

MEETING SUMMARY – JULY 10, 2013 MEETING
TOWN OF LANSING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE

Members Present: Susan Miller, Jase Baese, Dave Ferris, Amanda Steinhardt, Larry Beck, Lynn Leopold, Philip Snyder, Maureen Cowen.

Others Present: Jonathan Kanter, AICP, Planning Consultant. Nishant Tapuria, Planning Intern. Deb Myers, Town Resident. Sabrina Knight, Visitor.

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

Member Comments/Concerns/Announcements:

There was mention of Gerry Friedman leaving the Compressive Planning Committee. Larry Beck asked if new volunteers could be contacted to fill recently vacated positions on the Committee. Jonathan Kanter responded saying that it would be challenging to bring new volunteers up to speed with the Committee's work, although Larry's question was a good one to think about. Jonathan also said that more people are likely to get involved as awareness of the Committee's work increases in the future (due to public meetings etc.).

Maureen Cowen reminded everyone about a transportation webinar that could be informative for the Committee.

Philip Snyder reported that the Energy and Climate Change sub-committee had met and that Gay Nicholson had joined their sub-committee. They will put together information for the Committee to review soon. Jonathan mentioned that the sub-committee on the Town Center's design guidelines met and discussed their organization and responsibilities. He mentioned that they are scheduled to meet again and will provide further information.

Jase Baese mentioned that he and Susan Miller met with Sharon Bowman about community services and an improved inventory of community services would be provided.

Jonathan mentioned that the Pathways committee has an inventory of parks and pathways and is trying to obtain an inventory of recreational programs. He also mentioned that there is ongoing discussion on how to map the inventory and how to incorporate all of the sub-committee's work into the Comprehensive Plan. Jase Baese mentioned that he could help with geocoding landmarks in GIS (Geographical Information System) software, and that anyone needing help should feel free to contact him. Jonathan added that Tompkins County has a base map that could also be used. Jase also mentioned that where to host GIS data would need to be addressed. Maureen Cowen said that Kathy Miller and Dan Veaner could probably answer this question.

Draft Meeting Summary – June 12, 2013: There were no corrections or revisions regarding the June 12, 2013 meeting summary.

Review of Goals and Objectives in 2006 Comprehensive Plan - Starting with "Land Use & Development":

Dave Ferris mentioned that the sub-committee looked at the goals and objectives and the suggested changes are in red on the document. He also mentioned that the industrial and commercial development section was included in the Land Use section.

Susan Miller mentioned that the Town of Ithaca Comprehensive Plan is a great document, clear and concise, and asked if the Committee might want to use a similar format in the Town of Lansing Plan update. Dave Ferris mentioned that the land use and development sub-committee also looked at the Dryden Comprehensive Plan as part of the review process. Jase Baese mentioned that the previous (Lansing) plan was organized in a way that was hard to process, to which Philip Snyder added that the 2006 plan was being referenced for the energy and climate change section but the intention is to put together something new and in a different format. Jonathan addressed these concerns by saying that the 2006 plan should be taken as a reference and a revised structure could be devised with consensus, and that the Committee could come up with more action-oriented statements that can actually be implemented. For example, land use related suggestions could be accompanied with suggestions on how to implement them. Dave Ferris said that maybe the recommendations could be put in a separate section along with implementation suggestions. Amanda Steinhardt said that maybe the Committee could put more teeth in the Plan by including the how and why with each recommendation. Jonathan replied in the affirmative saying that all the sections could also be integrated as the Plan moves ahead; sustainability and renewable energy should be integrated with land use, for example. Jase Baese asked if it would be worth deciding on the format at the current stage, or else the Committee could end up with several different formats. Jase added as a suggestion that the initial section of the current Plan looks good and that maybe a Background>Goal>Objectives>Responsibilities section should be followed for the rest of the Plan. Jonathan agreed with the suggestion and said that maybe an implementation matrix could be put at the end of the Plan.

Amanda Steinhardt said that the Plan needs to be more concise and Philip Snyder added that language that is more accessible and easier to understand is needed. A possible format might start with a short narrative with descriptions of existing conditions and issues and then go to higher (or broader) goal statements. Then more specific objectives and finally recommend actions and strategies to accomplish the goals. It was suggested that the "why" and "how" of the goals and strategies be emphasized, leading from the general to the specific. Jonathan said that the Committee needs to think about the users of the Plan and Dave Ferris added saying that all the dots need to be connected. Susan Miller brought up the Town of Ithaca Comprehensive Plan layout and Amanda Steinhardt mentioned that the Hamlet of Varna Community Development Plan could also serve as a good example. Amanda also asked if a draft of the Plan will be provided to the community before being approved. Jonathan replied in affirmative saying that the draft Plan would be first opened to the public for comment. He also mentioned that the Town's website could be used to keep the Town Board updated on comments/feedback from the public, especially when they have questions. Jonathan went on to say that the community survey would be a very important document and that the results would

need to be presented to the Town Board and Village Board of Trustees, and that hopefully the results will be available in the next 2 to 3 weeks. Jonathan also felt that the survey analysis would help the Comprehensive Planning Committee in moving forward and that other communities' plans could be simultaneously read to help form a model for Lansing's Plan. Susan Miller requested Jonathan to send the Committee more examples of plans. The Varna Hamlet Plan was mentioned as a detailed and interesting plan and could serve as a good example.

Dave Ferris brought up the subject of style and asked if the Town's Plan could have just Goals and Actions, i.e Objectives section to be removed. Amanda Steinhardt suggested bullet points and subsequent details under each bullet point. Dave then suggested if the sub-committee could reconvene and amend the proposed changes (in the Land use & Development section), in accordance with the current thought process.

Amanda Steinhardt asked if "character" would be defined in the design guidelines. Jonathan replied saying that the hamlet design guidelines sub-committee intends drafting design guidelines once they have a better sense of what the Hamlets (in Lansing) are like. The sub-committee is going to document the past and current uses in the hamlets in an attempt to better understand their visual and historic character.

Jonathan asked if the revised draft of the Land Use and Development section could be made available in August. Dave Ferris replied saying that the sub-committee would try for the same.

Timing and Format of First Public Information Meeting:

The need to make the public more aware of Plan update related activities was brought up by Jonathan. There was mention of the draft vision statement on the Town's website and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis having been completed, and the Survey results being available soon.

Lynn Leopold asked if public input would be sought in October. Jonathan replied saying that a focused list of questions could be presented to the public, especially with respect to aspects that the Committee might be struggling with and would like to ask people for their comments and thoughts. A second public meeting would follow later.

Dave Ferris asked if the SWOT analysis could be shared with the community in advance of the first public information meeting. Jonathan indicated that the SWOT analysis outline is currently on the Town website and could be cleaned up a little to make it more readable. The Committee will need to think about when to schedule the public meeting.

Jase Baese suggested that there could be breakout poster sessions and the entire Committee seemed to like that idea. Jonathan added that demographic trends could be added as one breakout session.

Dave Ferris then brought up the question of primary media for distributing information amongst the public. The Town newsletter, the Lansing Star and the Ithaca Journal were mentioned as popular media. Use of the School and Lansing market were also suggested to display signage about public information meetings.

Jonathan suggested that one moderator and one recorder could be present at each break out session, and that people should also be given a chance to send in comments after the meeting.

Amanda Steinhardt asked where the meeting would be conducted; suggesting possible use of the High School and that the number of attendees should be considered. Jonathan indicated that based on his experience, the Town Hall meeting room would likely be able to accommodate the number of people anticipated to attend.

Philip Snyder mentioned Tompkins Weekly as another source for disseminating information. There is also a weekly column in the Ithaca Journal devoted to Lansing activities that could help. The school district newsletter was also mentioned as a likely medium.

Other Business: None.

Next Meeting: August meeting was canceled through consensus. It was felt that August is generally a time when many people are away and it might be more fruitful to meet twice in September instead. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 11, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the Lansing Library, at which time the Committee can decide whether to schedule a second meeting in September. In addition to revisiting the Land Use and Development goals section it is anticipated that the Parks, Recreation and Trails section should be ready for the Committee to review. There could also be report on the Demographic Update that Nishant has been working on.

The meeting was adjourned at 8.45 pm.

Prepared by:

Nishant Tapuria