation for the church, Ms. Zahler said it is one of the Town's goals. One resident said it did not seem to make sense for Exxon Mobil to post for-sale signs while being involved with negotiations with the Town. Another resident asked about access to soil tests. Ms. Zahler said soil borings were done in 2014 at Exxon's expense. Results of those tests are public, she said.

An audience member questioned why thousands of dollars would potentially be poured into the old church. He said he did not understand the effort to pursue historical designation. Ms. Hillmann gave a brief history of the building and said Exxon has been the owner for 30 years and done very little with it.

Ms. Zahler was asked of the Town's interest in owning the building. She said the intent is not to have a town-financed renovation of the old church.

Mr. Antweiler formally objected to the property's broker advertising it as single-family and multiunit. There is not multiunit in the zoning code, he said; this wording could imply possibilities for development. A fellow resident said she agreed with Mr. Antweiler.

Ms. Randall began the presentation on zoning at 7:20 p.m. Mr. Demarest also provided information on design standards.

The presentation concluded at 8:12 p.m., at which time a Question and Answer session ensued.

A resident asked how long it would take for the updated zoning to take effect. Ms. Randall said a public hearing would have to be held, as well as environmental quality reviews, with adoption as soon as early next year. Once adopted, the zoning is usually immediate, she said. Ms. Zahler added the review process could go back and forth between the Town and community for as long as it takes.

Mr. Antweiler said the updated zoning has many good ideas that are worth exploring. He noted it is important to realize the hamlet is a small place, and it does not take very many new developments over a decade to produce the kind of rapid growth that could change the hamlet's character. He urged consultants to be mindful of the scale of such changes.

Ms. Hillmann noted the issue of egress and ingress along route 96. Some areas are extremely dangerous, especially with vehicles parked along the roadway. Also, in regard to bank drive-thrus, she said the changes in banking have limited the need for them. Having no drive-thrus in the hamlet would be preferable. Ms. Randall said current zoning's definition of restaurants does not preclude a drive-thru; it is a distinct possibility for the Route 96 corridor. There are companies who scope out state highways that can deliver a customer base for people driving through town, she said. The Town can say no to drive-thrus, she added.

A resident asked about the likelihood of reducing the speed limit, if the hamlet were to become more walkable. As it is now, pedestrians are taking their lives into their own hands to cross the street, she said. In response, Ms. Randall said, with an established hamlet, the State Department of Transportation would comply with elements like road bumpouts, off-street parking and street

trees, to help mitigate speed; the State DOT has been much more amenable to reducing speed limits in town centers than in previous years, she added.

Mr. Antweiler pointed out the community park does not have any zoning limitations that would prevent it from being turned into a flag lot. In lieu of protective zoning, the Jacksonville Community Association has kept the park an accessible, public space. Better zoning is needed to protect the park, he said.

A resident said a beautification project was talked about in the hamlet relatively recently, but it is difficult to formulate a clear vision without anything concrete. He asked if a hamlet revitalization was part of the concepts. In response, Ms. Zahler said zoning is part of a several-step process, with the larger goal of drawing up a plan and finding ways to get resources to implement it. The income survey, for instance, could help the Town secure funding to do community planning, like purchase a blighted building. There are other funding sources to help towns affected by environmental contamination. The Town would be open to helping leverage some of the efforts in securing funding, but it is not in the position to fund all of it, she said.

A resident asked about sidewalks. Ms. Randall said streetscape standards can be set through zoning. A streetscape would show sidewalks, on-street parking and have a design speed built into it. Design speed, Mr. Demarest added, is different from the posted speed limit in that various design elements – buildings closer to the roadway, street-side trees, etc. – imply a village area and communicate to drivers to slow down. Ms. Hillman said on-street parking exacerbates the problem of having no sidewalks, since pedestrians must walk in the street in the wintertime. Route 96 is extremely dangerous when cars are parked on both sides of the roadway because visibility is limited, she said. Ms. Randall said they would be examining streetscapes with the quarter-mile range of the hamlet. Ms. Zahler urged the audience to note any aspects of zoning they think should or should not be included in the future. Comments can also be emailed to her, Ms. Thomas or Ms. Kiley, she said.

Mr. Boggs expressed concern about recent development over top of Cold Springs. Ms. Randall said local governments have the power to regulate streams.

The option of making Jacksonville a historic district was discussed. Ms. Zahler said pre-existing structures would be grandfathered under zoning updates. Ms. Thomas said the Town did a historic inventory in Jacksonville a couple of years ago and could create a historic advisory committee to recommend houses for historic preservation. The only problem is New York State does not provide funding for historic sites like other states do, she said.

Mr. Hertzler noted past stores in the hamlet and asked if similar businesses would be considered in this new plan. Try to take into account what people could get in the hamlet without having to drive into Ithaca or Lansing, he said. Ms. Randall said Sanborn maps would certainly show what buildings existed in the hamlet. To Mr. Hertzler's point about big-box stores, Ms. Randall said there have been huge declines over the years in big-box store development and retail power centers.

Ms. Cardina felt the Town may be biting off more than it can chew. On one hand, there is talk of developing a safer, more walkable hamlet, but there has been concern about a safe residential area. She thought Trumansburg does meet many of the needs of Jacksonville residents but does not feel it meets the needs for a safe hamlet. Another resident asked if more businesses would mean a safer community. Ms. Cardina noted previous businesses in Jacksonville that were great at the time but ultimately folded. The effort to improve safety is critical, she said.

A homeowner on Route 96 said she would love sidewalks but, given that it is a State road, how does the Town proceed? Ms. Randall reiterated the State DOT's willingness to alter streetscapes for village centers, but we – consultants, Town leaders, and the community – need to have a vibrant village center first. We want to make that first strong step, she said.

The meeting ended at 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Louis A. DiPietro II on June 14, 2016.