

Town of Salem Comprehensive Plan  
Committee Meeting  
October 15, 2007  
7:30 PM Town Hall

Attendees: Dorothy Schneider, Chair, Joseph Childs, Bill Eberle, Bruce Ferguson, Nancy Hand-Higby, Robert Laukaitis, Brigid Nosal, Eileen Ryan, Steve Alexander, Town Supervisor

Guests speaker: Chris Round, Chazen Company

Previous Action items:

Dorothy stated that she will be attending a workshop on October 23 (Tuesday) regarding the grant for agricultural planning being offered by the Department of Agriculture and Markets. Steve will also be attending. She had received a packet of information from Ag & Markets.

Nancy stated she spoke to Jackie Keren regarding grant writing and Jackie stated that her costs would be about \$500 for 10 hours to research grants and then about \$65 per hour for the actual grant writing. Nancy also stated that there was a proposed budget item of \$5,000 for comprehensive planning. Jackie stated that she could not guarantee that she will be able to secure funds.

Nancy also discussed her understanding of the Ag & Markets grant. A total of \$25,000 per municipal entity was available (with the town and village being separate entities it may be possible for a total of \$50,000). The grant requires a 25% matching. Of that 25% up to 20% can be in-kind services. It was not clear yet what would be considered in kind services.

There was no new information from Betty Little's office.

New Business:

Chris Round from Chazen Company gave a presentation. He stated that Chazen Company is an engineering firm with a planning component. He gave a brief background on the company and his experience (Queensbury Planning Director, environmental Engineering).

Chris was asked how do we approach the planning process? He stated that an agenda/approach needs to be established. Issues needed to be identified; a clear vision need to be set and a mission statement should be developed.

An information meeting with the community should be held early on in the process. Chris suggested this meeting should help identify what the strengths and weaknesses,

identify issues, ways to preserve what is liked, tackle threats to preservation, who is the town/community and we would like to be characterized.

Chris suggested the committee should be gathering information regarding trends such as population, downtown vacancies, what's missing, what's stopping (wanted) businesses from coming.

Chris stated a follow-up survey to the original community meeting could be done but surveys tend to be expensive and are difficult to gather meaningful information. He felt it is better to have meetings and get people in the room together.

The top eight to ten issues should be used for visioning things such as what do we want to become and what do we want to protect and how to manage the development process.

He suggested the plan could identify problems and ways to solve them with clear action steps over the next five years. He said it is common that site review and zoning often come out of a comprehensive plan where the plan is used to guide these activities.

Chris stated an approach could be to have community meetings on one issue at a time. For example a meeting on downtown issues and/or a meeting on agricultural protection and the tools that could be used including development rights, conservation easements.

Joe asked who would do the writing? The committee or the consultant?

Chris: It could be the consultant or the committee by assigning tasks and using the consultant as a facilitator.

Bruce asked about a joint village and town plan.

Chris: the shared municipal services initiative by the State may provide some funds if merging services was an option from the perspective of money to study how to share services. He also mentioned that right now the dissolution of villages is something the State is trying to encourage. He gave Glens Falls and Queensbury as examples of shared service agreements. They share an animal control officer and have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for highway services and until recently shared an assessor. Another area he suggested was shared code enforcement.

Joe questioned how this would fall under the plan.

Chris stated the plan could build a basis for shared services by identifying redundant services. The plan could state things that should be explored. The plan could chart a course. For example the plan may state consolidate services and identify funding sources. The plan could set early action items.

Joe asked about funds for writing plans.

Chris stated that the plan could be done modularly over time to limit the amount of funds needed at any one time.

Bill questioned the likelihood of the dissolution of the village.

Chris responded that usually some driving force such as taxes may convince the community.

Nancy asked that if both the town and village apply for the agriculture grant how can it benefit the village.

Chris suggested the village helps to stabilize the agriculture community, economic development (farmers markets, stores to sell farm products.)

Steve mentioned that there is no room for sprawl within the village since the village is surrounded by active farms.

Chris mentioned that it is possible to transfer development rights between the town and village to allow for more density in the village while giving more development rights to the town for the larger open spaces.

Joe inquired as to costs for consultants.

Chris stated that a proposal outlining a scope of services would state the costs and what would be provided for that cost. For example: the consultant would:

- conduct x number of meetings
- meet with the committee x number of times
- write plan sections

The work could be done over time to spread the costs. He stated that \$20,000 would be minimal work and up \$50,000 for a full project. It may be possible to do an update of the plan for \$25,000 - \$30,000.

Chris also stated smaller firms are available to help with planner and would be less costly. (Lisa Nagle, Nan Stolzenbrug)

Joe: Can the consultant just write an outline?

Chris: Yes.

Bruce asked why we should be doing a comprehensive plan. Nancy suggested that there will be more suburban pressure in the future, there is some need for a waste plan and the downtown needs development. Chris summed it up by saying the plan would help Salem to continue to thrive while managing growth under local control.

Chris stated that growth could come from better utilization of the rail system. He also suggested we look at the old plan recommendations and try problem solving for those recommendations that were not implemented.

Steve asked how we would engage the community.

Chris: It is critical that everyone in the community feels that they had the opportunity to be part of the process. He stated public workshops and meetings in the community help promote this. He suggested that town gatherings where many residents may be are a good forum. He stated that Stillwater used the Farm Bureau to help engage the farmers.

Chris provided the following possible funding/help sources:

Local waterfront Revitalization Planning

Member line items in the budget

Lake Champlain/ Lake George regional planning board

Glens Falls MTA for transportation issues and road classification

NY Small cities grant (infrastructure, downtown, housing)

Chris stated that there would be an administrative requirement for any funds received through a grant.

Action Items:

Nancy will follow-up with Jackie regarding hours to write the Agricultural planning grant.

Dorothy will report on the grant workshop.

Dorothy will try to get someone from Saratoga Associates to make a presentation

Anyone with additional agenda items will send them to Eileen or Dorothy for inclusion on the next agenda.

The net meeting will be on Monday November 19 at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall.