

Village of Lansing

MINUTES of a joint meeting of the Board of Trustees and Planning Board of the Village of Lansing held on Monday, November 3, 2008, in the Village Office.

Present: Mayor Donald Hartill; Trustees Larry Fresinski, Lynn Leopold, Julie Baker and John O'Neill; Planning Board Chair Ned Hickey; Planning Board Members Carol Klepack, Phil Dankert, Maria Stycos, Richard Durst; Code & Zoning Officer Ben Curtis; Clerk/Treasurer Jodi Dake; Attorney David Dubow.

Mayor Hartill called the meeting to order at 7:35 P.M. and opened the public comment period. Ned Hickey stated that McCune & Ainslie have picked up trash in the Graham Road/Triphammer Rd. area on November 1st and May 1st for years. Don will send them a thank you letter and let them know that they need to renew their paperwork for the Adopt-A-Highway Program.

Mayor Hartill pointed out that our past attorney, Bill Troy, had a son in the audience. Government students are required to attend a government meeting for class.

Motion-To Close the Public Comment Period

Trustee Leopold moved to close the public comment period. Trustee Baker seconded the motion. A vote was taken:

Mayor Donald Hartill-Aye
Trustee Larry Fresinski-Aye
Trustee Julie Baker-Aye

Trustee Lynn Leopold-Aye
Trustee John O'Neill-Aye

Mayor Hartill stated that the only business the Trustees had to do before starting the joint meeting was to approve the returned Village taxes that will be sent to Tompkins County. Every year the taxes that are unpaid get turned over to the County for collection and are thereby relieved on the Town & County Tax bill.

Resolution #5491-To Forward the Delinquent Village Taxes in the Amount of \$5,487.67 to Tompkins County

Trustee Fresinski moved this resolution. Trustee Leopold seconded the motion. A vote was taken:

Mayor Donald Hartill-Aye
Trustee Larry Fresinski-Aye
Trustee Julie Baker-Aye

Trustee Lynn Leopold-Aye
Trustee John O'Neill-Aye

The required documentation to implement the foregoing resolution was executed by all of the Trustees as required.

Ned Hickey called the Planning Board to order. Ned appointed Richard Durst, Alternate Member of the Planning Board, as an Acting Member to sit in for Mario Tomei. Ned stated that there are three issues that the Planning Board would like to discuss with the Trustees -- workforce housing, a stewardship program and parking regulations.

The first item discussed was Workforce Housing. Ned explained that Workforce Housing is a relatively new term that applies to what has previously been referred to as “affordable housing”. He explained that the Planning Board at this point has no opinion pro or con on this issue, but thought it best to discuss this with the Board of Trustees because both boards will very likely be involved if further action is taken.

It was explained that Tompkins County is pushing for workforce housing. Although the Village may not know a lot about it at this time, there appears to be some interest in achieving a better level of understanding. The Boards went over the documentation that they had received. There are four principal factors:

1. affordability-30% of household income for housing principal, interest, taxes & insurance
2. home ownership-single family homes
3. critical workforce-housing intended to appeal to key members of the workforce such as police officers, firemen, teachers, nurses, office workers, etc., whom we think of as the “backbone of any successful community;” workforce families are generally younger and often include or plan to include children.
4. proximity-located in or near employment centers

Ideally, workforce housing aims at satisfying the housing needs of family households earning 50% to 150% of median household income in a given SMSA (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area).It also aims at providing for ownership of single-family homes priced and financed in 30-year fixed-rate monthly terms equal to approximately 15% to 45% of median household income within a given SMSA.

Ned indicated that Cornell University announced that they have \$10 million for workforce housing. The goal is to cut down on the number of people coming from outside the area to Tompkins County to work. The property that Cornell owns is 23 acres adjacent to the Swim Club on Uptown Road. The area is zoned Medium Density Residential and is served by all the utilities.

Ned stated that Jack Jensen, a private developer, came to a recent Planning Board meeting and spoke on the role of the private developer in workforce housing projects. Mr. Jensen has undertaken a workforce housing development, Farm Pond Circle, in the Town of Lansing. This project utilizes volunteer labor and grants to keep the costs down.

The Tompkins County Planning Department sent the Planning Board information and data concerning the commuting patterns for the Village of Lansing. They stated that there are 4,089 workers that commute into the Village of Lansing to work and another 547 that work and live in the Village. The information also claims that there are lower salary ranges around the malls and higher further out. The information states that the median

income of a single family of four in this area is \$50,000. There was some feeling that the information as to median incomes may not be accurate. Dubow stated that a standard homeownership principle is that housing costs should be about 30% of one's income, which in the case of a family income of \$50,000 case would be \$15,000. He also briefly explained incentives that the Village could offer such as more development density for areas that are designated for the building of affordable housing. This would create extra lots. Inclusionary and incentive zoning are other things that could be offered to developers.

Ned asked posed the question as to whether this is something that the Planning Board should continue with. Ben stated that 50% of the Village's population is in dwellings with five or more units – multiple housing of some kind. When the Village was first formed that percentage was 71%. The next highest in Tompkins County is the City of Ithaca which has 38%.

Larry stated that the timing is not very good for this. He asked if the present regulations prevent affordable housing. Ned thinks that there needs to be stringent regulations for affordable housing. Dubow stated that provided all land use regulations and procedures are complied with, anyone can proceed with the development of affordable housing. The critical question for governmental entities is whether they want to encourage workforce housing. The Tompkins County Planning Department is strongly encouraging workforce housing, although the County's vision may be different than the Village's.

Ned spoke with Tom LaVigne at Cornell Real Estate and he would be willing to come in and speak with the Village boards about what programs Cornell University will be presenting. Ned indicated that if they come in asking for incentives the Village would need to consider amending its local laws accordingly. Larry asked if the increased density would reduce safety. Ben stated that the building code requirements and restrictions address safety issues.

Dubow suggested that one approach might be to identify areas in the Village that would be appropriate for workforce housing. There are any number of ways to address this issue. The Village can either be a proactive or reactive. Ned indicated that we could do planned development areas like Shannon Park or create overlay districts applicable to areas determined to be appropriate or desirable for workforce housing. The Planning Board is trying to identify what it can do to help with this problem. Ned stated that we are limited in the amount of land we have still to develop. He thinks that there are about 100 acres. Ned questioned whether we even need to do this. It was suggested that we use Cornell as an experience factor.

Mayor Hartill asked Ben what the current building construction cost is. Ben stated that it is \$150-\$200 per square foot. Ben stated that efficiency affordable housing is \$115 per square foot on the low end plus the cost of land. A 1,500 sq. ft. house might cost approximately \$180,000. Larry stated that this would be hard to afford unless there are subsidies. It was pointed out the workforce housing could be quite different for Cornell professionals. It is unknown what the needs are.

Maria stated that in the past the Village was concerned with the homeowner and commercial development as separate projects. Now we are looking at the possibility of mixed uses. She feels it is very progressive of us to explore these options and show that the Village is open to new ideas.

Ned feels that someone will have to bring a plan to us. Until then there are very few things we can do. Do we want to venture out? Lynn questions whether we should have no formal program or whether more people would approach the Village if we did have an incentive program.

Dubow suggested approaching Cornell and/or Tompkins County to talk about getting their input and exploring this further. It was acknowledged that the County's vision of workforce housing in the Village of Lansing may be very different than its vision for other municipalities. Tompkins County has prepared a model law. It was generally agreed that getting some direction from Cornell and the County would be helpful and informative. Ned stated that he is quite sure that Cornell is willing to come and talk to the Village. Lynn feels this is a good place to start. Ned will set up another joint meeting of the Boards and Cornell for late January.

Don stated that if we had 20 acres and did 8 living units per acre that could be 160 units under our Zoning Law provisions. Don feels that the County's participation will offer the opportunity to confirm whether their expectations for the Village are realistic.

Ben Curtis brought up the issue of special needs housing. Many people have approached him on this subject, and the Village does not have any special needs housing or specific land use provisions for such projects. This type of housing would not have the same traffic impact. It would typically be quieter. Don stated that we had done this once before when Kendal was considering a location. Ben suggested that we may want to look at our zoning and add a new category. The Village has good proximity to facilities and transportation.

Carol Klepack presented the Stewardship Program. Carol would like the Village to commit to a stewardship program for conservation easements and parcels which have been acquired through the recreation set aside program similar to the stewardship program the Finger Lakes Land Trust has instituted. There are certain large parcels that might be involved and also smaller connectors and pocket parks throughout the Village, many of which are not marked. There are regulations on deeds and other documents and the question is how to enforce these. Carol stated that this is an issue that the Planning Board has talked about many times.

The Village has been committed to acquisition and preservation of open space and green space. We have encouraged cluster development to get green space which is owned by homeowner associations. Carol feels we need to put together a program to oversee easements and our land entrusted the Village in some fashion. To do this we would need to have surveys done to identify the boundaries of the parcels involved. This would then become a budget issue. Ned suggested that we do a couple of properties a year since a surveyor can be very costly. Dubow added that each property very likely has a metes and

bounds description based upon maps and documentation on file at the Village and/or the County so the process of identifying parcel boundaries should be easier than having to arrange for new surveys. It was suggested that we mark out the area with little aluminum signs. In other municipalities they have staff that does this. Ned stated that the expense will be in the details.

David Dubow suggested that getting this program started might be a good project for a Cornell student or class. They could go to the County Clerk's office and the Village office to research and review files with the goal being the creation of a manual of some type where information can be recorded and updated as required. They could identify our park land, how we took title and what regulations exist. A lot of this information is on the Village map. Ned also knows a lot since he has been on the Planning Board for quite some time. Ben stated that TC3 has a survey class that may also be interested in something like this.

It was asked how much signage would cost to mark these areas. Lynn stated that the sign for the rain garden is coming from Voss. Carol will look into the cost of signs. We also need new signs for the heads of the greenway trails.

The next item on the agenda was to consider amending the parking regulations. Ben stated that he usually tells people that there is no parking on Village streets but David Dubow indicated that formal parking regulations need to be formally adopted by the Village. Section 135-22 of the Village Code currently lists only two areas where parking is prohibited at any time. Section 135-23 lists two areas where there is no stopping at any time. Section 135-24 states that there is no parking on all Village streets between 2am and 6am. Ben stated that it is not uncommon for people to have parties at their house and have people that park on the street, so it is not practical to say there is no parking on any street in the Village. However, he suggested that a provision be added that prohibits parking on commercial streets that are in or border on a commercial area. Richard Durst asked what good it was to have a law if we have no enforcement.

Dubow stated that New York law generally requires that vehicle and traffic restrictions must be posted with signage to be enforceable. Enforcement is obviously the primary issue. Because the Village parking regulations have historically been adopted by resolution as permitted, any new regulations can be done in similar fashion as provide in the Village Code. However, Dubow suggests having a public hearing so as to provide greater awareness. Specific areas for the parking restrictions will need to be identified and signs posted as required. The signs will be an expense. Mayor Hartill stated that we did have a parking enforcement officer at one time but it was a net loss to the Village. All the money received from the tickets goes to the Town of Lansing court. We would have to compare this to other issues in the Village once we decide on our path. Dubow stated that the Village can identify certain portions of roads as being restricted for parking with appropriate signs identifying those specific areas. Ben feels that the areas of Burdick Hill and by Bishops are very dangerous to park on. Don feels we need to do this and depend on the Sheriff and NYS Police to enforce.

Don mentioned that Tompkins County is very focused on the concept of nodal development. They have been pushing it for 3-4 years now and are having a workshop next week. The Planning Board has all received this workshop information. Ned stated that the Village is consistent with the nodal development model.

The Boards informally agreed to have a joint meeting every year in November.

Motion- To Adjourn

Trustee Fresinski moved for adjournment. Trustee Leopold seconded the motion. A vote was taken:

Mayor Donald Hartill-Aye
Trustee Larry Fresinski-Aye
Trustee Julie Baker-Aye

Trustee Lynn Leopold-Aye
Trustee John O'Neill-Aye

The Planning Board also adjourned, moved by Carol seconded by Maria, and unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.