

Google Groups

More Updates from the Town of Ulysses...

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Indeed Happy SUNNY (and a teeny bit warmer) Saturday.

More from the Town of Ulysses....

ZONING UPDATE

Below is a summary of what's gone on with the zoning update in Ulysses and some goals on timelines going into the future. Please keep a watch on the listserv to find out more as the process moves forward. The next draft of various zoning pieces can be expected sometime in May (fingers crossed!) with Jacksonville possibly in June. The Town Board is committed to several more public information meetings to have questions answered and welcomes comments throughout the process.

HOW DID WE GET TO THIS POINT ON THE ZONING?

Background information:

- The 2009 Comprehensive Plan called for development of zoning to implement several new zones. After creating the Lakeshore and Conservation Zones with volunteers and Town staff, the Town sought financial help from New York State to reach the remaining Comprehensive Plan goals. The grant to update the Ulysses zoning was written and submitted in 2014, and granted through NYSERDA in 2015 and covers these areas: Ag/Rural; Business; Office and Technology Mixed Use (OTMU); and Jacksonville. The original deadline of June 2017 has been extended to September 2018.
- At the time the grant goals were written, the Ulysses Comprehensive Plan was 5 years old and the Ulysses Ag and Farmland Protection Plan was 1 year old.
- On **5/26/2015**, the Town Board authorized the grant with NYSERDA for \$40,000 to be signed.
- To assist in the implementation of the grant, on **7/14/15**, in resolution 113, the Town Board authorized a consultant selection committee and authorized the Town Supervisor to enter into a contract with the firm the committee selected. The committee consisted of:
 - David Means, former **dairy farmer** and **member of the BZA** who had also been on the **Planning Board**;
 - Sue Poelvoorde, **Professional Planner**, the former chair of the **Comprehensive Planning Committee** for both the 1999 plan and the 2009 plan, former **Town Board member**;
 - David Blake, the current Chair of the **Planning Board**,
 - Nancy Zahler, Town **Councilperson** and **Deputy Supervisor**;
 - Darby Kiley, **Professional Town Planner, Zoning Officer** and **Stormwater Officer**; and
 - Liz Thomas, **Town Supervisor**, former member of the **Comprehensive Planning Committee** and former liaison to the **Ag and Farmland Protection Plan** Committee and **former crop consultant**.
- Based on the Consultant Selection Committee's decision, the Town Board authorized the Town Supervisor to sign an agreement with Randall and West from all the applicants. The contract was signed on **9/10/2015**.
- The original 6 member steering committee was appointed by the Town Board on **10/15/2015**. The directive to this group was to write the first draft of the revised zoning. This committee consisted of:
 - Rod Hawkes, former **Planning Board** member, former **Comprehensive Plan** member, whose professional work at Cornell has been in the areas of **agriculture and farming**.
 - George Tselekis - 20+ year chair of the **BZA**
 - Darby Kiley, **Professional Town Planner, Zoning Officer** and **Stormwater Officer**; and
 - Sue Ritter, **Director of Planning** for the Town of Ithaca and Ulysses resident;
 - Liz Thomas, **Town Supervisor**, former member of the **Comprehensive Planning Committee** and

- former liaison to the **Ag and Farmland Protection Plan** Committee and **former crop consultant**.
- Nancy Zahler, Town **Councilperson** and **Deputy Supervisor**; who later became the liaison to the **Ag Committee** and was replaced by Councilperson, Michael Boggs.
- Acknowledging the importance of ag community voices in the update, the Town Board accepted the recommendation of the former Chair of the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Committee, and authorized by resolution on **6/25/2014**, a 9-member Agriculture Committee to be formed. After outreach to the ag community, there were not 9 applicants for the committee. On **11/10/2015**, the Town Board changed the required number of members to a 5-member board and members were appointed on **4/12/2016**.
 - The update for the Ag/Rural zone, as well as the other zones listed, must comply with the Ulysses plans and should be supported by others. Plans being used as guidance are:
 - Ulysses Comprehensive Plan (**2009**)
 - Ulysses Agriculture and Farmland Protection plan (**2013**)
 - Tompkins Comprehensive Plan (**2015**),
 - Tompkins County Farmland Protection Plan. (**2015**)
 - Route 96 corridor management study (2008-**2010**),
 - Tompkins County Conservation Strategy (**2012**)
 - NYS Ag and Markets law—article 25AA
 - National “smart growth” goals.

Outreach and input so far (including listserv messages going out to nearly 900 residents)...

- 2/ 27/2016 - Trumansburg Fire Hall, General Kick-off meeting.
- 4/14/2016 - Outreach and input meeting for ag and ag land owners.
- 6/6/16 - Outreach meeting for Jacksonville
- 1/19/17 - Outreach meeting for Jacksonville.
- 8/18/17 - Listserv message generally giving a heads up on the zoning update and that a public information meeting will be held soon.
- 10/24/17 - present draft of Ag/Rural to Town Board
- 11/9/17 - notice of the 11/30 public information meeting on listserv
- 11/24/17 - ditto
- 11/30/17 - Public Information meeting is held including sessions on all parts of the zoning revision, broken into 3 sections.
- 12/22/17 - on listserv, background on zoning, and extension of comment period to 1/25 from 1/11 based on the public meeting on 11/30
- Innumerable instances of input from Planning Board, BZA, Ag Committee, Conservation and Sustainability Committee and Jacksonville.
- 1/18/2018 - Steering committee is expanded to include one representative from each: Planning Board, BZA, CSAC, Ag Committee, Jacksonville Community Association.
- By 1/25/18 at least 64 individual comments submitted in response to the November 2017 draft of the zoning update.
- Ag committee has done a great job notifying the ag community of the update.
- The zoning update has several web pages on the Ulysses site and has had links on its home page since the beginning of the process <http://www.ulysses.ny.us/boards/zoning-update/>

HOW SHALL WE MOVE FORWARD?

As noted, there has been a great deal of input, but the input is often conflicting. As individuals, each board member has different opinions on what is right. The job of the Steering Committee is to work to create the next draft of the revised zoning, taking into account the guiding foundational documents, and the submitted comments heard, with the assistance of all the professional planners and experienced residents who have helped us to date. The final document will be a compromise--too strict for some, too lenient for others.

To date, the whole Town Board has not been deeply in the zoning discussions, but it is time for them to understand what is being proposed, therefore the ZUSC is being asked to present a draft to the Town Board soon.

Suggested timelines:

- Mid-May - ZUSC finishes the revised draft zoning on all sections covered by the grant EXCEPT Jacksonville.
- End of May - The consultants give an overview of the document to the TB once ZUSC has their final draft.
- Early June - The Town hosts a Public Information Meeting (PIM) to explain the draft and invite questions and feedback.
- End of June - ZUSC finishes Jacksonville zoning revisions to send to the TB
- July - The ZUSC, consultants, and potentially others meet with the Town Board throughout the spring and summer to help the Town Board and the public understand what is being proposed and to further give input on the draft.
- July-August - The Town Board holds a second public information meeting on their draft.
- August - The Town Board deliberates on comments to their draft
- The Town Board adopts some or all of the proposed changes to the zoning law in time to meet the NYSERDA extension deadline of September 2018.

Zoning is complicated and confusing to understand, and this update is large making it all the more difficult to understand. Summaries of each section will be written to outline and explain the changes.

These proposed timelines will be uncomfortable for some, and a welcome relief for others. To meet these goals, the zoning update will need to be top of the agenda for Town Board meetings all which are public. It will be a challenge, but Ulysses has faced challenges before, and can succeed again with the help of the members of ZUSC, all the committees that have dedicated so much time to date (Ag Committee; Planning Board; Board of Zoning Appeals; the Conservation and Sustainability Advisory Committee; and the Jacksonville Community Association), the Town Board, and the good residents of Ulysses.

Stay tuned for more updates.

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