

TOWN OF ULYSSES
STEERING COMMITTEE FOR ZONING UPDATES
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, August 4, 2016
7:00 p.m.

Approved: August 15, 2016

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

Public in Attendance: Sue Poelvoorde of the Town's Sustainability Advisory Council, and John Wertis of the Town's Ag Committee.

Agenda Review; Minutes Review (7/25/16)

Mr. Hawkes MADE the MOTION to accept the amended July 25, 2016 meeting minutes, and Ms. Ritter SECONDED the MOTION. The motion was unanimously approved, 6-0.

Zoning Draft Discussion

Topics still left to be discussed include subdivision options and the three different ways to subdivide existing lots into smaller lots, Mr. West said. With an illustration of an 80-acre parcel to guide the conversation, Mr. West said the three options are: (1) 4 20-acre lots; (2) 7 fragment lots – varying in size from .5 to 2 acres – along with the single residual lot; (3) or a cluster of 9 fragment lots and the single residual lot. Option 3 is the preferred option, he said.

Ms. Ritter asked if, under option 1, each of the 20-acre parcels would remain in farming. Mr. West said they would hope so, but there is the possibility each 20-acre parcel could be home to ranchettes, with no farming operations. The third option, he said, offers the property owner a 30-percent bonus, allowing 9 fragment lots along with the single remaining residual lot.

Mr. Tselekis said he had two issues with option 2: by enforcing a 50-foot setback, the Town would be spacing out parcels, and would the Planning Board have to consider each individual subdivision? Ms. Kiley said the applicant would need to come before the Planning Board for each subdivision, if the subdivisions are done one at a time. Ms. Zahler added the incentive for the applicant would be option 3 – to subdivide the parcels all at once and take advantage of the 30-percent bonus. How to track timelines and when individual subdivisions took place would have to be spelled out, Ms. Kiley said. The County Assessment Office maintains tax maps, which can be used to track subdivisions, she said. There is also the question of what the Planning Board would be reviewing if the subdivisions meet all requirements. Ms. Zahler noted the question of timing and tracking subdivisions is something for the Committee to address moving forward.

A discussion ensued regarding when subdivisions trigger the need for a full review. Ms. Kiley said full reviews are tied to New York State realty law. Ms. Zahler reiterated questions that could

use further consideration: What procedures are in place if someone is to subdivide over time? What does the timeline permit, whose level of review is required, and at which step? Ms. Kiley said nothing is written about subdivision timing with the current zoning; three years is what the Town goes on.

The Purchase of Development Rights was briefly discussed. Mr. Wertis noted wooded areas in the example illustration, and said the Town needs to look at individual parcels when it comes to development.

A general discussion ensued in which Committee members weighed various scenarios involving how land could be subdivided under the three options. Setbacks were also discussed. Ms. Ritter suggested a maximum road frontage for fragmented lots. Ultimately, Committee members reached a consensus to not include a maximum lot frontage figure.

Mr. West clarified the Committee can change the subdivision minimums and maximums under consideration. All variables can be tweaked.

The subject then turned to uses. Ms. Kiley asked how the Town is to handle a hobby farmer who, for example, has a 2-acre basil farm and a roadside stand but does not meet the State's definition of Ag. Is such a farmer afforded the same protections? Under State guidelines, a farmer must have a minimum of 10 producing acres, meet a certain revenue threshold and be in operation for a set time. Does the Town need to define hobby farm within the updated zoning? she asked.

Mr. West said they could define Ag more broadly than how the State does. Based on feedback from community members, consultants have put in really broad definitions of Ag-related activities in the A1 zone, Mr. West said. As written now, he continued, a hop grower on 2 acres could have a micro brewery in the A1 zone, on any parcel, unless there are additional requirements included in the updated zoning. Asked how Americana Winery would be classified, Mr. West said they are allowed a winery if they are selling on site. Processing for your farm is allowed, but setting up – for instance – a cannery and importing tomatoes is not.

Questions still left unanswered, Ms. Zahler said, include: whether or not the Committee should consider specific uses by lot size; whether or not to allow facilities of limited size to do non-farm ag processing – meaning the production of foods not grown on site; and whether or not commercial composting is a site plan use and, if allowed, would there be standards associated with them?

Committee members and Mr. West agreed to hold a second meeting on Monday, August 15.

Ms. Zahler asked the Committee to be mindful of any specific questions to refer to the Town's two advisory boards – the Ag Committee and the Sustainability Council – like how the Town should site large-scale solar arrays and if there should be guidelines.

Ms. Kiley MADE the MOTION to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Tselekiis SECONDED the MOTION. The motion was unanimously passed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Louis A. DiPietro II on August 12, 2016.