

Town of Salem Comprehensive Plan  
Committee Meeting  
May 19, 2008  
7:00 PM Town Hall

Attendees: Dorothy Schneider, Chuck Alexander, Steve Alexander, Joseph Childs, Bill Eberle, Bruce Ferguson, Nancy Hand-Higby, Robert Laukaitis, Eileen Ryan, Brigid Nosal, Anita Witten

Others: Sheldon Brown

The Committee began by discussing the Request For Proposal (RFP) responses. It was agreed that all respondents were qualified. The three proposals were from Community Planning and Environmental Associates, Behan and American Farmland Trust. It was noted that Community Planning came in at a cost higher than the grant and matching funds. It was discussed that Community Planning left their final fee open for negotiation based on the Committee doing some of the work instead of Community Planning.

A go around was done to get everyone's opinion.

Eileen began by saying that she had preferred Behan and American Farmland Trust (AFT) based on the proposals submitted. She stated that Community Planning did not give as specific information to the tasks as the other two proposals. She noted that when we talked to Community Planning she was impressed by the consultant and felt they were qualified and could do the job but that Behan had included a fiscal analysis and a specific land ranking plan. AFT also mentioned developing a land ranking system.

Joseph Childs stated he liked Behan and Community Planning. Joseph felt Behan had the most comprehensive proposal but that Community Planning may have more experience in the Agricultural arena. He stated that he did not think that using the webcasting proposed by Community Planning would be as good as having face-to-face meetings. He stated that the main person for AFT had the least experience of the candidates. He also stated that AFT did not appear to have strong GIS and mapping skills.

Anita stated she preferred AFT and AFT seemed to have many successful projects in the past.

Dottie stated that Behan's planner Mike Weltie was very good and if was assigned to the project she thinks he would do a good job. She also expressed she liked AFT and was impressed with Liz Brock.

Bill stated he did not review the proposals but he liked Community Planning's presentation and thinks they would be a good consultant. Easton is currently using this consultant and has said good things about them.

Bruce stated that he (may be) biased since his daughter works for AFT doing writing but she would not be participating in our project. He also expressed that another person that would be helping with the project grew up in Salem and this may be a plus.

Nancy expressed that she thought Behan was too rigid in their proposal. That Behan had a specific method and formula and may not be flexible to Salem's needs. She did suggest that if Mike Welti was the main project person, Behan would be higher on her list. Nancy suggested that Community Planning may have the best approach to incorporate the Farmland Protection Plan into a Comprehensive plan. She did state that we would need to negotiate with Community Planning to bring the costs down.

Brigid expressed she liked AFT. Rob stated he would like to meet with Behan since we did not get a presentation from them yet.

Sheldon Brown spoke up and stated that the farmers knew AFT and would be more open to speaking with them than some company they did not know. He also mentioned that AFT has other programs to purchase development rights. He mentioned that AFT may have other aspects that would be beneficial in the larger scheme of farmland protection and developing a relationship with them on this project may be a good opportunity.

It was decided that Dottie would call all three consultants and ask them to appear at our next meeting to answer some questions before we make a final decision. It was also decided that both the Village and Town Board members would be invited to this meeting. Eileen agreed to start a list of questions for each consultant and send them out to the Committee for additional questions and approval.

Sheldon asked the committee if we had defined what a "farm" was. We stated that this had come up in past meetings and we were expecting the consultant to help us with this definition.

Both Anita and Dottie expressed that the Committee should participate in doing surveys and interviews of stakeholders as the project goes forward.

Joseph gave a brief presentation on maps.

Nancy mentioned that in a prior meeting, the Committee had discussed putting some information together to give presentations to various local groups and had this been assigned to anyone. It was determined that it had not been assigned and would be on the agenda for next month depending on the consultant interviews.

Consultant Interviews will be done at the June 16<sup>th</sup> meeting please note the time change to 6:30. Other agenda items for the next available meeting:

Information for local groups

Business listing being developed by Chuck

The next meeting is scheduled for **JUNE 16 at 6:30 pm** at the Town Hall.