

**WESTERLO TOWN BOARD  
WORKSHOP MEETING  
OF  
TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 2019**

The Town of Westerlo Town Board held a workshop meeting on June 18, 2019 at the Town Hall located at 933 County Route 401, Westerlo, NY. Acting Supervisor Bichteman opened the workshop at 7 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Attending were:       Acting Supervisor William Bichteman Jr.  
                              Councilwoman Amie L. Burnside  
                              Councilman Joseph J. Boone  
                              Councilman Anthony W. Sherman

Absent were:            Councilman Richard Filkins

Also attending were: Professional Planner Nan Stolzenburg and Associate Veronica Solar, Historian Dennis Fancher, Grant Writer Dr. Nicole Ambrosio, Planning Board Chairperson Dorothy Verch, Zoning Board Chairperson John Sefcik, Westerlo Vol. Fire Co. President Kelley Keefe, Deputy Town Clerk II Karla Weaver and approximately 5 residents.

**PROFESSIONAL PLANNER FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Acting Supervisor Bichteman introduced Professional Planner Nan Stolzenburg and Senior Planner Veronica Solar from Community Planning and Environmental Associates. They were invited to explain more about Comprehensive Planning, specifically what it is, how it's put together and how they are used. Nan has been a planner for 26 years and mainly concentrates on small rural projects.

Ms. Stolzenburg explained that a good Comprehensive Plan will answer three main questions; what is going on in the community now, where do you want to be and how do we get there. She recommended hiring a consultant who would provide advice to the Comprehensive Plan Committee and could keep things moving along. The consultant could either help with the process, develop a survey or if needed could be available for the entire project.

Ms. Stolzenburg mentioned that she follows State law for towns 272-A which gives the town authority to develop and adopt a Comprehensive Plan. She explained that when the Town Board appoints a committee to draft a Comprehensive Plan, the committee is required to hold a public hearing which is then submitted to the Town Board who is required to have a second public hearing. Comprehensive Plans in NYS are adopted via resolution by the Town Board and filed with the town and county. The process typically takes about 18 months but can be longer.

Ms. Stolzenburg mentioned there were no NYS guidelines for Comprehensive Plans. She indicated that a Comprehensive Plan is a living document that should be used regularly as a guideline for decision making and if not utilized; it's not worth the time to develop. She also noted that if the Comprehensive Plan is not followed and Zoning regulations say something else, it leaves the town vulnerable for court cases.

She recommended that the town figure out where help is needed and to determine a budget. Discussion ensued regarding number of committee members, how to get people to help with surveys and if Ms. Stolzenburg had any recommendations for getting residents to attend these meetings.

Councilman Boone questioned what the process is for updating Comprehensive Plans over the years. Ms. Stolzenburg responded that the Town Board is empowered by State law 272-A to amend the plan at any time. She indicated that legally noticed public hearing, county Planning Board review, SEQR and adoption of a resolution of the Town Board would be requirements. The plan should state how often it will be reviewed as well. A plan can just be reviewed and updated as needed or if the Town Board decides some areas are still valid they can leave them as they are.

Councilman Boone asked Ms. Stolzenburg how she recommends selecting a committee. Ms. Stolzenburg believed the group should have an overall interest, love and care for the community and a commitment to attend meetings.

Acting Supervisor Bichteman asked about cost. Ms. Stolzenburg explained that they could be hired just to do one small part or could do the full plan with an estimated cost between \$1,000 and \$25,000. She indicated she is flexible with payments and will work with the town and their budget as best she can.

With no additional questions for Ms. Stolzenburg, the Town Board thanked her for attending and providing guidance.

### **POTENTIAL SOLAR MORATORIUM**

Councilman Boone indicated he was in favor of discussing steps for a moratorium for future Commercial Energy Solar Systems. He was unaware if the area's substation could support any other arrays at this time; Mrs. Verch understood there wasn't enough room for any additional Commercial Solar at this time. A resident believed that could change.

Acting Supervisor Bichteman mentioned that if the town had a moratorium on Commercial Solar it would be good for 1 year and could only be renewed once for an additional year. He believed a moratorium would buy the town time to do the Comprehensive Plan and address the solar law. Discussion continued regarding a potential moratorium for Commercial Energy Solar Systems.

Councilwoman Burnside indicated she agreed with Acting Supervisor Bichteman and Councilman Boone regarding a potential moratorium.

### **SOLID WASTE LAW REVISION**

Mr. Bichteman suggested that Councilmen Boone and Filkins meet with Highway Superintendent Jody Ostrander to review suggestions proposed by Attorney Afzali on the Solid Waste Law revisions and report back at the Town Board meeting in July.

### **SINGLE SERVER EMAIL**

Mr. Bichteman mentioned again that the staff in the town hall are the only ones that currently use town emails. He suggested all boards and committees use town provided email in the future. A brief discussion continued regarding email options, potential costs and making it easier to obtain emails for FOIL purposes.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

A resident commented on the town being vulnerable to all renewable energy.

A resident suggested putting Town Board email addresses on the town website for easier communication.

Kelley Keefe President of the Westerlo Volunteer Fire Co. mentioned there is a barrel at the transfer station for bottles they use to raise funds. The Fire Co. is currently discussing ways for different community groups to benefit from the bottle funds.

There being no further business to discuss, Councilman Boone made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilwoman Burnside, motion carried by those present. Meeting adjourned at 8:54pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karla Weaver