

Stuyvesant Greenway Committee II  
April 24, 2008  
Stuyvesant Town Hall

Attending: Peter Donahoe, Juanita Knott, Ron Knott, Kristina Kwacz, Bill Vick  
Absent: Gale Bury, Brian Chittenden, Kent Keller, Tom Kilcer, Charlene Leach, Mike Naegeli, Bob Leach

Secretary Kristina Kwacz conveyed apologies that the minutes of the March meeting are not yet completed.

Chairman Ron Knott reported that he wrote County Planner Roland Vosburgh requesting his comments on the agricultural component of Stuyvesant's 1996 Comprehensive Plan as well as 1) cost of community services (COS) studies; 2) the County ag and farmland protection plan; 3) groundwater data and mapping; 4) affordable housing; 5) geographic information systems (GIS).

Mr. Vosburgh replied to Ron in an email dated April 21, 2008. On the points, he responded:

- 1) Cost of community services studies have been advocated by American Farmland Trust. (AFT is a non-profit organization that works with federal, state and local leaders and communities to develop legislation, implement policies and execute programs that keep farmers on their land and protect our environment.) The Town of Kinderhook conducted a COS in the 1990's. His perspective is that that these studies vary little from town to town, and therefore suggested that we obtain a copy of Kinderhook's study and contact American Farmland Trust to obtain their most recent information.
- 2) The County Ag and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) decided to wait and see how other counties approached creating a county Agricultural Farmland Protection Plan (AFP) rather than jumping in as a leader. At this point in time, Mr. Vosburgh has personally reviewed over twenty such plans. The County AFPB began drafting a plan in 2003-04 which reflects that county government has limited impacts on farmland protection. That group is currently addressing comments presented during a public information meeting on the plan.

*Ron suggested that committee members look up the countywide AFP plan online.*

- 3) There are existing data sources and maps pertaining to groundwater resources which the Town should consult before engaging in a new study. A 1951 study completed by Theodore Arnow should still be useful, and the County Planning Dept. has a copy which they would be willing to loan to the Town. If the Town then wished to conduct comprehensive groundwater planning, he suggested we hire a consultant.

*Ron reported that he made contact with a representative from the New York Rural Water Association, which conducts aquifer mapping. The organization is located in Commerce Park, Claverack. Ray Jurkowski was familiar with studies that that organization had done for other towns.*

- 4) Affordable housing is a large issue facing the entire Hudson River Valley, but due to limited staff and budget resources, the County Planning Dept. is not involved in any significant way. He suggested Housing Resources of Columbia County as a resource as well as the NYS Department of State and the New York Planning Federation.
- 5) Columbia County does not have comprehensive GIS at this time due to fiscal constraints. Mr. Vosburgh supports a unified, countywide approach at some point rather than piecemeal efforts. Countywide strategic planning is now underway regarding governing the responsibilities of all county government. Art Baer, Chair of the Board of Supervisors, has implemented this strategic planning process.

*The committee recommended that Ron write a letter to the Stuyvesant Town Board and Columbia County Government in support of GIS mapping at a countywide level.*

Discussion ensued regarding planning resources that the Town has available. Peter Donahoe suggested that the set of detailed GIS maps that were completed for the 1996 Comprehensive Plan should be displayed in the town hall using a flip-page poster display. Committee members supported this idea. Peter also inquired about the location of binders containing the siting documents from the proposed atomic power plant. Ron replied that they are likely to be in the town hall attic.

Peter commented that the late Mike Snyder (a pump and well professional) believed that there are aquifers in Stuyvesant, with Route 9 possibly being a demarcation of an aquifer on one side. This is counter to comments made by a representative from Smith Well Drilling, who stated that there is not an aquifer in Stuyvesant.

Chairman Ron Knott reported that he met with Town Engineer Ray Jurkowski after the last Town Board meeting to discuss the "Review of the 1996 Comprehensive Plan's Final Recommendations" that the committee is drafting. Mr. Jurkowski suggested that the committee finish this review and compile a separate report that documents the committee's proposed changes to the comprehensive plan. Ron added that producing those two reports would complete the work of the Greenway Committee.

Peter expressed concerned that the committee has had no professional guidance during our review process. He stated that an impartial but experienced professional consultant would be a great help in guiding us toward concluding our work. Ron commented that at first, he expected that significant changes would have to be made to the 1996 comprehensive plan. His sense now is that there are a few goals that no longer are feasible and should be deleted, and recreational opportunities discussed, but in general, the plan is still appropriate to guide the Town's planning for the next decade. River issues are still very important to the Town, for example. To this point, Peter added that coastal policies are an important leverage in this area.

Juanita Knott then recommended that the committee contact the State Greenway office to ask for their help. Juanita will initiate the phone call.

The committee began to review the summary of the comprehensive plan recommendations that Kristina had compiled from the committee's minutes, including updates suggested by Ron. Ron asked the committee to review the summary as homework and bring comments to the next meeting. Bill Vick made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Juanita. It passed with all in favor.

Next meeting: May 22, 2008 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristina Kwacz  
Secretary