

**Danby Planning Board
Minutes
August 18, 2010**

Members Present:

Robert Roe
Naomi Strichartz
Olivia Vent
Anne Klingensmith (arrived 7:48 pm)

Excused:

Steve Selin
Ted Melchen

Absent:

Ray Van de Bogart

Others Present:

Pamela Goddard	Town Clerk/PB Secretary
Susan Beeners	Code Enforcement Officer
Ric Dietrich	Town Supervisor
Dan Klein	Town Board

Members of the Public:

Joel Gagnon, Ted Crane, Henry Peterson, Elizabeth Keokosky, Stephanie Scheck, Guillermo Metz

Planning Board Meeting:

The Planning Board opened its meeting at 7:07 pm. In the absence of Steve Selin, Deputy Chair Roe chaired the meeting.

Biofuels presentations:

Henry “Beauty” Peterson made a presentation about local-scale alcohol fuel production and answered questions about his plan. Peterson distributed copies of a list of proposed needs and goals for “Alcohol Initiative Danby” (AID), which he described as a “wish list” for the long term.

Peterson views alcohol fuel as an alternative to “Big Oil” for local energy independence. According to Peterson, White Hawk Ecovillage is seeking to be a demonstration site for this type of fuel production and use, by creating a non-profit company for AID. His primary requests for the Town are in the areas of education and political support for this initiative. In the long term, he would like to see multiple distilleries for alcohol fuel in the area, which would all sell to a cooperative with a possible distribution site at the old Danby Store.

A letter from Ames Brown, expressing concerns about alcohol fuel agriculture, was distributed to the Planning Board. Peterson noted that switch grass (the main focus of Brown’s letter) is only one option for an alcohol fuel crop, and not the best for this area. Peterson recommended a diversity of crops for alcohol fuel production. Peterson responded to other concerns about alcohol fuel viability in standard cars, product quality control, and economic sustainability. Conversion kits are available for many cars. Conversion of town highway vehicles to 15% alcohol fuel has been tried in other towns (e.g. Dryden) with mixed success.

Betsy Keokosky responded to Peterson’s presentation and gave an update about the Danby Land Bank Cooperative (DLBC) activities and plans. She asserted that the energy return on energy invested for biomass used in pellet stoves and heating use is much more efficient than biomass for alcohol fuel production. She agreed that each had its place for specialized uses.

The DLBC is in its 2nd year and has 20 members. DLBC is working with old fields, harvesting weeds and brush for biomass for burning. Community Biomass Energy has been researching using grass for pellets. Keokosky stated that there is strong competition from existing markets for wood chips and

sawdust. The best market seems to be in grass briquettes and logs. A production facility is starting in Broome County.

Keokosky is interested in a small, local facility making in the range of 500 tons of grass briquettes and logs for local heating needs. The Danby Highway Department biomass heating system is looking to use this type of grass biomass for heat. Keokosky is encouraged by this effort and appreciates the town's support.

Beeners reported that an inter-municipal energy advisor has been funded through a NYSERDA grant. Discussions regarding how this position will be used are under way between the participating towns. Beeners suggested that support for the local initiatives discussed this evening be part of this person's role.

Information was distributed about a pilot program for low-interest financing of energy efficiency home improvements, including direct incentives (\$500 rebate) for purchase of pellet stoves. Guillermo Metz clarified aspects of this program, offered through a partnership of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County and the Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services. There is funding for roughly 24 units. The low-interest loans will be available to a broad range of households. There is no income cap. The price of pellets for the pellet stoves will be guaranteed at a rate slightly below market for two years. Data will be collected to show how energy uses can be reduced, due to weatherization and heating with wood pellets rather than propane or oil. This data will be used for homeowner education.

Sketch Plan review for proposed Town Line Road subdivision:

Beeners distributed a map and gave a brief overview of a proposed subdivision on Town Line Road. There is a request for variance of the minimum two acre lot size for a 1.92 acre lot. This request will need to go to the BZA for variance. Beeners requested that, should this be approved by the BZA, it be scheduled for a hearing at the Planning Board to facilitate passage.

Approval of Minutes:

Resolution No. 25 of 2010 - APPROVAL OF MINUTES, 07/21/2010

Resolved, That the Planning Board of the Town of Danby approves the minutes of its 07/21/2010 meeting.

Moved by Strichartz, Second by Klingensmith.

The motion passed by acclamation.

Planning Board work goals/Multi Use Zoning:

Roe suggested that this discussion be tabled until the full Board is present.

Vent reported on her meeting with Robert Morasch and suggested that he be invited to speak to the Planning Board. He has been consulting with Vent regarding her property across the road from the Town Hall. Vent suggested that his presentation could spark brainstorming and inspiration for further discussion on creative zoning and integrated, sustainable development. Beeners advised that this speaker would be able to give a perspective more contemporary than anything in print. The PB asked Vent to invite Morasch to speak to the board at the September 15 meeting.

Member Items:

Roe distributed some information on a County Cell Tower Legislation initiative for PB general information. This generated a discussion about the state of Danby's existing Cell Tower ordinance and whether/when it needs to be updated.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Pamela S Goddard, Planning Board Secretary