

**WESTERLO TOWN BOARD
WORKSHOP MEETING
of
TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2013**

The Westerlo Town Board met on Tuesday August 13, 2013 at Westerlo Town Hall located at 933 County Route 401 in Westerlo. The purpose of the workshop was a joint discussion with the Planning Board regarding the draft of the Comprehensive Plan. The draft had been previously submitted to the Town Board by the Planning Board but was not approved by the Town Board. Supervisor Rapp opened the workshop at 7:03 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

PRESENT WERE: Supervisor Richard H. Rapp
Councilman Alfred L. Field
Councilman William F. Bichteman Jr.
Councilman Theodore S. Lounsbury III
Councilman Anthony W. Sherman

Also attending were: Planning Board Chairwoman Dorothy Verch, Planning Board members Edwin Stevens, Gerry Boone, Richard Kurylo; Highway Superintendent Keith Wright Sr., Deputy Supervisor/Zoning Administrator Edwin H. Lawson, Town Clerk Kathleen Spinnato and three residents.

Chairwoman Verch began the workshop stating the Planning Board has changed the wording in the draft Comprehensive Plan mission statement portion removing agricultural suitable lands and replacing with cottage industry. She read the previous mission statement which had been previously written by the prior Planning Board Chairman Anthony W. Sherman.

Councilman Bichteman explained his objections to the draft Comprehensive Plan, and gave a brief review of the areas he suggested should be recommended and addressed in a plan for potential development of a Comprehensive Plan. Discussion followed between the Town Board, Zoning Administrator, and Planning Board members regarding the hamlets, Lake Onderdonk, potential commercial area zones, potential future development within the Town of Westerlo i.e.: subdivisions, sewer districts and State Laws regarding time periods before the Town has to take over a private sewer system owned by a developer, potential sewer requirements, town road accessibility, storm water runoff etc. The Comprehensive Plan would be a tool to set in place safeguards for the Town of Westerlo with evolution reviews on a usually 5 yr. basis.

Councilman Bichteman stressed the alarming economic restraints the Town of Westerlo currently has with the tax base not large enough. The Town has to look to other agencies for funding of major expenditure projects which usually require the Town to pay the expenses upfront and hope to receive payments in the future i.e. FEMA, grants, etc. The Town needs other sources of revenues to generate income to provide the services we need.

Planning Board member Edwin Stevens advised the recent economy and the moratorium in effect at the time ran out this helped deter development in the Town of Westerlo. The sad part is a lot of people would have built homes but the economy was poor.

There was a brief discussion on Zoning Laws.

Councilman Field has a concern about the tax base. We need to look towards improving the Town in case there is loss in tax base due to i.e. potential plant foreclosure or demolition of structures on properties within the Town. Councilman Lounsbury stated the need to find a balance between needs and desire for growth in the Town. The attributes of the Town were discussed along with the

geographic location, State & County roadway infrastructure the deplorable conditions of State Route 85, soil conditions and the cost of a transvap septic systems.

Councilman Sherman who had served as prior Chairman on the Planning Board advised he and the Planning Board had worked hard on the previous draft of the Comprehensive Plan before Dorothy Verch became the Chairperson. He was proud of their accomplishment. He believed Councilman Bichteman is suggesting the Planning Board review the draft Comprehensive Plan by section and make recommendations to the sections or those that follow. He advised, commercial zones had been previously addressed when he was Planning Board Chair but were then removed. More discussion followed between Councilman Sherman and Dorothy Verch regarding suggested potential recommendations.

The school districts and the school taxes within the several school districts in the southeastern boundaries of the town were discussed.

Special Use permits and the process and perception that the Town is not business friendly was briefly discussed. Many times a property owner doesn't attend the scheduled meeting, or they may not have the required documents in hand needed to grant a Special Use Permit, the process is then delayed or discontinued. The application process has improved. Very few special use permits in the past have actually been denied the Planning & Zoning Boards try very hard to help businesses by helping give direction in the application process.

Zoning Laws and the set back requirements in the hamlets and around Lake Onderdonk were discussed by the boards. A potential expansion of the hamlets and the Westerlo Water District No. 1 were discussed and suggested as possible recommendations for the modification of the Comprehensive Plan.

There being no further discussion Councilman Bichteman made a motion to adjourn the workshop meeting. Councilman Lounsbury seconded the motion and carried all in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Spinnato