**Town of Stanford**

**Meeting Minutes from Comprehensive Plan Review Committee**

**January 26, 2021**

**Committee Members Present via Video/Conference Call**

Gary Lovett, Committee Chair

Rosemarie Miner, Secretary

Tom Angell

Conrad Levenson

Karen Mosher

Richard Bell

James Sansum

**Others Present**

Wendy Burton, Town of Stanford Supervisor, Committee Liaison

Nina Peek, VP AKRF, Inc. Committee Consultant

Madeleine Helmer, Deputy Project Manager, Planning AKRF, Inc

Danielle Salisbury, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Climate Smart Communities

**Public Comment**

One member of the public was present – Charles Shaw.

The meeting opened at 7:30 pm via Zoom Webinar.

Gary reviewed the proposed agenda:

1) Approve minutes from meeting on January 13, 2021.

2) Presentation by Danielle Salisbury of Cornell Cooperative Extension on how the Climate Smart Communities program fits into the Comprehensive Plan.

3) Review of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 edits. Nina and Madeleine forwarded the revised and formatted chapters on Tuesday afternoon, January 26, 2021.

*Approval of Minutes*

* Minutes approved unanimously.
* Richard requested more comprehensive data on rental units (vacant versus occupied, short-term versus long-term, price over time). Nina will pull out available data used to draw the conclusions in Chapter 2.

*Climate Smart Communities*

***PRESENTATION***

***Overview***

*Danielle presented via PowerPoint and shared her screen. The outreach and education from Cornell Cooperative Extension is provided through their Climate Resilience Partnership with NY DEC Hudson River Estuary Program, NY Water Resources Institute with support from the NYS Environmental Protection Fund.*

*Certification as a CSC provides a framework to guide local municipalities in their climate action efforts and recognize achievement as they make progress. It is voluntary for the Town.*

*The Town earns points with specific actions in different categories. These points will place the community in a ranking system of Bronze (120 points needed to qualify), Silver, and Gold. There are 12 different categories for actions that cover a wide range of activities and each action is assigned points.*

***Why pledge to become a Climate Smart Community?***

*CSCs receive free webinars, staff training, networking with community leaders, access to funding streams (as it relates to infrastructure upgrades, implementations of special projects and research/operations funding), and recognition for strong leadership at the state level.*

*As it relates to the Comprehensive Plan, if we include language that encourages effort toward greater town-wide sustainability initiatives we could earn some points needed to apply for the Bronze rank.*

*Example Action: Comprehensive Plan with Sustainability Elements*

*Required actions:*

1. *Support alternative modes of transportation (including strategies for bicycles, pedestrians, public transit and electric vehicles).*
2. *Promote smart growth principles in land-use policies.*
3. *Conserve natural areas (including strategies to designate open space and protect it from development).*
4. *Promote a healthy and safe community.*
5. *Foster equity (include strategies for housing, school, transportation, recreation, food, and environmental exposures).*

*The Comprehensive Plan could include other actions that may add points toward achieving sustainability goals and CSC certification.*

*Danielle noted expressed values and goals in the 2012 Draft Master Plan that may earn points toward CSC certification. In some cases, there may be a need to reword, or simply state the intended outcome for a proposed action, for it to align more closely with the Climate Smart Communities framework. Danielle suggested aligning already stated priorities and goals to the language in the Climate Smart Community framework and noted that she can help with this task.*

*Danielle clarified one of the actions listed in the CSC guidance document: “Foster green economic development” as referencing incentives for or eliminating barriers to green businesses. Green economic development could include farmer’s markets and solar farms.*

***What does this entail for the CPRC?***

*Danielle would review the draft chapters and recommend CSC-friendly language. If the Town decided to pursue CSC status, Danielle would prepare a memorandum that states the Comprehensive Plan reflects the sustainability elements required to earn CSC points.*

***What does this entail for the Town?***

*Mark Molinaro will be speaking on the benefits of becoming a Climate Smart Community at the Feb. 11 Town Board meeting to address any concerns. After pledging to become a CSC, the Town would appoint a CSC Coordinator and form a committee to do an assessment. This assessment tallies points from actions taken in the last ten years and proposes future actions that are aligned with the Town’s goals (from the CSC framework). The CSC Coordinator would upload all documentation and proof of completion to the CSC portal.*

***Discussion***

The discussion highlighted several positive aspects. Many of the goals and objectives of the 2021 Draft Comprehensive Plan align with the CSC actions, but may need rewording to hit specific CSC goals. A benefit of CSC certification is access to funding for municipal projects. Wendy noted that the Town is already exploring becoming a CSC and beginning outreach. The Conservation Advisory Commission is on board and applied for a grant to fund the Climate Smart Communities Coordinator position.

Several concerns were also raised. We should be careful to keep the Committee’s timeline and not get sidetracked. There was some concern that there may be a negative reaction among some residents to becoming a CSC, and that negativity could spill over to the Comprehensive Plan.

It was decided that the Plan should be framed in such a way that it is consistent with CSC criteria, but we should not endorse or recommend becoming a CSC in the Comprehensive Plan. The Committee supports the adjustment of language to ensure the Town can receive the available points if/when the Town decides to move forward with the CSC pledge.

In response to a question, Danielle referenced Dutchess County CSC communities, including the Village of Red Hook (Bronze), City of Beacon (Silver), Village of Rhinebeck (Bronze). Amenia, Dover, Pleasant Valley, Hyde Park, Poughkeepsie (City and Town), Rhinebeck (Town) have started the process.

*Review of Draft Chapters (after edits)*

Most of the CPRC did not have time to read through the chapters in the few hours between receiving them and this evening’s meeting. Members will need the next chapters sent a few days before each meeting.

Richard and Gary had some editorial comments that will be sent directly to Madeleine. Chapter 1 now includes some discussion of the planning effort as it relates to previous plans, committees and feedback. Gary would like to make sure that this language is not perceived as too negative.

CPRC members will thoroughly review both Chapters 1 and 2 before the February 9 meeting and propose any substantive feedback be added to the agenda for the next meeting. Editorial comments can be sent directly to Nina and Madeleine.

Before next Tuesday, AKRF will send Word versions of the Natural Resources and Utilities & Infrastructure chapters. The CPRC can review before the meeting and substantive feedback can be discussed.

Utilities Chapter –

Broadband update: Wendy reports that the broadband process will be a long one, coordinated with adjacent communities, including Pine Plains. The goal, as understood, is to ensure broadband service to every user. Optimum/Altice is currently the only provider in Stanford (via a service contract negotiated between the Town and Optimum/Altice). Residents report subpar service and lack of “last mile” connection where broadband infrastructure ends at private driveway. Many partners in the County are investigating alternatives and Nina suggests that we make a clear statement on the matter, stating something along the lines of, “it’s really important that the infrastructure is provided and the Town is working on a solution with other stakeholders.”

Existing commercial solar installation behind Town Hall in Stanfordville -

Tom noted that the actual solar field construction doesn’t seem to match up with the approved site plan. The visibility analysis prepared by the Applicant for their Site Plan approval appears incongruent with the actual site grading and installation. Nina suggested that perhaps the DEC reclamation plan for the sand and gravel mine may have required new site grading, and the visual impact assessment did not account for that. Amendments to Zoning Code regulations for solar installations (if/when implemented) should require that visual impact analyses account for changes in land contour.

The current issue could also require enforcement to ensure compliance with Site Plan approval conditions. Richard suggests intervening once the project applies for final approval, in the form of a Certificate of Occupancy equivalent.

Bed & Breakfasts –

Bed & Breakfasts are regulated by the Zoning Code but the desire is to allow additional flexibility for farm stays. Bed & Breakfasts are allowed in all zones by PB special permit.

Short-term rentals (AirBnB, VRBO, etc.) are not currently regulated. AKRF suggests the Comprehensive Plan recommend preparing a general inventory of the AirBnBs, and requiring registration to confirm health and safety standards. This recommendation would be included in the Plan’s Economic Development and Community Character chapter. Other towns are managing the issue with a variety of different approaches. James pointed out the potential for litigation, based on precedent, should the Town attempt to impose too strict limitations. AKRF will draft language around the registry proposal.

*Final Remarks:*

Richard brought attention to the number of references to the previous plans in the current draft. He wanted clarity around the repetition, is it purposeful to drive home the similarities or was it an overlooked redundancy? Any specific editorial comments or changes can be emailed to AKRF before the next meeting.

AKRF would like more photos of the Town for the CP. Wendy is willing to ask photographers who submitted to the Fall Photo Contest for the rights to the images if Nina thinks any are appropriate. AKRF will send a list of images that would be supportive of the content in the Plan.

The next meeting will start with a presentation from Charlie Shaw on Historic Hamlets.

Meeting adjourned at 9 pm.

**Next Committee meeting will be held on:**

Tuesday, February 9, 2021

**The public is invited to listen to these meetings by signing on through the following**

**Zoom link:** <https://zoom.us/j/99284835503>

Meeting minutes submitted by:

Rosemarie Miner

CPRC Secretary