

Town of Amenia
Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee
January 31, 2005

Present: Mark Doyle, acting Chair, Vicki Doyle, Bill Flood, Dolores Holland, Darlene Riemer.

Guests: Bill Carroll, Jim Devine, Linda and Jack Gregory, Tom Lejeune

M. Doyle opened the meeting by asking for comments and impressions of the workshop of 1/22/05.

B. Carroll thought the meeting was a success and that J. Russell's idea of separating like-minded groups and seating people of different views at the same table was an excellent idea. He added that the main subject at his table was the proposed hotel at Silo Ridge and that one of the participants in the discussion was strongly opposed to it and preferred to continue the operation of a fish-and-game club in the location. The consensus at his table was, that a 70-room hotel would be acceptable where a 400 would not be. Tourism should be promoted and people need a place to stay.

T. Lejeune said that J. Russell is doing a great job and that it is time to move forward and not be bogged down on one issue. The discrimination of 'weekenders' should cease - they do not require any of the town's services and are an asset to the community. He added that developers are coming in because they are running out of land further south - they are getting ready to build houses here and a law should be in place soon to prevent that.

M. Doyle summed up by saying that we need consensus building and getting a strong zoning code in place to 'get what we want'.

B. Flood: We must not be too strict : the area is changing faster than we are getting things done. Just down the road they are building 1400 homes and 600,000 sq. ft of commercial space: that is going to affect us.

At his table there was a consensus on Maxon Mills - that it should be torn, people think it is a detriment to the community.

M. Doyle asked, if the attitude toward Maxon Mills might change, if it were fixed up.

B. Flood replied that people are getting impatient with the issue and want it resolved. He added that the fate of the old Rennie mine is another issue which concerns people.

B. Carroll wanted to know, whether there had been discussions about opening a General Store in the area - he remembered that there had been one a long time ago.

M. Doyle: there should be limited mixed use in the hamlet - we have to determine, if it will fit into the surroundings.

B. Flood: in Patterson they proposed a plaza - in a historical district, and got approval.

L. Gregory commended J. Russell on his work but objected to a remark about Jack's Garage in the summation of comments. M. Doyle explained that the wording had been copied verbatim from one of the questionnaires but that,

for the purpose of having a useful document, the remarks would be stricken.

L. Gregory added that she also was impressed with the way the workshop was handled and that she wished it would all come to fruition. Rte 22 - up to Foodtown Plaza - should be zoned commercial and, she feels that, eventually, it will be.

M. Doyle said that he did not see that opinion expressed in any questionnaire he saw.

J. Devine said that two years had been spent already in working out the criteria and that it is now time for the expert to put everything into clear shape. Later we can negotiate and reach compromises that are good for everybody.

M. Doyle: it would be useful, if members of the committee and those who are involved in the process would say to their friends and to the public that nothing is set in concrete yet.

J. Devine: J. Russell came in as our expert; he has no agenda, no axe to grind, we should just let him do what he wants to do which is to look for the best possible development for the town of Amenia.

D. Holland: Jim, are you aware that that is exactly what he is doing now?

J. Devine: Yes, but there seem to be efforts to push him into specific directions. That should not

happen - he is exactly the kind of person we need - he has a clear vision of how this could work, practically, and that is what I need to see.

D. Riemer: as to the mixed use - it should not be all commercial or all residential. It is the mixture that brings vitality. Route 9 is all commercial - at the end of the day there is not a soul on that road. We are thinking of little shops that bring people out all the time. Some of those businesses will be supported by residents.

B. Carroll wondered, if anyone had gone to property owners in town.

B. Flood: most pieces of property have already been sold and developers are waiting to see in which direction we are going. The post office is for sale - they can't sell it because there is no septic system.

The discussion returned to the workshop - attendance was estimated at 90 to 97 - would have possibly been higher but for the announced snow storm. More meetings will have to be held.

B. Flood: The more specific we get the more people will participate.

It was suggested to send out surveys. D. Holland said that surveys are expensive and time-consuming.

M. Doyle: the bottom line is: does a survey help? Does it make people feel more involved?

J. Devine: some people were intimidated by Silo Ridge.

D. Holland: we are considering the fire house in Wassaic for the next meeting. Re; the survey: talked to Billy Kish, chair of the Planning Board in Millerton, who said that they did not learn anything new from the survey.

The consensus of committee and guests seemed to be that once something

exists on paper and people know what they are talking about, more residents would attend meetings.

V. Doyle J. Russell will work with the questionnaires and comments and will have some materials for us within two weeks.

B. Carroll: General Store and a Coffee Shop - that is what most people want; it would be nice, if those could be included in the plan.

V. Doyle: workshop consensus: very positive overall. People felt they were able to speak and were listened to.

(The next 3-4 minutes of the meeting are unintelligible on the tape - many people were speaking simultaneously.)

D. Holland: nothing came out of the meeting that had not been previously discussed by the committee and suggested to J. Russell.

M. Doyle: things to be attended to now: a time line has to be established; CAC environmental inventory has to be made a part of this; the school district issue has to be covered - it will affect us and can not be ignored.

V. Doyle: the comprehensive plan and zoning have to be combined and a Positive Declaration created for the entire thing. Ted Fink will help us through the SEQRA process - Joel agrees that he is the best.

As Valentine's Day falls on Monday, 2/14, the next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, 2/15.

Submitted by
Monique Montaigne
February 26, 2005

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