

TOWN OF GHENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE

05 FEBRUARY 2008

Chairman Jim Galvin called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. In attendance were members Jonathan Walters, Larry VanBrunt, John Fishman, Al Wassenhove and Gil Raab. Town Attorney Ted Guterman and Don Meltz, representing Community Planning & Environmental Associates, also attended.

Absent were members Jim Beal, Frank Mendelson, Nick Tipple, Phil Trowbridge, Janice Fingar and Kyle Wilber.

PUBLIC INPUT

There were no members of the public in attendance.

REVIEW VISION STATEMENT

Members of the Committee reviewed the form and contents of the draft 'Vision Statement and Goals, Version 3.' Several corrections were noted, including the final sentence of the paragraph, 'A Description of Ghent's Vision' being changed to read 'An efficient town government providing quality services, while striving to keep taxes as low as possible.'

It was agreed that there should be a goal statement for each major subject. A general discussion of agriculture-related issues took place. Town Attorney Guterman observed that **goals** need to be distinguished from **strategies**. Goals are a combination of workshop and survey data. They are not 'set in stone' and the Committee has the right to modify them. Committee members reviewed the draft list of goals:

1. maintaining the natural beauty and rural character of the Town
2. preserving the natural environmental features of Ghent
3. preserving open space
4. promote sense of community and civic pride
5. quality road maintenance
6. support usage of public transportation
7. small business development and employment that protects the Town's environment
8. maintain emergency services
9. historic preservation
10. protection of farm lands
11. diversity of housing
12. cultural aspects of Town life; the quality of life
13. fiscal responsibility

Attorney Guterman offered that the community should be involved in the compilation of the goals, in the forms of focus groups, specific subject public meetings, and input from 'experts' Chairman Galvin suggested that the Committee address regionalism within Columbia County. Committee members were asked to forward any additional ideas directly to Nan Stolzenburg. The subject of New York State water and sewer projects, in relation to the Town, was discussed. It was suggested that a co-ordinating office would be required. Mr. Beal asked if health and human service issues, such as care for the elderly and quality education, were being addressed in this list of goals? His question was reiterated by Mr. Fishman.

Mr. Meltz, of Don Meltz Planning and GIS, supplied members with build-out information. He noted that in accordance with existing codes, a potential 15,000 units could be added to the

Town's tax roll. Ghent's Local Law #2-2006, the Conservation Subdivision law, along with various environmental constraints such as water sources and sewage management, would restrain growth to approximately 5,100 units. Mapping, identifying historic sites and structures, was requested.

Mr. Wassenhove raised the question of asking Carol Legrasse to appear before the Committee. Town Attorney Guterman questioned the possibility of a meeting of the Town's young people.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Committee will be held on Tuesday, 04 March 2008.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 pm.