TOWN OF ULYSSES
PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, January 02, 2018

Approved: January 16, 2018

Present: Chair David Blake, and board members Benjamin LeWalter, Rebecca Schneider, John Wertis and Sara Worden.

Mr. LeWalter was named a voting member in place of David Tyler, who was excused.

Public in Attendance: none

Call to order: 7:03 p.m.

Agenda Review; Minutes Review (12/19/17)

Meeting minutes were not yet available.

Privilege of the Floor: No one addressed the Board at this time.

Draft Zoning Discussion

Mr. Blake said Liz Thomas, chair of the Zoning Update Steering Committee (ZUSC), has invited two members from each of the Town boards and committees to attend ZUSC’s next meeting on January 18 and offer additional public input. Mr. Wertis, Ms. Schneider, and Mr. LeWalter all expressed an interest in attending the meeting.

Unrelated to zoning, Mr. Wertis offered a resolution supporting the investigation of historic properties in the Town of Ulysses and the possible creation of an overlay historic zone and historic properties local law.

Mr. Wertis MADE the MOTION to approve the resolution, and Ms. Schneider SECONDED the MOTION. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Schneider thought the proposal was a good idea. Does it include the Village of Trumansburg? It could, Mr. Wertis said, but it would be more complicated since the Town cannot govern the Village. He described his research as an ongoing project, saying he found an old map that labels structures by code, but he has been unable thus far in determining what the codes mean. A Waterburg resident, Ms. Schneider said she has seen firsthand historic structures in the Hamlet get torn down. Identifying these historic structures and learning more about the Town’s options in protecting them are important first steps and are worthwhile. She noted the number of historic buildings in Trumansburg and said more effort should be made to protect them. Mr. Blake said he supported the effort but could not support the creation of a local law.
Mr. Wertis withdrew conditions 2 and 3 from the resolution. The resolution was amended as follows:

Whereas the 2009 Town of Ulysses Comprehensive Plan begins with the identification and discussion of “historic small communities” in the town and emphasizes the desirability of preserving what remains, and

Whereas, the town is currently reviewing the zoning for the A-1, R-1, R-2, and Hamlet zones where many of these properties are located,

Therefore, The Planning Board proposes that they undertake, with the assistance of the Town Planner, to identify and map such properties.

The vote was follows:

- Mr. Blake AYE
- Mr. LeWalter AYE
- Ms. Schneider AYE
- Mr. Wertis AYE
- Ms. Worden AYE

**Result:** Resolution passed

**Draft zoning discussion**

Mr. Wertis said ZUSC has not looked at the subdivision analysis since it was submitted more than a month ago. At the Planning Board’s last meeting, it seemed there was going to be a slowdown on zoning updates, he said. There needs to be an opportunity to ask questions and get answers, not just a public hearing. Mr. Blake noted the public comment deadline on the zoning proposal has been pushed back to January 25.

Ms. Schneider offered her thoughts: there seem to be two different requests – on one side, the farming community is telling ZUSC that the committee does not have the appropriate statistics to make an informed decision; on the other side, some – like Bob Howarth and several others – are suggesting they are not concerned about the number of farmers potentially affected by the updated zoning, since so many non-farmers own the ag land and lease it for ag use. Those are two different sets of questions. Meanwhile, there are three major points of concern with the zoning proposal – acreage, road frontage and the number of subdivisions, and the overarching contention over whether or not the new zoning is actually justified. At the previous meeting of stakeholders, most liked the idea of cluster development, but it was dismissed as too expensive because the Town would need to build roads. Now, ZUSC is right back to allowing roadside development, she said. Ithaca is growing like crazy, and it is coming our way. Mr. Wertis said the Ag and Farmland Protection Plan (AFPP) Committee recognized the development in the southeast corridor of Route 96 is very different from what is happening Townwide. The current zoning review looks at the whole A1 zone as a single entity, and that is counter to what the AFPP Committee wanted, he said.
Ms. Schneider said she is concerned with the prospect of combining both ag and rural areas and giving them one set of rules. Protecting farmland, protecting farms and preventing suburbia require three different strategies.

Mr. Wertis said there has not been an effort from the ZUSC to say, “here is where we discussed this”. It has been frustrating for the Ag Committee because they do not get answers, nor do they or the public see the data used to inform decisions. There is an impression that the zoning updates are being rushed to completion, he said. Ms. Schneider said there needs to be an analysis of the full document, with justifications given for proposed changes. She offered to review the document and outline areas that need explanation. Ms. Worden said ZUSC is limited in its perspective based on its membership; the Ag Committee has not had a voice. Will there ever be a discussion when we all meet face to face? Public outreach and meeting notices are additional concerns, she said. The Town website has lots of information, but it requires hours of reading. There are commonalities of vision among the stakeholders; our collective goals overlap, she said.

Planning Board members discussed the zoning process thus far and ways it could have been improved.

The Planning Board reached a consensus to hold its next meeting on January 16.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.