

**TOWN OF ULYSSES  
ZONING UPDATES STEERING COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, 01/04/2018**

**Approved: January 18, 2018**

**Call to Order:** 7:00 p.m.

**Present:** Chair Liz Thomas, and Committee members Michael Boggs, Rod Hawkes, Darby Kiley and Sue Ritter; CJ Randall and David West of Randall + West.

**Public in Attendance:** Rich Goldman, Nancy Zahler, Roxanne Marino, Bob Howarth, Cheryl Thompson, and John Wertis.

**Agenda Review; Minutes Review (11/30/2017)**

Ms. Thomas MADE the MOTION to accept the November 30, 2017 meeting minutes, and Mr. Boggs SECONDED the MOTION. The motion was unanimously carried.

**Privilege of the Floor**

Responding to a question from Mr. Wertis, Ms. Thomas said up to two representatives of each stakeholder group would be invited to the Zoning Updates Steering Committee's (ZUSC) next meeting on January 18. Other committee members are welcome to attend, she said. Mr. Wertis said it is a great idea, but not enough. He does not believe the public really knows what is happening. Also, Randall + West's report on Town subdivisions exaggerates the number of housing starts occurring here. A valid study should have been undertaken at the beginning of the zoning deliberation process. Has ZUSC discussed the subdivision analysis report yet, and does the Town Board have the resolution that the Planning Board passed on January 2, 2018? he asked.

Ms. Thomas said ZUSC cannot be sure it has seen the report Mr. Wertis refers to. The group has received many comments.

Ms. Marino suggested ZUSC bring in a facilitator to lead the meeting; Mr. Goldman agreed.

Ms. Thompson suggested perhaps using non-tillable land as criteria for determining housing development potential within the Ag District. That may require site plan review.

There was a brief back-and-forth involving Mr. Wertis, Mr. Howarth and ZUSC members regarding the make-up and size of the Ag Committee.

**Debrief from November 30 meeting**

Ms. Thomas had several takeaways from the meeting, primarily the issue of CAFOs being reviewed by peers and the support of Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs). Perhaps ZUSC wants to make a statement to the Town Board regarding PDRs.

Ms. Randall pitched the idea of consolidating questions within the November 30 minutes and addressing each one. It was difficult to answer questions directly at the meeting because of the crosstalk. Ms. Thomas suggested compiling a Frequently Asked Questions list.

Mr. West felt confusion and misinformation were the common threads among each of the breakout groups at the November 30 meeting, specifically what zoning can and cannot do. ZUSC and consultants cannot know what will happen; they can only set the table for development and make regulations to control what is and is not permissible. The November meeting was the first in which Mr. West did not hear any talk of renters, drugs and crime, which are typically brought up in zoning discussions by Jacksonville community members. Tiny homes were also suggested as a solution to housing issues, he said.

Discussion ensued on how best to organize the multiple comments, questions and memos received on the zoning proposal. Committee members also addressed the best way to offer explanations as to why changes were made to the existing zoning. Adding the draft zoning document to Google Docs, which would allow each member of the committee to weigh in, seemed to be the preferred option. Mr. Goldman suggested ZUSC and the Town Board interact before the draft proposal comes before the Town Board. There may be an item within the draft that the Town Board does not support. A discussion before a full proposal would save time, and it is good politics, he said. Normally, the Committee does the best it can and presents a proposal to the Town Board with explanations, Ms. Thomas said, and the Town Board may change it how they choose; she suggests ZUSC go this route.

Maximum lot sizes were discussed. Responding to a question from Mr. Goldman, Mr. West said property owners have two routes for subdivisions in the Ag/Rural zone: they can subdivide for housing development a limited number of times, and they can subdivide an unlimited number of ag lots, but no houses may be built on them. That seems very restrictive, Mr. Goldman said. Ms. Randall quoted the Ag and Farmland Protection Plan, which states there should be a maximum lot size. Randall + West recommended a 2-acre maximum lot size because, as Mr. West added, they want houses to take up the least amount of space. The current proposal calls for a 4-acre maximum lot size.

Ms. Thomas said she met with Jay Franklin of the County Assessment Office to discuss how land is assessed. Added Ms. Marino: Mr. Franklin said land is assessed based on its value of current use, not its future use. Do you not want to know the value of land on the open market? Mr. Wertis asked, adding there is a discrepancy between farm assessment and the market value. It would be worthwhile to poll local real estate agents to find out how much ag land recently sold for. Ms. Thomas said all sales are recorded with the Assessment office; they have up-to-date sales information. In their meeting, Mr. Franklin also did a comparison of three agricultural lots. What the data shows, Mr. West added, is a 100-acre lot is not worth the sum of ten 10-acre lots. A back-and-forth between Mr. Wertis and ZUSC members ensued over assessments vs. market value, up-to-date sales information within the Assessment office and PDRs.

## **Zoning map**

ZUSC then spent significant time considering residential properties located on the Town-side edge of the Village, near Rabbit Run Road, as well as an idea to extend the Conservation Zone up and along Dubois Road. First, regarding the Rabbit Run Road area, Ms. Thomas proposed ZUSC consider expanding the R2 to these areas not within the County Ag District. The suggestion, Ms. Thomas said, came from a resident of that area who questioned why so much of the R1 was being put in the Ag zone. The woman's argument was that the area is already residential and is in close proximity to the Village; why not leave it as a non-ag zone?

On the subject of the Conservation Zone, Ms. Kiley noted that given current discussions regarding lot sizes and development, the Town could extend its existing Conservation Zone along Dubois Road to Willow Creek Road and along the Black Diamond Trail. The Town Comprehensive Plan calls for an environmental protection zone, and an extension of the Conservation Zone would do that. Mr. West will draw up a proposal on this particular initiative.

ZUSC members scheduled future meetings through March. They will be held: January 18, February 8, February 22, March 1 and March 22.

Logistics and agenda for the January 18 meeting were discussed in depth. Ms. Thomas said she would compile a list of recurring comments and would ask each committee/board chair to poll their members on the three questions or areas they would like to discuss.

Having read a good deal of the ZUSC minutes, Mr. Wertis noted ZUSC rarely takes a formal vote when a proposal is put forward, like for density-based averaging, for example. Ms. Thomas said the Committee does not vote on every change it makes to the draft document, but instead considers the proposal a fluid document, which ZUSC will vote on as a whole once it is completed.

Ms. Ritter MADE the MOTION to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Hawkes SECONDED the MOTION. The motion was unanimously carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Louis A. DiPietro II on January 11, 2018.