

DRAFT

**TOWN OF GHENT
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE**

08 JANUARY 2008

Chairman Galvin brought the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. In attendance were Committee members John Fishman, Pete Nelson, Jim Beal, Frank Mendelson, Phil Trowbridge, Gil Raab, Nick Tipple and Janice Fingar. Also in attendance were Town of Ghent Attorney Ted Guterman, and consultant Nan Stolzenburg of Community Planning & Environmental Associates.

Absent were members Al Wassenhove, Jonathan Walters, Larry VanBrunt, Aaron Groom, and Kyle Wilber.

PUBLIC INPUT

No members of the Public were at the meeting.

REVIEW OF SURVEY RESULTS AND COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Ms Stolzenburg offered some observations: the survey is only one piece of the picture and survey results are to be melded with data gained at the workshops and/or public input. She added that some topics provoked strong consensus, patterns and opinions, while others did not. The demographic analysis will be compared to the survey comments, as a check to ensure the results are representative of the community.

Mr. Raab offered a synopsis of the survey: residents wish to keep farms in Ghent; to maintain open spaces; and while they do not wish any subsidized housing, favor 'mother-in-law' apartments. Ms Stolzenburg added that senior citizen housing is a major issue. Mr. Guterman noted that any review should reflect a cross-the-board concern with agriculture. Ms Stolzenburg suggested that it is important for Town residents to understand the connection between rural development and rural character.

Mr. Trowbridge observed that this recent survey does not include anything different from that of the 1994 survey. Ms Stolzenburg stated that the survey is beneficial in that it confirms the values of the Town's present-day community. Chairman Galvin stated, that after several months of discussion of the issue, he was surprised by the residents' response to rail trails,

Ms Stolzenburg noted the task before the Committee is the combining of the survey results with the information garnered at the workshops. She referred to the draft vision/goals distributed at the December 2007 meeting and questioned if there were any survey results contrary to the supplied draft.

Mr. Beal inquired whether the return of surveys was satisfactory; supplying enough information and Ms Stolzenburg noted that it was. Mr. Fishman observed that very few people under the age of 26 had completed and returned the surveys. Apparently it is difficult to get youthful residents to participate; it is a concern that faces many municipalities.

The issue of low-cost senior housing was raised once again. Consultant Stolzenburg noted that there are many possible ways to approach this issue, including various combinations of private and public funding, and local and regional government funding. After a brief discussion, it was recognized that the lack of town utilities is **the** major, limiting factor. Mr.

Bruce Levine, of 3d Development Group, LLC, Amherst, NY who appeared before the Committee on 10 July 2007, had identified this issue.

Mr. Fishman noted that Committee members require input in order to set goals. A build-out analysis is currently being prepared by Don Meltz and should be available sometime next week. Information will include mapping and results. Ms Stolzenburg suggested that Committee members review the build-out materials at the next (February 2008) meeting.

Ms Stolzenburg encouraged agreement between Committee members so to determine a common set of goals. It was agreed that individual members will e-mail their suggestions to Ms Stolzenburg. She will then re-draft the materials and return it to members by the end of the week (04 January 2008). Members were encouraged to attend the February meeting, and to come prepared to discuss vision goals, build-out, and make suggestions/report back to Ms Stolzenburg. Committee members are to discuss goals, add to them or change them; using the draft vision statement as a starting point. Ms. Stolzenburg will include the draft vision statement in an e-mail to members.

It was suggested survey results be posted on the Town's website, and that a press release, providing a summary of the workshops, the survey and profile and inventory be issued to local media. It was also suggested that a counter be placed on the website.

MINUTES

A motion to approve the December 2007 minutes was made by Mr. Tipple, seconded by Mr. Trowbridge and unanimously approved.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Committee will be held on Tuesday, 05 February 2008.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.