

Town of Salem Comprehensive Plan
Committee Meeting
November 19, 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, Jackie Keren

Dorothy began the meeting by stating that the Town had included \$5,000 in the new budget for the Comprehensive plan. The Town Board also authorized Jackie Keren to proceed with the grant writing for the Agriculture and Market Farmland Protection Plan grant. Dorothy stated that the Town will have the funds available in January to cover Jackie's fee and Jackie agreed to work on the grant now with payment coming in January. Joseph Childs stated that the Village Board has agreed to apply for a joint grant as two municipalities for the time being. Joseph said the Village does not have any funding and would need to know exactly what costs they would have to cover. It was clarified that Jackie's fee for writing the grant would be covered by the Town even if the Village could not contribute to her fee.

Joseph then asked what we expected to get out of the Agriculture and Market grant as the current comprehensive plan had a statement about protecting farmland, having a right to farm law and maintaining the agriculture nature of the Town. Joseph sent an email to the Committee members prior to the meeting discussing a 65 page report called the American Farmland Trust. He felt it was a very good at identifying tools that the Town could use to accomplish the general statement already in the Town's Comprehensive plan. He questioned what the grant would provide funding for – would it provide funding to purchase development rights or set up easements? Bill clarified that the plan will not be a source of funding for purchase of development right, conservation easements, etc. but would provide information and possibly identify funding sources that may be used in the future.

Jackie responded by stating that the grant would enable us to hire a consultant that could review these tools, do an analysis of the Town's situation, explain how to use the tools and help with public hearings to get an understanding of the different agricultural interests within the Town. Nancy stated that it would also provide an outside perspective and guidance for the committee. She stated that the comprehensive plan is a general document that states goals whereas the consultant could provide us with policies, procedures and recommendations specific to the Agricultural portion of the plan.

There was more discussion on the potential positive impact of getting the grant and everyone agreed we should go ahead and apply for the grant. The grant can be up to \$25,000 per municipality (\$50,000 for both Town and Village) but does require 25% matching by the municipality. The 25% matching may include up to 20% of in-kind services but these services could not be from the committee volunteers. It may include

use of Town employees, help received from groups such as ASA (agricultural stewardship association), County planners, printing, postage etc. Any in kind services would minimize the dollars needed to be expended by the Town and Village.

Jackie stated she could prepare a narrative for the grant and possibly contact some people regarding in kind services. The narrative could include that state of agricultural business in the Town, what the Town's goals are and describe current resources. She stated that prior to submitting the application that the committee would need to decide on the dollar amount of the grant if it wasn't going to be the maximum amount. Jackie stated she could start writing the grant next week. And that there were already 5 applications that have been received and paid out so we should make decisions quickly.

Nancy stated that a point person (or two) would need to be identified so if the state had questions during the application process they would have a responsive individual to contact. Any questions that need answers would delay the processing of the application until answered therefore the point person must be available and easily reachable.

Nancy also stated that a resolution would have to be passed by both the Town and Village to authorize applying for the grant.

Prior to the meeting Nancy contacted Saratoga Associates regarding what they could provide as services specifically addressing the Agriculture and Market grant. Nancy provided the response in an email to the committee. It was suggested that we get other estimates.

Steve stated that we should talk to as many consultants as possible. The committee agreed that if Steve could reschedule CT Male for December 3 the committee could meet then to listen to a presentation. Nancy also agreed to contact Chris Round from Chazen to try and get an estimate from him as well as inquire to others whose names he gave in his presentation (Nan Stolzenburg, Lisa Nagle). Nancy will try to schedule someone for the regular December 17 meeting.

Joseph stated that he is moving forward with updating the Village's General Development Plan with newer statistics.

Action items:

Bruce will try to get copies of the American Farmland Trust report for the committee. It can also be found online through the link provided by Joseph.

Steve will try to reschedule CT Male for December 3 not specific time was given.

Nancy will contact Chris Round for an estimate for the Ag & Market plan.

Nancy will try to schedule another planner for the December 17 meeting.

Jackie will begin the narrative for the Ag and Market grant.

Steve will look into what is required to provide the resolution necessary for applying for the grant.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for December 3 at 7:30 if the speaker can attend and a second meeting on December 17 at 7:30

Steve will send an email once the speaker has been confirmed for the December 3 meeting.