

Town of Amenia

Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee

October 24, 2005

Present: Mark Doyle, Rudy Eschbach, Bill Flood, Dolores Holland, Darlene Riemer, Tony Robustelli, Joel Russell.

For guests in the audience M. Doyle briefly outlined the current activities of the committee, namely the process of reviewing the zoning ordinance and the first outline of the zoning maps. He then went on to issues that had come up during the mapping process.

J. Russell agreed that, if the area of Bull Farm were generously screened and buffered, it could be designated CO . He added that there are few areas in and around the town which lend themselves to mixed residential and commercial use - the Committee should therefore give CO designation to all suitable areas they are able to find. M. Doyle said, that it would be easy to re-district the area as residential, if the demand for commercial use did not materialize.

R. Eschbach asked what to do, if the Amenia Sand and Gravel processing plant (which, although not in an area which is zoned for that purpose, has been operating in the location since the 1940's) wanted to expand.

J. Russell pointed out that the new zoning ordinances make it easier to expand a non-conforming use and added that a special permit would still be required. If the area were to be zoned 'residential' the plant could expand up to 50% with no more than a site plan and their continued operation is assured. It could be sold as an industrial parcel even though its use would most likely be limited to another processing plant. Any buyer would probably want to rezone 'residential' which would be a higher value use in that location.

If the area were to be zoned 'residential' now, the town would make certain that no new processing plant could be built, if and when the current one ceases operations.

D. Riemer wanted to know how much control the Town would have over uses of the property after it is sold, if it were to be designated 'industrial'. J. Russell said that it would still require a special use permit whichever way it was zoned. In the interest of being 'business friendly', he suggested zoning the certain areas CO which would encourage business but minimize noise, dust, etc. associated with processing gravel - zoning in 'industrial' might bring on protests from residents in surrounding areas.

R. Eschbach: what if this owner - or any other business - wanted to relocate the entire plant to an area closer to the highway and how many criteria would have to be met to make that possible?

J. Russell: there are a number of sites they could use - if the Planning Board felt that such a move were advantageous, the process could be streamlined.

M. Doyle: The intersection of Rte 22 and Cascade Road is designated SR which the current residents want to keep. It would be a good spot for clustering. J. Russell said that 12 clustered houses at the upper end of the property would be possible but probably not without water and sewer.

M. Doyle is concerned about bringing the hamlet up to a narrow strip on the west side of Rte 22, south of Foodtown, which is currently designated 'commercial'. D. Riemer added that it would be a perfect area for people to walk to shops and J. Russell suggested HM zoning. B. Flood wanted to know how many acres comprise this section - the response was 33 acres. 25 acres are wetlands and only of 50% of the remaining 8 acres permit impervious surfacing. Because of the presence of the town wells and wetlands, this location requires further study.

M. Doyle: What is the correct underlying zoning for a resort overlay?

J. Russell: The underlying zoning should be whatever you want it to be, if you do not have a resort there. The purpose of a resort overlay is to let something happen that would not otherwise be allowed - the underlying zone could be split between RR and RA.

M. Doyle: the density in a resort overlay is not guided by what lies underneath.

J. Russell: re: impervious surfaces: this is to give some flexibility to the developer; he can design in any number of ways as long as no more than 15% of the site is covered with impervious surfaces.

A conservation analysis has to be made in order to determine where the impervious surfaces may go.

NOTE: J. Russell will add language permitting the developer to go to the planning board with a proposal including surfaces which are partly permeable.

Affordable housing for the workforce has to be included in the plans - employee housing does not count towards the total impervious surface restriction but has to be approved (Planning Board, SEQRA).

M. Doyle, re: Highway Commercial - three areas; Foodtown Plaza, Crop Productions and Cousins.

Ridge line Overlay: R. Eschbach: does it include the entire mountain or just the ridge line? J. Russell: do it site-specific - according to the view shed. A uniform elevation line does not work. M. Doyle: a computerized scenic view analysis will be made (by the Dept. of

Planning) , based on the old Master Plan view points which will show which areas are and are not visible.. J. Russell: the limitation of that is that they will be looking at the area from specific viewpoints only so our determinations need to be combined with the computer map but it is a good starting point. He advised to take the various analyses, view them next to each other and see what makes the most sense.

R. Eschbach is still concerned about the protection of view sheds - based on his observation of development which has been allowed in Connecticut. J. Russell: if it is part of a subdivision, it goes through the Open Space Development Analysis which takes out the ridge line automatically and prohibits building there. The effect that building a road would make will be examined as well.

R. Eschbach: how strongly can such protection be worded? J. Russell referred to page 20 section F. He added that all development has to be clustered in an area where it has the least visual impact.

Section F paragraph 3 - strike " to the extent practical".

Section H "to the extent practical" should be more precise including provisions for safety, deterioration, etc.

Condos: J. Russell will add a provision which states that, the same standards of approval apply to condos as to subdivisions.

Historic Overlays: J. Russell: you already have design criteria for the hamlets - new buildings must be compatible with existing. Demolition is different - what are the criteria for telling someone that he can not demolish something. In order to avoid resistance from the community, the list of protected buildings has to be very short - no more than 4 - 6 .

Logging Law: M. Doyle: we need a simple logging ordinance.

Wetlands: J. Russell: once there is a CAC wetland inventory, it has to be flagged - any map is subject to field verification.

Provisions on what can and can not be done is already in the text.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, November 2nd at 7:00 PM.

Submitted by Monique Montaigne
October 31, 2005