

Meeting Notes for Town Board &
Planning & Zoning Committee May 22, 2006
7:00 p.m., Town Hall
Notes by Gene Moncrief

In attendance:

Town Board Members	Planning and Zoning Committee Members
	Jonathan Blair, Chris Kelder, Walter Levy, Mike Baden, Steve Fornal, Bill DeGraw, Donna-Marie Ragonese
Consultants	
Tom Shepstone	

This was not an official Town Board meeting, and Walter Levy chaired the meeting.

Pledge.

Public Outreach meeting dates are set for discussion of Plan revisions:

Saturday June 17, 2006, 9:00 – 11:00 AM
Town Hall (Scenic Drive, Accord)

Wednesday, June 21, 2006, 7:00 PM
Alligerville Firehouse (Creek Road)

Thursday, June 22, 2006, 7:00 PM
Rochester Town Court (Samsonville Road)

Tuesday, June 27, 2006, 7:00 PM
Rochester II Firehouse (Samsonville (Road)

Thursday, June 29, 2006, 7:00 PM
Accord Fire House (Main Street, Accord)

In addition to news posted on the Town web site, efforts will be made to broadcast news of these meetings, especially by word-of-mouth. A sign has been placed on Route 209 just south of Main Street, Accord. (Thank you Jack Schoonmaker.) Flyers will be posted. Mike Baden will put out the news releases in newspapers and the Town Crier

Walter Levy explained that the Natural Resource Inventory was in process and would be done in early July. Susan Blickstein will be taking the lead in developing the necessary

information for a NRI that will satisfy our needs for adopting the new Plan. Most of the information is already available. A more in-depth Natural Resource Inventory will be worked on by the Environmental Conservation Commission, which is taking the lead in fulfilling the Hudson River Estuary Grant.

Tom Shepstone conducted the review of the revisions for a draft Comprehensive Plan. Changes were based on discussions generated from suggestions generated at the first round of Public Outreach meetings. A copy of the revisions is available on line: visit www.townofrochester.net , go to Comprehensive Plan, then to the link to Peter Fairweather. Copies of the revised draft will be available at Town Hall in time for reading before the Public Outreach meetings.

Shepstone explained the suggestions have been incorporated into the revised draft.

Land Use:

Jonathan Blair pointed out that the Town should do as much as it can to protect land use and environmental quality especially by installing sewage systems. Shepstone said that the belief that sewers protect environmental quality has changed, and that where there are high quality streams, the government is not putting money into sewage. The idea is to let water run through the earth to purify. Bill DeGraw said that growth in the hamlet of Accord requires sewers, otherwise growth will be limited. Levy pointed out that careful engineering would be needed to overcome the hard rock underneath the hamlet.

In complying with many comments, the new draft will emphasize the need for “affordability” in Rochester.

Community Character:

Discussion centered on the desire to preserve the scenic views along Route 209 and along the ridge lines. Questions arose as to how best to define a scenic view and it was generally agreed that scenic views should be defined from a community perspective.

After a discussion about the importance of individuality and property rights, it was agreed that we will include a separate goal regarding the importance of each.

Economic Development

Questions centered on the identities of the hamlets and how to deal with them. No decisions were made.

In addition to tourism, emphasis will be placed on and hiking and biking, sightseeing and other kinds of outdoor recreation. Future discussion should include TOR’s part in the Scenic Byway.

Chris Kelder affirmed that the Town has already adopted a Right to Farm statute.

Infrastructure:

There was discussion about standards for private roads. The unanswered question was “Who is responsible to maintain a private road once the developer sells the homes?”

On the issue of property rights, it was agreed that we are looking for a balance between public and private rights. This is a major concern that requires more discussion, which we expect at the Public Outreach meetings.

Steve Fornal discussed the Code Task Force and explained that the revised codes will not be completed until after the Comprehensive Plan is adopted.

Donna-Marie Ragonese asked for assurance that the draft of the Comprehensive Plan will be subjected to extensive public hearings after it is presented to the Town Board. It was reaffirmed that the final draft of the Plan submitted to the Town is required by law to hold public hearings before any official action is taken.

Public Comment:

There was a concern from the Accord Speedway that their business might be closed. The owners, Gary & Donna Palmer, were comforted to learn that no business would close as a result of the Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is a not and does not regulate or enforce.