



Town of Mount Hope Comprehensive Plan Update



Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) Kick-off Orientation Meeting

Mount Hope Town Hall
Thursday, June 9, 2016

Meeting Notes

The following members of the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) were present:

- Dominick Cambareri,
- Daniel Golebiowski,
- Matthew Howell,
- Wayne Howell, and
- Jim Kowalczyk

Also in attendance were:

- David Bavoso (Town Attorney),
- Chuck Voss (B&L), and
- Michael Welti (B&L)

The meeting began at about 5:30 PM. Mr. Welti suggested that everyone introduce themselves to the group and then he reviewed the agenda (attached). Mr. Bavoso agreed to be the primary contact person for the committee. A contact list was circulated so that current addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses could be collected. The committee agreed that an early evening (5:00 PM) start time for future CPUC meetings would be fine.

Mr. Voss reviewed the scope of work for this project. He provided an overview of the comprehensive plan process and explained the relationship between the comprehensive plan and the Town's zoning and subdivision regulations.

The committee discussed some of the various options for engaging the public in this process. It was agreed that an initial public workshop would be scheduled for early September, soon after the school year gets back underway. Mr. Welti noted that the workshop will not be organized like a public hearing, but instead will be setup to encourage participation by all attendees. Getting the word out about the comprehensive plan update process, and encouraging people to attend the public workshop, will be a primary responsibility of the committee. B&L will provide assistance with this when the time comes. The committee also expressed a desire to

utilize some type of community survey to solicit public input during this process. The group's initial thought was that a web-based survey would probably offer the best combination of utility and cost efficiency. Finally, there was discussion about setting up a web page for this effort – a place where information about upcoming meetings, work in progress, etc. could be kept current for members of the public. Mr. Cambareri agreed to provide B&L with the name and contact information for the person who maintains the Town's website. Mr. Welte said he would contact that person to figure out the best way to get this done early on in the process.

The committee discussed the conduct of future committee meetings. It was agreed that CPUC meetings should be open to the public and that information about upcoming meetings should be made available on the website and at Town Hall. However, since these will be working meetings of the committee it was also agreed that public comment at CPUC meetings would be limited to a specific point on the agenda. There was also a discussion about adding a couple of additional members to the CPUC. Another town resident (someone who is not already on one of the Town's boards) and a resident of the Village of Otisville will likely be added over the summer. It was noted that the Village updated its plan and zoning a few years ago and it included input from the Town. Everyone agreed that it would be beneficial to have a Village representative on the CPUC.

The committee discussed some of the topics/issues that have been of concern to the Town in recent months/years. These included:

- Commercial solar – the Town Board adopted a temporary moratorium on commercial solar projects in April. Residential roof mounted installations are still permitted (Town uses state code) but the Town intends to create regulations to manage the review of larger, solar farm project proposals that have surfaced in the last few months. The moratorium is set for six months, and it includes a provision for two, three month extensions if necessary.
- Light industrial zoning – the Town expanded the LB (local business) zoning a few years ago. The committee is interested in looking at additional opportunities for low-impact commercial/light industrial uses in appropriate locations.
- Protection of rural character, including scenic views (of the ridge), is very important to the community. There are only a handful of working farms remaining, but retaining farmland and open space is viewed favorably. The Town's Resource Preservation Zoning provides some protection now, but the committee would like to review this to determine whether additional provisions would be useful.
- Residential development – some pressure for further growth and expansion of specific communities into the Town (Hasidic community in Bloomingburg and Buddhist community at Dragon Springs). Is the Town prepared to address the potential impacts of such growth?
- Mr. Voss asked about variances – have there been many requests? Mr. Golebiowski (ZBA Chair) said that the ZBA saw mostly minor area variance requests until recently. There has been a bit more activity lately – issues primarily in the Resource Preservation

Districts. Also variance requests at the “lake community” developments – old subdivisions designed for seasonal cottages that are now the subject of year-round home construction/expansion. Very small lots and no water/sewer infrastructure.

- Watershed and stream protection considered an important subject – would like reasonable/fair regulations for protecting these resources. There was some discussion about county-owned land in the southeast corner of Town. Land was purchased by the county in the 1970’s to build a reservoir. It was never built. What is the future of this land? It was also noted that Middletown’s reservoir system is located in the Town.
- Old school building that the Town owns in the Village – what should be done with this building. Can it be renovated for some acceptable use or should it be torn down? What are the costs? The Town has tried to solicit interest in this property but has not been successful.

The committee agreed to meet again on **Thursday, July 21st at 5:00 PM** (Town Hall). B&L will start to pull together some of the background and inventory materials ahead of that meeting. The meeting was adjourned at about 6:45 PM.