



TOWN OF ROCHESTER

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Meeting Notes for 26 April 2006 Planning and Zoning Committee

Town Board Members	Planning and Zoning Committee Members
Pam Duke, Alex Miller, Tony Spano	Dan Davis, Chris Kelder, Kristin Marcell, Donna Ragonese, Ruth Bendelius, Gordy Bell, John Dawson, Bev Schoonmaker, Steve Fornal, Bill DeGraw, Walter Levy
Consultants	
Peter Fairweather	

The topic of discussion was the impressions and feedback generated by the four Public Outreach meetings.

1. General impression is that the meetings successfully presented the basic concepts for revising our comprehensive Plan.
2. There was a sense that the the town was actively and productively engaged in listening to each other. It seems now plain, that the fear of being ramrodded into change will not happen and that the new plan will represent the will of the community. A list of comments taken from the meetings is attached.
3. Peter explained that he is now in the process of analysing responses to the Plan's goals and the Slide Show. This information will be incorporated into a new working draft, some of which will be ready for discussion at he next PZC meeting.
4. Peter's impression is that the following concerns appear to be most important to the Town and that they ought to be clearly worked into the plan:
 - *Affordability
 - *Controlling taxes
 - *Protecting water resources
5. It was also agree that the plan schedule would be lengthened. A revised draft of a plan will be developed and presented to for community comment in June and a ready draft will be completed in July.

Look for a new calendar to be issued soon.
6. During the Public Comment period, Peter (and Tom) was praised for their presentations and willingness to listen to the community.

Next meeting: Wednesday May 10, 2006, Town Hall 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Public Outreach Comments April 2006 Meetings

Below are combined notes from Gene Moncrief, Jonathan Blair, Tom Shepstone, and Walter Levy. These are not verbatim and some responses have been combined. The arrangement of notes in categories is arbitrary and subject to revision. Other notes, especially Peter Fairweather's review of the slide show will be forthcoming. (WL)

Land Use

What hamlets will be subject to development and small business zone?

Does concentrating development result in savings?

Do we cover mixed-use development?

How do we protect small lot owners?

Where in this does mother/daughter housing come in? We're looking to make the goals flexible meaning that type of housing.

When we broaden housing opportunities, does that mean new development or old?

Does the plan take into account highway planning and increased traffic and the interrelationship with the tax base?

Is there a way to develop a comprehensive plan to eliminate McMansions so that it's not an elite area?

How can the plan address the short term? Does our plan build in ways to cope with the long term in a short term way?

How would you discourage types of building? Why would you do this?

Development of Hamlets – This is a hamlet [Accord]. This is what's worth saving This is a town that can't agree on anything. This very firehouse is an historic firehouse. We had parties here. It's time that the town government take responsibility for the basic services of this town. It needs to be taken over by the town for preservation. We're not looking at the basic things. We should look at the basic responsibilities. It's great to plan for the future but we have to take care of basics first.

Can you define cluster zoning?

How does a town get involved in preserving wooded areas?

Who comes up with the price on the town buying open space?

Who can use the property that the town buys? What will it be used for? Who will have access?

Are people going to lose the rights to their land?

I know that there is a build out of 300 houses on the books. How would that affect the town?

I have a problem with the whole process. Our property has no potential for development. How is this process good for me?

The market is demanding a combination of larger lots for metro folks moving in and smaller lots for first-time homebuyers. We need to provide for both.

It's important not to force first-time affordable housing buyers into hamlets but, rather, to ensure they have choices.

Clustering (received very skeptically by the group) will require major incentives or it would already be here.

Environmental Quality

Do we need to study storm water issues more closely?

How do we improve traffic patterns and make roads safer?

Does the town qualify for flood insurance protection?

The DEC already regulates. Do we need more regulation? Will we have a different police force? Will we have specialists that do this? The DEC can predict what we need to be more strict. Zoning might require different methods of protection for water quality. When we had the flood, we now need to consider how to manage that.

Noise pollution: Do we need to tie that to mining? Can we add noise pollution as a separate category? Does this mean that I can't mow my lawn on Sunday? We'll have to do what's appropriate to the community.

Where and when will the natural resource inventory be finished?

This is all happening too fast. I'm feeling that this is too major for this amount of change to happen.

There is too much regulation. Before you know it we won't have any rights..

We don't want to put our miners out of business by a clean air act. We want to encourage mining that uses responsible/acceptable practices.

We want to look carefully at anything that would affect our water and our air. Is there anything that would come in conflict that? Yes, those who want to protect property rights. Would grandfathering affect that? There will always be preexisting conditions.

How do you define open space? How does the plan protect it?

Does open space depreciate land values?

Tell us a bit about the ECC study and the NRI.

Can the town “dictate” character ?

Can more recreational services and support be built in to the plan?

Community Character

How about maintaining the town park for the kids?

What are we doing about recreation for kids, adults, seniors?

We need to do something about the town’s morale. The volunteer spirit is eroded. That has something to do with community character.

Some of these words are subjective. Who’s going to make judgment about what’s scenic, etc. How is the criteria going to be determined?

Historic Preservation. Will it be enforced? The town is 300 years old and everything is historic. Who is going to determine what’s historic? Should it be the homeowner’s decision?

The older man who lives on 209. The new people who moved in wanted him to clean it up. This is a good example of what we need to deal with in the comprehensive plan. I recognize that there are some polarizing issues in this town. We want to make the town better for you and our children. We have to make these decisions together. It’s good they are coming up because we

Bottom line, the town board is going to do what they want.

I think you’ll all agree that it’s the school taxes that are crippling. I know we want business here. We want to have business come in and be happy to put up buildings here, not across the street from the crumbling old hardware store. We’re knocking business out of here. Didn’t we just lose the Hudson Valley Resort because they wouldn’t let them put a water park into it. Some of this is a matter of taste. How can you qualify it? It’s important that these go through public agreement.

Is the viewshed going through the ECC? .

What are the appropriate forms for new development? Guidelines versus standards for architecture? What the difference between standards and guidelines?

What's the process for getting a code in place?

Where should we put stores and factories?

Who makes plan for business and industrial zones?

Economic Development

Does the comprehensive plan speak to taxes? The plan should speak to what's on the mind of the community.

Can we limit tax exempt status in the town?

To what extent do we regulate?

How can the plan protect local business?

What about shared services in this plan?

Do we have a "the right to farm" plan?

Does commercial development mean that the town will set aside certain areas to do that? Like an industrial park?

Do we cover brownfield reclamation and development?

What about supporting community supported agriculture

We don't need to increase the value of our properties any more. We can't pay taxes on what we own now!

How can we know what will be affected by the Comprehensive Plan and new zoning regulations without the Natural Resources Inventory being complete?

Mining is a valuable business and should be encouraged in certain areas of the Town.

Historic preservation concepts being considered by the Town are scary and could be used to prevent anything.

Rochester is on its way to being an "Upstate Hamptons." It is critical that regulations be fair to those who cannot afford that lifestyle.

The emphasis should be on landscaping as compared to screening or hiding of a business.

There is a strong need for affordable homes and lots throughout the town for existing residents who cannot afford large acreages and estate lots.

A services goal should be added to strongly support offering of financial and other incentives to prospective members of volunteer fire and emergency workers.

Tourism businesses should be given incentives and regulations streamlined to facilitate their development and expansion.

Does the plan provide incentives for youth to stay in the town? Encourage affordable housing?

Do we address issues concerning seniors?

Infrastructure

How do we clarify and improve record keeping and public communication?

How do we improve public notification?

Where would you put industrial sites? We don't want the traffic on the back roads.

How does housing growth compare to population growth and how much of the former is from second homes?

It is important not to give new residential NIMBY's too many opportunities to make frivolous complaints that will drive business out.

Existing mining, lumbering and other industrial businesses need zones of protection.

How can you change a Comprehensive Plan? How often?

Government Services

Code enforcement needs review. There were a couple of places that were told to clean up the mess and never did. Is there a code? Who enforces it?

The government of this town, the RV school board, the town board and the highway supervisor isn't integrated. How can we have a comprehensive plan if these groups are not talking to each other?

More government services means higher taxes. We should have a line in there that keeps fiscal responsibility.

Are we getting representation from schools, and fire department? We need to get their input.

Can we work to get professional services [fire, rescue] in the town?

How can we do this plan in such short time? If we put all those laws in place, no one will live here. If the codes are clear, it will be easier to enforce. You may not need code enforcement.

Are we getting the biggest bang for our buck? Do we need to have a budget for contingency?