

Town of Stanford

Comprehensive Plan Review Committee

Meeting Minutes of November 10, 2020

Committee Members Present via Video/Conference Call

Gary Lovett, Committee Chair
Tom Angell
Conrad Levenson
Karen Mosher
Jeff Spiers
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

The meeting opened at 7:32 pm via Zoom Webinar.

Public Comment

Curtis DeVito from the CAC attended. Curtis introduced himself and said that the CAC is interested in what we are doing and is willing to help if needed.

Gary and Wendy clarified that the public is invited to attend the meetings in Zoom webinar format, and that the minutes of the meetings will be posted on the Town web site.

Agenda items:

Minutes from the previous meeting were not available. The committee will review the minutes of the Oct. 27 and Nov. 10 meetings at our next meeting on Nov. 24.

Land use map. Madeleine and Nina reviewed the current land use map. There are many more multi-family residences in the current map than there were in 2012, and Madeleine questioned whether the map data, which were provided by the County, are accurate. AKRF will make a table of the data, check with the County, and then we will contact Steve Gotovich (Town Assessor) to ask what the current use is on the questionable parcels. Conrad will check out the parcels around Hunns Lake that are listed as multi-family. Other specific parcels were discussed, including the former Roseland Ranch.

Format of the plan. Madeleine and Nina reviewed the format of the Plan, including the graphic design, colors, and fonts. The Committee agreed that it looked attractive and was very readable. Each chapter will begin with a summary of action items and implementation. Madeleine also gave us a preview of some of the infographics in the Plan, and the Committee discussed some of the data on population trends and income

distribution. There will be an introductory chapter on the changes that have been made in response to public comment on the Draft Plan. Gary will help draft the text for this section. The Plan will also give more background on what a Comprehensive Plan is and how it should be used.

Encouraging business in Stanford. Gary reviewed what the current draft plan says about business, and the comments that were made by the public. Most of the comments said that the Plan did not do enough to encourage business in Town. The mentions of business in the current draft plan describe where business could or could not locate, rather than how to encourage commercial activity.

Richard asked Nina what levers small towns have to encourage business. Nina responded that ultimately you need enough people to support the businesses. Without central water and sewer, we will not have an opportunity to increase residential or commercial density in the Stanfordville Hamlet. Without the infrastructure you can't have additional people, and without the people it is hard to support businesses. We should look at the current code and figure out how to make it easier for businesses. One possibility is to relax restrictions on home-based businesses, farmers markets, and other businesses that already exist here. After we do that, we can tackle the harder problem of how to increase population density in the hamlet(s). Richard stated that thriving businesses don't require local population density because they draw from a larger area. For instance the pharmacy has a niche market for nursing homes. James noted that we are at a disadvantage because of the lack of a "Main Street" area that would serve as a magnet for people, like Rhinebeck or Millbrook. Nonetheless, there are empty storefronts in Stanfordville and Bangall that could serve as a location for new businesses. One thing Stanfordville could offer is cheaper rents than Rhinebeck or Millbrook. Wendy wondered how we could take advantage of the many bicyclists that ride through Stanfordville. Richard noted that having successful businesses tends to draw more businesses.

How do we entice business that we think we might be successful? We have no Chamber of Commerce and the Stanford Business Association mostly advocates for existing businesses. We should look to the Dutchess County Chamber of Commerce to help us. The Bangall Whaling Company restaurant had a thriving clientele but had issues of parking and septic-- these problems are solvable and the Town may be able assist, for instance, by creating a central parking area in Bangall. We discussed the possibility of parking in Bangall in the parcel behind the former church. The Town could also contribute to a marketing fund. Richard spoke about creating a critical mass of businesses in the Town center, including a restaurant, retail shops and a market. James noted that we need to have our own versions of these businesses because we are competing against neighboring towns that are more attractive for business.

Tom recalled that representatives from the County Planning Department spoke to the previous committee, and they recommended that we try to develop a small central business area around a crossroads at the new library. They suggested that we should start small, and try to add sidewalks, slow traffic on Route 82, and add parking to make the Town center more attractive for shopping. Tom also noted that there was an

application to the Planning Board for a wedding venue business, but the business was not allowed by the zoning code in any zone. This is something that we could change.

Wendy asked about starting a local Chamber of Commerce, and Nina said this was feasible and we could start small. Wendy spoke about the desirability of sidewalks, bike lanes and a crosswalk. We could also organize a farm tour. We should organize our plans as short term goals (e.g., sidewalks, crosswalks in the center of Stanfordville), medium term (shared parking), and longer term (community wastewater treatment if needed). Some people felt that sidewalks might be a controversial issue in town. One alternative might be “soft sidewalks” (dirt or gravel) that are more consistent with the rural character.

Jeff mentioned that while we are focusing on retail businesses, many of the businesses in Town are service businesses and we should not neglect them. In terms of the plan, these businesses may fall under the home-based business recommendations, if they are located in people’s homes.

Conrad said we should consider ways to encourage impermanent businesses like food trucks and flea markets. Richard asked if there could be an opportunity for craftspeople to display their products in a retail space. Nina suggested that we look at existing space that could be repurposed for new businesses.

Tom made the point that if we want to effect some change in Stanford, we need to do something different, and not be dissuaded by those who want to see no change. He also said that the Town needs to review the zoning code with an eye toward permitting businesses that may be desirable in Town but are not currently permitted.

Karen noted that the Stanford Business Association has new leadership and new members and is looking to be more active, and they should be consulted on this issue.

Gary and Nina will get together and try to organize the discussion and present it back to the Committee at the next meeting.

Next Meetings

Committee meetings will be held on the following Tuesdays:

November 24, 2020

December 8 and 22, 2020

The public is invited to listen to these meetings by signing on through the following Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/99284835503>

Meeting adjourned at 9:35.

Respectfully submitted by
Gary Lovett
CPRC Chair