

**TOWN OF ULYSSES
ZONING UPDATES STEERING COMMITTEE
FINAL MINUTES
Thursday, 04/05/2018**

Approved: May 3, 2018

Call to Order: 7:01 p.m.

Present: Chair Liz Thomas, and Committee members Michael Boggs, Greg Reynolds, Rod Hawkes, Darby Kiley, Diane Hillmann, Roxanne Marino, Steve Morreale, and Rebecca Schneider.

Public in Attendance: John Wertis, John and Linda Liddle.

Agenda Review; Minutes Review (03/22/2018)

The March 22, 2018 meeting minutes were not yet available.

Privilege of the Floor

Mr. Wertis noted the challenge of timing with all monthly stakeholder meetings: ZUSC meets, and then liaisons take issues and concerns back to their respective boards for comment. However, comments are not often reported back to ZUSC by the time its next meeting happens. He referenced an email Ms. Schneider sent to ZUSC and participating stakeholder boards and quoted her introductory paragraph that expresses the feeling that the zoning process is being rushed.

Item for discussion/decision making: Draft zoning map, How design standards apply to new agricultural uses (signs, parking, loading docks) and elsewhere

Ms. Thomas suggested ZUSC address design standards first. In the 65 comments from the public, she stated, there were some who completely opposed design standards, while others specifically addressed loading docks, sign sizes and parking. Ms. Schneider stressed CAFOs and manure spreading should not be left out of the discussion; at some point, we need to discuss those, she said.

Loading Docks

Beginning first with loading docks, Ms. Thomas suggested deleting “Section A. Loading Areas” sub 1 from the proposed design standards. It reads: “No loading berth may be located on a front façade, and no loading area may be located in a frontyard, except in IL and B1 Districts”.

Mr. Hawkes MADE the MOTION to remove this language, and Ms. Thomas SECONDED the MOTION.

Further discussion ensued on specifics of the language.

Ultimately, a variation of Section A, sub 1, was offered: “In the R2, Hamlet Neighborhood and Hamlet Center, no loading berth may be located on a front façade, and no loading area may be located in a frontyard.”

Ms. Thomas offered this language as a friendly amendment, which was accepted by Mr. Hawkes.

The vote to approve this language was 8-1, with Mr. Reynolds offering the lone dissenting vote.

Sign sizes

To contextualize the discussion, Ms. Thomas and Ms. Kiley had recently measured some existing signage within Town: the former Barangus has a 44 square-foot sign; Lakshmi, 13.2 square feet; Brownies, 24 square feet; and Redders, 40 square feet. Current zoning allows up to 64 total square footage for signs. Ms. Thomas thought 64 square feet is too large and suggested possibly retaining the cumulative 64 sq.ft. sign total per parcel, but limiting the size of individual signs to a certain number, like 24 sqft.

Mr. Morreale felt the current zoning rules may be adequate, referencing the BZA’s prior work with the Taughannock Inn project and its applicants, who had pressed for more signage. Ultimately, current zoning limited the applicants in both size and number, he said.

Ms. Kiley said she would like to see a more simplified approach to signage, including some standard numbers to establish an allowable size.

A long discussion ensued on specifics of signage size as well as rights of way, sign placement, roadside stand signage and sign illumination.

Mr. Morreale thought ZUSC should address the complexities of the current law, while Ms. Kiley supported much of the new language within Design Standards Section B “Sign Illumination” and Section C “Sign Measurement”.

Reiterating comments from the Planning Board, Ms. Schneider called for reference to dark-sky parameters wherever possible. She also asked about roadside signs that express opinion or use profane language. Ms. Kiley said the Town cannot dictate or regulate what people chose to write on signs, but the Town can address temporary signage. It is worth limiting how many and how long they are up, she said. Mr. Reynolds noted that a short temporary sign law could negatively impact farmers, who often grow and sell a variety of crops over an extended period of time.

Several ZUSC members opposed the idea of a total sign maximum square footage allowance of, say, 64 square feet without any cap on number of signs (For example, with a 64 square foot threshold and no cap on size or quantity, a property owner could have one large 64 sqft sign, or eight 8-square foot signs).

One idea offered was to allow for a single permanent, free-standing sign of up to 24 square feet per 400 feet of road frontage. Another idea was to set a maximum total signage allowance of 64 square feet, prohibit any sign exceeding 36 square feet and limit the number of signs per parcel. No proposals were formally voted on.

Ms. Kiley explained that part of the problem with the existing language on signs is the uses do not match the uses in other sections of the zoning. If those uses were consistent, the existing zoning would work better.

Ultimately, Ms. Thomas suggested bolstering existing language with parts of the proposed language, incorporating a sizing chart, and including dark-sky language and parameters for freestanding signs.

Parking

Addressing parking problems in Jacksonville, Ms. Hillman said much of the issue stems from existing single-family houses being split into duplexes. The key is not so much required parking areas, she said, but rather the lack of controls on cutting up one-family households with road frontage into multiple family dwellings. Whatever parking you once had for a single-family residence is not enough for a duplex, she said. Ms. Kiley suggested tabling the discussion until ZUSC addresses Jacksonville zoning.

Reading over proposed language, Mr. Morreale said there is nothing to stop a property owner from parking their car in a sideyard setback or on their neighbor's property line. Mr. Boggs suggested prohibiting parking in front and sideyard setbacks, but both Ms. Thomas and Ms. Kiley opposed this, saying it would cause problems.

Another suggestion was to add language to encourage the use of permeable surfaces wherever possible.

Maximum building footprint

Ms. Thomas thought that if the proposed zoning includes a 20,000 square-foot maximum footprint size in the Ag/Rural zone, then other zones in the Town should have that 20,000 square foot maximum as well. This discussion would close with Ms. Thomas suggesting ZUSC consider this option moving forward. However, during the discussion of max footprint, Ms. Schneider addressed her pending comments from the Planning Board and asked that the comments be considered for the next ZUSC meeting, since it did not look like there would be enough time to address them tonight. ZUSC still needs to discuss other areas like CAFOs and stream standards, she said, adding that she does not feel she has been given the time to properly present the Planning Board's concerns. Perhaps in future meetings, liaisons can get five minutes each to report comments and/or concerns to ZUSC.

Zoning Map

Ms. Schneider was firm in her sentiment that the zoning map was far from done. Planning Board members did not support a one-size-fits-all approach, with a single Ag/Rural zone with several permitted uses. The Town's prime soils, for one, should be treated like a resource in the same vein as wetlands or Taughannock Falls. Prime soils should be classified as A1, for instance, with other areas designated as A2, she said. Ms. Thomas expressed the need for a base zone before completing a natural resource inventory with appropriate overlays. Ms. Schneider said there are pros and cons to overlays; they are not zones, and most people are not aware of protective parameters within overlays, she said. Ms. Thomas reiterated the deadline associated with the zoning proposal (as outlined within the NYSERDA grant, which is funding the zoning rewrites), whereas the natural resource inventory has the luxury of time. Wetlands are important, but right now wetlands are not within the scope of the current zoning project, she said. Ms. Schneider suggested ZUSC find out precisely the minimum deliverable required under the grant.

Ms. Marino said she feels there is a fundamental conflict playing out among stakeholder groups regarding the zoning initiative, and the Town Board may need to weigh in with clear direction. Zoning updates have been discussed for the last four years, and what the Planning Board is suggesting reflects a massive change, she said.

Mr. Reynolds said he had been told that the Conservation Zone was outside of the scope of the zoning update work, yet ZUSC is considering expanding that very zone. The reason for the proposed expansion, Ms. Kiley explained, is to bring the Zone more in line with environmental protection areas. She expressed her support for the zoning map.

Mr. Boggs said he is concerned with the financial side of the grant. With Ms. Kiley leaving and with limited meetings from now until the deadline, ZUSC may run out of time, he said. He thought the map was fine but did reference the importance of further considering the Town's northwestern side, near the Village of Trumansburg.

Noting the \$40,000 that the Town would have to cover if the grant money were not awarded, Mr. Reynolds thought it a small amount compared to what some Town residents have invested in their land.

Ms. Hillman said she has specific concerns, but she likes the intent behind the zoning map. She also likes Mr. Boggs' idea of forming smaller subgroups to tackle aspects of zoning.

What we are charged with, Mr. Hawkes said, is to present a proposal to the Town Board. He felt ZUSC should present the map, as written, to the Town Board and address overlays after the pressure of the grant is behind them.

Privilege of the Floor

Mr. Wertis feels the community members he is familiar with were only made aware of the zoning rewrite process back in November. He felt the process of adding overlays was backward and asked how ZUSC would explain it to the public. If you pursue overlays, you have to do a much better job of informing the public, he said. He noted a map in the Ag and Farmland Protection Plan that identifies the Town's southeast corner as an area for development.

Ms. Liddle asked if the zoning rewrites – once approved by the Town Board – would come before the public via a permissive referendum. Ms. Marino was fairly certain that the rewrites would constitute a change in local law, which would be subject to a public hearing and a board vote, not a permissive referendum. Ms. Thomas explained the process: once ZUSC reaches a consensus on the zoning draft, it will be sent along to the Town Board and the general public before a formal public hearing.

Ms. Kiley MADE the MOTION to adjourn the meeting, and Ms. Schneider SECONDED the MOTION.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Louis A. DiPietro II on April 8, 2018.