

Town of Niles Comprehensive Plan Committee
Niles Town Hall, New Hope, NY
November 14, 2006

Present: John Behrens, Tony Hart, Caroline Head, Jane Kozlosky, Larry Roser, Rose Roser, Kris Scholl, Dorothy Rizzo, Co-Chair, Diana Cramer, Co-Chair, Ellen Abend. Guest: Kristy LaManche, Environmental Planner-CNY Regional Planning & Development Committee.

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Rizzo at 7:05 PM.

Reports on action items from October: Ms. Head distributed copies of a draft survey created by Ms. Andrus for review. The Town Board felt that allowing conference calling for committee members to attend meetings would be too expensive; request denied. Following procedures, Mr. Scholl will attend the December Town Board meeting to request the addition of a new member: Dr. Peter Andrus. The development of an informational post card has been put on hold. The Qualities Communities Grant proposal was written by Dr. Andrus, reviewed by the Town Board and submitted.

Comprehensive Plan Training: Six committee members (T. Hart, J. Behrens, D. Cramer, C. Head, D. Coalson, and E. Abend) attended this training which was held in the Cayuga County Office Building on October 25, 2006. All reported it was an excellent orientation to the process which defined the committee's role as being the "voice" of the whole community. Mr. Hart stated that as a result of the training he feels the committee should step back prior to conducting the public survey and address other issues first. He also felt that having a facilitator to guide the committee is important.

Environmental Planner: Ms. Kristy LaManche introduced herself to the committee and explained that her role in the comprehensive plan process can be flexible. Through funds provided by Congressman James Walsh, she is available to assist the committee with tasks such as organizing and facilitating the visioning process through the actual writing of the comprehensive plan. Ms. LaManche can also help with developing a web page for the committee.

Visioning Process: Ms. LaManche presented information on the visioning process and explained that it will help to identify community assets and important issues. The survey will follow and be a summary of the visioning process to validate the major values identified with the whole community. Four visioning sessions, each 1.5-2 hours in length is recommended. Publicizing the sessions to encourage the public to attend is important and there is a specific protocol to follow. Ms. LaManche stated that the Regional Planning Board can assist with promoting the sessions. Discussion of targeting specific groups and timing of the sessions ensued. It was decided that the sessions should start in March to allow farmers to attend prior to spring planting. Ms. LaManche will develop specific questions for the sessions and be the facilitator for each one. At the end of Ms. LaManche's presentation, Mr. Behrens suggested that be invited to all of the committee meetings to help the process move forward. The committee agreed.

Discussion: The issue of farm-land trusts versus farmers being able to sell their land for retirement was introduced as a point of discussion. Ms. LaManche suggested that the challenge to the community is to find a balance between agriculture, residential, and light industry.

Action:

- Mr. Scholl will attend the December Town Board meeting to request that Dr. Peter Andrus be added to the committee.
- Ms. LaManche will develop visioning questions; email them to the secretary who will then send them to the committee members for review.

Next Meeting: Thursday, December 14, 2006, 7:00 PM

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Abend
Secretary