

Town of Danby Planning Board
Minutes of Regular Meeting
March 21, 2019

PRESENT:

Ed Bergman
Scott Davis
Joel Gagnon
Bruce Richards
Jody Scriber
Jim Rundle (Chair)

ABSENT:

Naomi Strichartz

OTHER ATTENDEES:

Town Board liaison	Leslie Connors
Town Planner	John Czamanske
Recording Secretary	Alyssa de Villiers
Public	C.J. Randall (former Town Planner), Sarah Schnabel, Matt Ulinski (Town Councilperson)

The meeting was opened at 7:02pm.

(1) CALL TO ORDER / AGENDA REVIEW

Towards the end of the meeting, discussion of a joint training meeting with the Board of Zoning Appeals was added to the agenda as agenda item number seven, discussion with Planner Czamanske about Board priorities was added as number eight, and agenda items for the next meeting was added as number nine.

(2) PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

No comments were made during privilege of the floor.

(3) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Approve February minutes

Moved by Gagnon, seconded by Scriber

The motion passed.

In favor: Bergman, Davis, Gagnon, Richards, Scriber

Abstain: Rundle

(4) TOWN BOARD LIAISON REPORT

Leslie Connors shared the following information:

- The informal plans for a commercial corridor at 1839-1849 Danby Rd. that Olivia Vent has put forth for review will likely come before the Town Board during the first meeting in April. Letters have been sent to the neighbors.
- The Danby Community Park Association got a \$5,000 grant to put up a playground. The next step will be preparing a site plan.
- Connors attended the tree talk by Akiva Silver put on by the Conservation Advisory Council and thought it was great and much enjoyed by those who attended; she hopes they can have him back again.

(5) INTRODUCTION OF NEW PLANNER

Chairman Rundle welcomed John Czamanske as the Town's new planner, pointing out that he brings a lot of experience to the position.

Planner Czamanske then introduced himself, giving a brief history of his career in planning. He has been working closely with outgoing planner Randall to ensure a smooth transition. All expressed gratitude for the ability to have that overlap, allowing for a person-to-person transfer of information and systems. Czamanske has met with the Chairs of the Planning Board and Board of Zoning Appeals, and will be meeting with the Town Lawyer and Town Supervisor next week. He is also communicating with the new Code Enforcement Officer John Norman. He is currently reading the Zoning Ordinance and getting up to speed on ongoing projects. While he has been hired part-time, he is starting out by putting in more hours to become acquainted with everything. He does currently have some office hours, and will continue to do so, although the schedule has not yet been solidified.

(6) PLANNING AND ZONING REPORT

Outgoing Town Planner Randall reported the following:

- She has been meeting daily with the new Town Planner during this time of transition.

- Grant administration for the NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities highway project and the Brown Rd. stabilization project will be taken over by Laura Shawley at the Highway Department. This involves the use of NYS's Grants Gateway system.
- Jim Holahan (Town Councilperson) will be taking over the administration of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) housing needs assessment project.
- Through the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) a geodatabase was created. Planner Czamanske can use this along with County Planning's Geographic Information System (GIS). She said that Danby now has one of the most complete mapping data sets in the County.
- There are currently no pending development applications.
- Randall and Czamanske met with the Chairs of the Planning Board and Board of Zoning Appeals and talked about doing a training with Town Lawyer Guy Krogh soon, possibly in May, hopefully while nothing is pending.
- Final map edits for the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) draft will be to the Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) by the April meeting, which Randall will attend.
- Administration of the EV charging station is now done by the Town Clerk.
- Regarding the LED streetlight conversion project, someone from the NY Power Authority will be coming to an upcoming Town Board meeting to discuss implementation. Initially it was thought it might be through shared services, but instead the Power Authority may buy all the Town's lights and do the conversion. The energy savings would be applied to the cost until the project is paid off, and then the Town would get the savings. The Town is aware of the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council's recommendations on light color. A survey would also be done of the types of fixtures in the Town through Cornell Cooperative Extension.
- The TCAT Park & Ride agreement between TCAT, the Town, and the Danby Park Association has been executed and shelter installation will be coming soon.

Town Planner Czamanske posed a question to the Board:

- What does the Board use to review zoning? Most members answered that they largely used paper copies of the Zoning Ordinance, and that they need the most updated version. As Planner Czamanske starts out, one of the questions he asks is, what are the official documents of the Town? And has the Town at some point readopted everything or incorporated all the changes? Now the most recently updated document of the Zoning Ordinance is on the website. He will be

able to print out zoning and subdivision regulations and the related local laws soon; this way everyone will be able to work off of the same documents. He would also like all the planning and zoning information to be in the same place.

(7) JOINT TRAINING SESSION

Czamanske suggested doing the training session in May. He will talk to Guy Krogh next week about his schedule. Specifically on how to make the training most useful, Scriber brought up the importance of the training meeting the Board's needs and being relevant. Randall mentioned that Board members need four hours of training per year and that training hours can roll over. If the training is recommended by the Town or related to planning and zoning it can count. Randall also brought up the upcoming NY Planning Federation training; the Town would pay overnight accommodations and the cost of the conference. Davis asked that the training address the transition the Town is in regarding growth, long-term planning, logistics of rewriting the zoning, and updating the comprehensive plan.

(8) BOARD PRIORITIES

Randall reviewed six of the Board's seven major goals that they had identified through the zoning audit:

- (1) The zones are too binary, density is flat throughout the Town; low-density residential zone does not reflect the desire for actual low density.
- (2) Add environmental protection overlay zones (NRI can help).
- (3) Develop future land use map.
- (4) Use inventory; reviewing and updating definitions.
- (5) Uses by special permit versus what should be by site plan review.
- (6) Ag uses (nothing regarding animal waste storage facilities, etc.)

Because the Town Planner position is part-time, there was discussion of how to tackle the Board's goals and in what order. There is both the issue of rewriting the Zoning Ordinance and updating the Comprehensive Plan. It would be possible to focus first on the zoning, work on it in conjunction with the comprehensive plan, or wait until the comprehensive plan is updated to tackle the zoning. Both Gagnon and Rundle spoke against postponing addressing zoning. Gagnon pointed out that the zoning has not been updated since the last comprehensive plan, so he is not in favor of waiting until the next one. Rundle said that there are so many frustrations the Board encounters around zoning, they need to be addressed. Rundle also brought up the possibility of dealing with some of the easy, straightforward fixes to the zoning early in the process. The need for a future land use map was reiterated.

Randall said that applying for a NYS Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) this year to get Climate Smart Community money for zoning updates might be a good way to go. This would help with funding to look at a zoning update and/or comprehensive plan update, hopefully allowing the Comprehensive Plan to

be updated by 2021. Randall added that bringing a consultant in to help rewrite the zoning has benefits — their work is focused and they can make professional recommendations while retaining some separation from day-to-day goings on in the Town. She said that usually a steering committee would be created to read drafts and focus just on zoning. She cautioned that this process is expensive. In response to a question from Gagnon, Randall said there is no circuit rider from County Planning currently. The circuit rider would go from town to town helping with projects; this is particularly helpful because rural communities often need help and may not have the staff. Because the County does not have land-use authority, the direction has to come from the towns in the form of a detailed scope of work. Both Randall and Czamanske are on the County Planning Advisory Board and are bringing up some of these issues that small towns face.

In discussing how to move forward, it was concluded that more discussion was needed with the Town Board, and that a joint scoping meeting would be needed to reach some decisions on these topics. Randall stressed that all contacts can be brought in to pull together to make things happen. She also specially thanked Mary Ann Barr for her help in getting the planning office organized.

(9) ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Davis thought more discussion about pinning down specifically how the next steps will be taken would be good. Scriber mentioned talking about the “easy” issues that came up through the zoning audit. Richards suggested focusing first on maps. It was agreed that the CAC would present the NRI maps to the Board at the next meeting.

(10) ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm.

Alyssa de Villiers – Recording Secretary