



**TOWN OF HALFMOON
2014 ZONING REVIEW COMMITTEE
HALFMOON TOWN HALL
7:00 P.M.
JANUARY 16, 2014**

Summary Meeting Notes

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

Walt Polak opened the meeting and asked for approval of the November 21, 2013 summary meeting notes- passed unanimous, with edits requested by Jason Dell to clarify that the difficulty with Form-Based Codes can be in identifying target areas and enacting the zoning, not the actual utilization and application of the Form-Based Code.

Walt Polak informed the Committee that Council member Daphne Jordan is expanding the Trails and Open Space Committee, and she is the new liaison to the Committee for the Town Board.

The Committee discussed a list of amendments currently being considered by the Town Board with regards to zoning and building codes. There are a list of items developed by Planning and Building depts., with input from residents, Board members, etc., that are being revised and clarified including things such as the definition of “buildable” acreage for PDD’s, and prohibiting soil disturbance permits prior to final approval of a project. Many items are “clean-up” items, while some look to address issues raised by the public over the years. Walt Polak informed the Committee that the Town Board would hold a public hearing on the proposed zoning changes on February 5, 2014 and Committee members are invited to review and comment and attend the hearing.

There was open discussion on the need promote small business districts throughout town. In discussing areas of town that could possibly be used as a small business district, Wayne Allen mentioned, although it may not be plausible, a place such as the Town’s highway garage, and that we should seek similar areas when we label parts of town as small business districts. It was mentioned that at this point, there are few areas of town which may be suitable for a small business district, one of the leading factors in that assumption was the infrastructure. Most portions of town cannot support much more concentrated development that a small business district would call for. Route 9 as an example is very much oriented for vehicle travel between stores and existing buildings are not on public sewer and the current systems may not be able to handle further new development. Committee discussed looking for smaller areas than Rt. 9, with less traffic and where it would be more walkable. Guideboard near Stewarts and the area around Town Hall were suggested.

The Committee discussed the importance of promoting small business, as it is a viable source of tax revenue for the Town and a priority of the Town Supervisor. Walt Polak discussed the Town Supervisor's creation of a Small Business Committee to help expand small business in Town. It was suggested that we need a "small business start-up" portion of town, where there would be low rent space that allow small businesses to get their business off the ground and grow. It was suggested that this could be a task for the new Small Business Committee to look at and try to establish a small business incubator with help from the County and/or State. It is believed that if these sorts of services are provided it will promote and stimulate small business growth. It was noted that we already have some portions of town that are similar to those principles, places such as Abele's business park. The Committee suggested that we look to use more mixed-use development in town wherever possible. The Town needs a healthy mix of commercial and residential development, allowing small businesses to be developed as well as residential at the same time.

Jason Dell presented some points on Form-Based Code and what utilizing it could do. He reviewed a recent project in the Town of Ballston that used clustering. Timber Creek located off Round Lake Road was an example of using clustering provisions to maintain quality open space. The project consists of nearly 400 units on 200 acres in which roughly 140 acres will be deemed "forever wild." The project includes a central park as well as a sidewalk system throughout the multiple phases. Jason explained that in the Town of Ballston they have designated specific parts of town that they will allow clustering, areas which have a different set of standards and allowances. He explained that in this particular portion of town, in order to promote the clustering, the Town allows a higher density of units per buildable acre. In terms of single family homes, a developer is allowed to build up to 6 units per buildable acre and up to 12 units per buildable acre for multi-family homes. These standards are designed to concentrate development in clusters, which can help preserve open space. Concerns about noise and privacy were raised during this discussion, and is something we should consider in a clustering provision.

Jason Dell mentioned another smaller scale clustering project located in Clifton Park. He explained that in this project the developer has managed to maintain 15 acres of open spaces as well as construct a Town Park for the future residents. As part of the project the developer set aside an 80-foot right of way to be dedicated to the Town for a future pathway to be built. He explained that by using the smaller lot sizes and clustering the developer was able to have excess room for a Town Park, greenspace and land to dedicate to the Town for a future trail.

The Committee discussed some of the different elements of clustering provisions. Jason Dell discussed the conservation subdivision requirements in Malta, which has a "quality" open space requirement like the Town Halfmoon GEIS area in the northern part of town. Committee discussed fiscal impacts of projects, but there are legal limits on using fiscal criteria in project consideration. One of the major issues the Committee had was the idea of maintaining quality open space and the need for it to apply town-wide and not only in the northern area. In most cases it could be determined by a Board as to what qualifies as "quality open space," which in most cases things such as steep slopes and wetlands would not qualify. For the most part it is understood that "quality" open space is land that is developable but they choose to keep wild. Committee agreed that a "sliding scale" can be used when determining open space requirements based upon buildable land and gross acreage. The scale would take into account the actual amount of physical land on the parcel and adjust the requirement accordingly. Another principle

of clustering often used is trying to establish connectivity between open spaces on adjacent properties. When adjacent properties have open space within each parcel, developers should try to situate the lots so that both parcels have connecting open space, this will ensure that the open space is most optimally utilized and not segmented. If possible, try to use large portions of land to be set as right-of-ways, of which could be used in the future for things such as sidewalks and trails. The Committee requested discussion on the “conservation subdivision” requirements of the northern GEIS and requested examples of these and clustered projects approved in town.

For the next meeting, Walt Polak asked the Committee to look around town at areas which they would like to see zoning changed, particularly areas where they think small business districts could be targeted. At the next meeting, the Committee will discuss Wayne Allen’s zoning district break down as well as revisit Fred Bahr’s triage chart to see what can be finished in a timely fashion.

The next meeting will be February 20, 2014.