

MEETING SUMMARY – MARCH 13, 2013 MEETING

TOWN OF LANSING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE

Members Present: Jase Baese; Tom Butler; Maureen Cowen; Lin Davidson; Ruth Hopkins, Town Board; Lynn Leopold, Village of Lansing Board of Trustees; Kathy Miller, Supervisor; Susan Miller; Amanda Steinhart; Susan Tabrizi; Sarah Thomson.

Others Present: Jonathan Kanter, AICP, Planning Consultant; Katrina Binkewitz, Town Board; Roger Hopkins, Pathways Committee; Deb Trumbull, Pathways Committee; Dale Baker, Pathways Committee; Gay Nicholson, Sustainable Tompkins.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Member Comments/Concerns/Announcements: Gay Nicholson announced the upcoming “Climate Smart and Climate Ready” Regional Conference to be held April 18<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013. This is being co-sponsored by Barbara Lifton’s office and Sustainable Tompkins and will have multiple venues in Ithaca and Cortland. There is a track for local government officials, and all are encouraged to attend. Sessions are free except for Saturday (\$20 fee). Gay distributed a flyer with information about the conference.

Susan Miller indicated that she had contacted Jonathan Kanter and suggested that the next meeting agenda include an update on what has been accomplished in the Comp Plan Update so far, what remains to be done, and what the next steps are. Jonathan said that this would be a good idea.

Lin Davidson mentioned that the Town’s Agriculture Committee has been working on an Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan for Lansing under a grant from New York State and that a draft report would be available at the end of March. A public meeting is also being held on March 27<sup>th</sup> by the Agriculture Committee. The report will include possible zoning changes and other measures to encourage farming in the town. Lin suggested that the work on the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan should be coordinated and integrated with the work of the Comp Plan Committee and that the Comp Plan Committee might want to invite members of the Agriculture Committee to attend a future meeting to discuss the recommendations of the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan.

Draft Meeting Summary – February 13, 2013: The Committee had no corrections or revisions regarding the February 13, 2013 Meeting Summary.

Presentation by Pathways Committee: The Pathways Committee gave a Power point presentation summarizing their recent work. Maureen Cowen introduced the Pathways Committee members present, including Roger Hopkins, Deb Trumbull, and Dale Baker. Highlights of the presentation included the following:

- The Pathways Committee was established by the Town Board and has been working for over 5 years on recommendations and strategies for implementing a trail/pathway system in the Town.
- The Committee has already talked with land owners about the possibility of trails on the properties, and many owners are supportive of these efforts.
- Benefits of trails include safety, attract visitors and tourists, link hubs in the Town, etc.
- Conceptual maps have been prepared by the Committee showing possible trail routs and connections.
- An important goal is to incorporate trails and pathway connections into new development that is proposed in the Town.
- The Lansing Center Trail on Town-owned land was done as a demonstration project and has been very successful.
- There are a number of specific trail proposals that the Committee is currently doing preliminary work on.
- It is timely to integrate the work of the Pathways Committee into the Comp Plan update process.

Maureen Cowen indicated that the Pathways Committee is interested in looking at the 2006 Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives relating to parks and trails and would be willing to prepare an inventory that could be included in the Comp Plan update that Steve Colt can help with. Jonathan mentioned that many municipalities are using park and recreation set asides in the subdivision review process to obtain trail easements. Maureen added that the Town can obtain grants such as "Safe Routes to School" to assist with building walkways and trails, but the Town needs to have shovel-ready plans and easements in place to qualify for grants. Kathy mentioned that the Town Highway Department helps with a lot of the basic construction work on trails. Jonathan asked for a couple of volunteers from the Comp Plan Committee to help the Pathways Committee review and update the goals and objectives in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan and to help flesh out recommendations and strategies regarding trails and pathways that can be incorporated into the Plan update.

Community Survey: Kathy Miller reported that the Town Board discussed the proposed Comprehensive Plan survey, and two of the Board members had concerns regarding cost, why can't the survey be done by volunteers, and others. Kathy asked Susan Tabrizi to attend the next Town Board meeting on March 20<sup>th</sup> to explain the benefits and need for a survey and to answer questions that Town Board members might have. Susan agreed. Jonathan added that some Town Board members may have misunderstandings about the survey methodology, how the phone survey process works, what happens if people called hang up without answering the survey, etc. Jonathan suggested that other Committee members attend the Town Board meeting as well. Susan mentioned that the Committee had received more than one quote on the survey, and the SRI estimate was quite a bit lower than the one from Stony Brook University. Susan Miller asked how residents who are responding to the survey would be able to answer questions on subjects that they may not understand. Susan Tabrizi responded that survey questions would have to be simple, straightforward, and designed in a way that would not bias responses (e.g., lead respondents to answer in a particular way). That is a good reason why the Committee needs to have professionals to help design and implement the survey. Amanda Steinhardt asked whether there would be any announcement prior to the survey giving residents a head's up that the survey would be coming. Jonathan indicated that the Town Newsletter that is just about to be sent out includes an article about the upcoming survey. The Town can also place a notice on the Town Hall bulletin board and on the website.

Susan Tabrizi indicated that we will have to get on SRI's schedule and that SRI would hire part-time employees to make the phone calls to conduct the survey, but that we cannot ask SRI to start working with us until there is a signed contract, and that will depend on what the Town Board decides at the next meeting. The entire survey process will take about six weeks from start to finish. After school classes are over in the Spring, part-time people to work on the survey may no longer be available. Kathy added that the Town will ask Cornell to contribute up to \$1,500 to help the Town fund the survey.

Lynn Leopold reported that the Village of Lansing is also considering doing a survey in conjunction with its Comprehensive Plan update. There have been discussions between the Town and Village about doing a joint survey and people are interested if timing of the surveys can be coordinated. Lynn added that Mayor Hartill has indicated willingness to budget up to \$8,500 for the Village to conduct a survey. Susan Tabrizi added that the Town and Village could work together on a survey without negatively affecting the Town's survey – there are methodologies used for joint surveys. Lynn indicated that the Village had received an estimate from SRI for a combined Town/Village survey, and it appears that a combined survey could lower the overall cost per municipality since some questions would apply to both, and the combined sample survey population could be reduced per municipality. Lynn added that the

Village may want to do a survey of businesses located in the Village as well, and that might have to be handled in a separate survey format.

Tom Butler asked if mid-May would be the earliest that a survey could start at this point? Jonathan responded that we could ask SRI whether waiting until August would be better. Various Committee members agreed, however, that waiting until August would delay obtaining valuable information needed to make progress on the Comp Plan update work.

Sub-committee to Discuss Town Center, Design Guidelines: Jonathan indicated that at the last meeting, the Committee had a discussion about the proposed Town Center and that he had asked Committee members to think about setting up a sub-committee to work on concepts for the Town Center, including possible design guidelines. Kathy Miller added that many towns are adopting design guidelines to help guide growth in their communities and that are some good examples that the Committee could look at. Jonathan suggested that a sub-committee could look at both the Town Center and broader community design guidelines. Kathy asked if design guidelines would help the Planning Board with development reviews. Lin responded that design guidelines would help, especially with commercial and multi-family developments. Amanda Steinhardt and Sarah Thomson agreed to serve on a sub-committee with Jonathan. It was agreed that the sub-committee would discuss both Town Center design concepts and guidelines as well as broader town-wide design and landscaping guidelines for commercial, multi-family and mixed-use developments.

Review of Goals and Objectives in 2006 Comprehensive Plan: Jonathan handed out an outline of goal and objective categories as a reference for the Committee to review – the list being a combination of goals and objectives from the 2006 Plan and some suggested subjects that were not addressed in the 2006 Plan. Jonathan asked each Committee member to take a look at the list and identify subjects that each member would be interested in reviewing or working on, including how update, flesh out strategies and make more action oriented. This will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Other Business: None.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 10, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the Lansing Library. The Committee requested that the agenda include a summary of the status of work on the Comp Plan Update – what has been accomplished, what remains to be done, etc.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Prepared by Jonathan Kanter, AICP