



**Town of Halfmoon
2013 Zoning Review Committee
Halfmoon Town Hall
7:00 P.M.
October 17, 2013**

Summary Meeting Notes

Attendance: Committee Members (voting): Brenda LaMere, Michelle Manchester, Wayne Allen, Fred Bahr, Eli Taub, Jeff Burdyl, Walt Polak (Chair); Committee Members (non-voting): Jim Bold, Jason Dell; Staff: Lyn Murphy, Rich Harris, Paul Marlow, Mike Bianchino.

Walt Polak opened the meeting and asked for approval of the September 19, 2013 summary meeting notes- passed unanimous, with comments about addressing the housing unit count requested at the last meeting. Town Staff noted they would try to have it prepared for the next meeting.

Wayne Allen spoke with regards to a proposed revision to the current zoning distinctions and how each area of town could be zoned in a more appropriate fashion. He discussed that there needs to be a further break down of the current zoning, particularly in the Commercial and Residential sections. It was proposed that we break down the residential into 10 different divisions, five being "County Residential" and five being "Residential." The basic deviation between each division of residential zoning would be using a Square Footage or Acre measurement, whereas there would be intervals of Square Footage and Acreage (Example: according to Wayne Allen's handout, R-10 Residential would be 10,000 SF, and R-15 Residential would be 15,000 SF of land etc). It was also discussed that we break Commercial Zoning down in a similar fashion, whereas to create different sorts of Commercial sectors. Suggested new Commercial zoning were OB- Office Business and/or SCB- Shopping Center Business etc (see chart for full detailed breakdown).

It was discussed on ways to preserve open land, and keep agricultural lands undeveloped. One idea that was brought up was the idea of clustering development and offering clustering incentives to developers. The point was made that the preservation of open space was key to everyone and that we should have some sort of encourage to developers to keep a majority of land open while still allowing each resident to own acre size parcels. The ideas of utilizing "country roads" rather than standard infrastructure when building in areas that are clustered in lands that were formally open space and/or farmland was another point raised. The premise of these "country roads" is that is a road that requires less work and maintained as a conventional town road and is more prone to agricultural and country settings, according to a general consensus of the board.

The board discussed the idea of increasing the size of buffering areas between adjacent zoning areas where two different kinds of zoning occur. Many people on the board felt that the current requirements for buffer zones were not adequate enough and wish to see the minimum number increase. The board also raised the idea of being more flexible with zoning regulations; the thought

being that by allowing more things under current zoning and/or proposed new zoning there would be less need to the utilization of Planned Development Districts (PDD). Brenda LaMere explained that there should be a shift to commercial PDD's rather than residential PDD's because residential PDD's tend to leave the tax burden to the public.

It was discussion on why town own lands were not subject conventional zoning that is in areas owned by the town, zoning regulations were not as strictly enforced as in other areas. There was concern from the board that things may be able to be developed on these town owned lands without any real safety net to catch it and stop the development. Matt Chauvin clarified to the board that although the town owned land is exempt from many zoning regulations, in order for any sort of purchase and/or development to occur it must be offered before the public at a public hearing and the residents of the town must approve of it. No development can occur without approval from the residents of the town, as the funds to develop on town owned land are inadvertently controlled by residents.

There was discussion on possibly identifying portions of town that could be labeled as "Historical" and/or "Hamlets" in order to help preserve areas of town with certain characteristics from being further developed. It was established that the Crescent-Vischer Ferry area could be a possible area to be deemed "Historical" and/or "Hamlet" with the ideas of making a more pedestrian friendly area, with sidewalks and bike paths, making it more walkable to the people. There was some concern that the idea of a hamlet would not be something that would work in the Town of Halfmoon being that hamlets are generally designated for areas with smaller populations, often times areas smaller than villages.

The board discussion on clearly defining what sorts of things should be allowed under each kind of zoning regulations. It was suggested that we move more towards labeling zoning as things that "shall" be done, rather than "should" be done, specifically in areas of historical and/or agricultural significance. It was noted that restrictions of each zoning area should be very clearly defined and laid out in a manner, which is easy to understand to avoid all future confusion as to zoning allowances. It was also noted that when building any sort of development it should follow similar styles of the surrounding areas. It was also suggested that there be a limitation as to the development of "big box" stores and that we should try to concentrate them to particular parts of town as to avoid scattered placement throughout town that may lead to future development and sprawl.

There was discussion on expanded notifications was brought up, where the general consensus of the board was that the expanded notifications should be used more often. It was suggested that they be required for all PDD's and/or all Major Subdivisions, it should be noted that no clear definition of "expanded" was established as a constant. Along with expanded notification suggestions, the board recommended that a sign is required to be placed on the proposed land to be developed, as to notify residents of the whereabouts of the land. Jason Dell explained how that practice is used in the Town of Colonie and that the Town of Halfmoon could adopt a policy that very closely mirrors that of Colonie's. It was agreed that the board would look into and consider Colonie's policy and look to apply a similar practice to all future development.

Future items were discussed such as bringing in CDRPC to discuss things such as Form-Based Code, population expansion, the core principle and concepts of smart-growth and how to apply it to the

towns zoning regulations. It was established that at the next meeting Jason Dell would spend one hour discussing Form-Based code and how it has been used in other towns in years past, and the board would spend the remaining one-hour performing a SWOT. It was established that the board agreed upon the vision statement and it can be considered done and no longer subject to review by the board. Talk of future development of an Architectural Standard board occurred, with the general consensus that there should be some sort of regulations and Architectural Standards that builders, specifically commercial builders should have to adhere to. This board may be able to establish a Architectural Standards board once any and all zoning updates are made to the Town Code. Walt Polak asked the board to review Wayne Allen's proposed zoning classification changes and look at possible areas to define under each one of Wayne's proposed headings, this is to be discussed at the next meeting.

Next meeting is to be held on November 21, 2013.