

DRAFT
Town of White Creek
Comprehensive Plan and Ag Protection Plan
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
February 9, 2011

Attendees: Darryl Caputo , Jim Perry, Carol Moore, Peter Hetko, Don Sweet, Sarah Ashton
Absent: Rich Moses, Ed Gulley Tim Smith, Bill Badgley, Roady Walker,

Minutes: The minutes of the January meeting will be considered at a future meeting.

Nan was on speaker phone given the success with this strategy in January. The Committee went through page by page the Town of White Creek Comp Plan DRAFT 2 (v 3). The committee was appreciative that since January, Nan had incorporated two new sections: (1) an introduction summarizing the data collection report findings; (2) Add sections in the text of the plan about the current land use regulations (site plan review, sub division, right to farm and mobile home ordinance) and summarize the recommended actions with regard to updating these in the main report. Steering committee members had printed out and carefully reviewed the plan. She also worked on an Executive Summary but this was not the focus of the February meeting.

Overall comments included:

- From Caputo that he was impressed that the plan seemed realistic and should be OK weathering public hearings as it is not controversial. He appreciated the focus on providing density bonuses. He wondered if such density bonuses might be given for open space as well as agriculture and whether attached housing which could be appropriate for seniors, and if done properly allow could result in land protected for agriculture and open space/environment.
- Ashton suggested that 12% of the community's residents live below poverty and the plan might offer some suggestions to offer opportunities or help empower people to access assets. To this end, there was discussion about including density bonus incentives to provide senior or other affordable housing.
- Hetko suggested that the plan might be too agricultural centric. Agriculture is exempt from a lot. Perry noted that agriculture is regulated. Hetko encouraged the plan to encourage agriculture activities to be undertaken in an environmentally sound practices. Ashton noted that she had heard criticism about the ag focus of the plan before as well. She noted that the plan does include an economic development section and perhaps through reorganization this could be highlighted further—the economic development section should be placed in the report directly after agriculture instead of further back in the plan. Sweet noted that the community is agriculture focused and this is a key reason people liked living in the community. There is an interest in protecting the farms. The plan should defend agriculture. Caputo noted he expected a heavy emphasis on agriculture. Nan pointed out that much of the top priorities for the community emanating from an interest in protecting agriculture.
- As discussed in January the draft plan was shared with Ptacek at the Agricultural Stewardship Assn. Ashton reported that she felt that the plan seemed to have effectively reached out to and engaged farmers plan development and as a result included a range of strategies to promote agriculture from agricultural economic development, agricultural awareness and incentives to protect farmland. She noted that since the planning process had begun some additional lands had been preserved in White Creek and she would forward this data to Nan for incorporation in maps. She offered some suggested edits throughout which Ashton would note as they went through the plan and offered to share some

additional thoughts about what the Township might recommend to Washington County and NYS given her knowledge of issues on the table in these forums. This will be forwarded at a later date.

Then the committee went through the plan page by page. Unless noted below, suggestions made were design to tighten wording and address typographical errors.

- 4.0 Goals and Recommended Actions: Reorganize the seven major topics in the report: (1) Agriculture (2) Community Character; (3) Economic Development (4) Environment: (5) Housing; (6) Services and Infrastructure (7) Arts, Culture and Recreation...
- 4.1.5. Farmland Protection #6 i. Modify sentence to read “Review the definitions of what constitutes a minor and major subdivision.” Nan clarified that shared driveways can be used in minor subdivisions but as soon as anyone puts in a road it is automatically a major subdivision.
- 4.3 Environment: Add a Goal and related Recommended action: “White Creek has identified environmentally sensitive areas and sought to protect them.’ Caputo will provide a list of what types of environmentally sensitive features will be identified and forward it to Ashton for inclusion as the resulting recommended action.
- 4.3.2 remove reference to an exact size of a buffer. Buffers should apply to all structures.
- 4.3.2. Recommended Actions for Environment. #12 add in names of conversation organizations like Battenkill Conservancy, Battenkill Watershed Alliance, Trout Unlimited.

Next Meeting: Monday, February 14th at 7:30pm. Focus of the meeting will be finishing up the page by page review of the draft starting with the section Economic Development and reviewing the prioritization chart and Executive Summary.