

**Danby Town and Planning Board
Planning Meeting Minutes
March 25, 2010**

Present:

Supervisor: Ric Dietrich
Councilpersons: Leslie Connors, Kathy Halton, Dan Klein
Planning Board: Ann Klingensmith, Steve Selin, Naomi Strichartz, Robert Roe
Town Clerk Pamela Goddard
Code Enforcement Susan Beeners

Members of the Public:

Joel Gagnon, Ronda Roaring, Gary Bortz

Supervisor Dietrich called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

BZA Appointment:

The Town Board interviewed Gary Bortz for a vacant position on the Board of Zoning Appeals. Bortz has worked as a real property appraiser for the Tompkins County Assessment office since 1992. In that capacity he has worked with local zoning laws and regulations. Members of the Town and Planning Board asked a variety of questions of the applicant. There was also a discussion about required training for members of the BZA. A decision for appointment will be made at the April Town Board meeting.

Grant Announcements:

Dan Klein announced that Danby was awarded two grants in relation to energy conservation. A grant of \$267,000 for a biomass boiler at the Town Highway Barns and funds for an Energy Educator and Environmental Consultant. The Energy Educator will be shared between a group of towns and will work up to one day a week for Danby for up to a year.

Planning Discussion

Members of the Town Board and Planning Boards met to discuss and prioritize the “to do” lists generated during the joint meeting on February 22, regarding objectives for 2010. There was a suggestion to prioritize items in levels of importance and long-term and short-term goals. It was further suggested that specific people be identified to work on particular topics. Each board member had an opportunity to express their interests and concerns and to ask questions of each other. An effort was made to arrive at a level of consensus between Town Board and Planning Board members as to areas of interest. In addition to the topics on the February 22 list, tourism awareness/promotion was added to the list for discussion.

Councilman Klein suggested that a consultant or temporary employee next year be hired to handle some of the work involved with these topics. He suggested that temporary staff be hired for very specific jobs and goals. Supervisory Dietrich said that the bookkeeper is looking over the budget to see if any money could be made available for this purpose during this year. Money might be available in the Planning Board budget for this work on the Comprehensive Plan.

It was agreed that four general topics should be pursued further research and planning:

Zoning, Housing, Hamlet Study, and Energy initiatives.

There was also a general discussion about the structure of the Planning Board and how it operates in relation to the Code Enforcement Office and the Town Board. The Planning Board is encouraged to be

more proactive in its work. Suggestions and concerns included: subcommittees/working groups to tackle long and short term projects, work with consultants, looking at the process of communication including neighborhood notification of upcoming projects. Members of the PB have expressed a desire for increased, tangible projects and more involvement with development process at earlier stages. A scoping session for the Planning Board, following a re-read of the current Zoning ordinance, may be the next step.

Planning List: *This is a rough draft of items from the list which might fit in these general categories. Other groupings and addition work items are possible. The order of items within each section does not imply any level of priority.*

Zoning:

Neighbor notification in relation to proposed development and special use permits
(Whenever a building permit has been issued?)

Open Space conservation needs - non-regulatory approaches to protection and tax abatement
Difference between Open Space and Sense of Open Space
Critical Environmental Areas study

Reinvigorate the Comprehensive Planning Task Force
Proposal for Conservation Advisory Council
“How to Keep Your Land” forum/education - brochure and web site

Follow up the Right to Farm Law - zoning questions

Better mapping for Zoning - visual guide, comparison between current and proposed
Owning the data to generate maps

Zoning to maximize rural character of Danby; rules not rigid and could be modified
(examples might include; Increase lot size, setbacks, incentives to protect view-shed, revisiting what constitutes Home Occupation. *Note that in the minutes of the February 22 meeting this short list, presented by Dan Klein, included the phrase “introduce elements of invisibility.” It should be noted that Leslie Connors disagrees with that goal and wants the Town to look toward preserving/creating true open space, not just “a sense of it.”*)

Tourism initiatives: eg. B&Bs and trails

Hamlet Study:

Hamlet Goals (housing rehabilitation, appropriate zoning)

What is appropriate to be done and how can it be accomplished?

Is there political will to promote nodal development?

Revisit White Hawk development (also mentioned in the area of housing)

Infrastructure/services; re-establish a store

mixed use area/cottage industry (Olivia’s land in the area behind the church)

Municipal Water (?)

Beautification and the removal/remediation of “eyesores” at major intersections

Housing Initiatives:

Housing Rehabilitation/energy conservation

Retrofitting/weatherizing old housing stock

Possible grant/support money for building/improving new housing at this time

Investigate closely the range of options available including

energy programs, structural programs, housing improvements

Educational efforts, including a manual of applications and information for Home Owners

Senior Housing - Question of feasibility, positioning Danby for future HUD grants
Neighborhood development/community development
(“What will fill the infrastructure?” Activities and quality of life.)

Energy Initiatives: *(some of these are already underway)*

Taking the community pulse via the Listening Project

Sustainable energy education (for residents) and initiatives

Support/enhance Public Transportation

Localization of energy and food production

Land-bank/grass pellet project/Highway Biomass Boiler project
community gardens

Gas Drilling Issues

Wind energy/alternative energy - Wind Power Legislation

Base-line energy survey of the Town to promote efficiency

Adjournment

The Meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

Pamela S Goddard, Town Clerk