

**JOINT MEETING
GHENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE AND THE GHENT TOWN COUNCIL**

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, 21 JANUARY 2009

Chair Galvin called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm. In attendance were Committee members Chair Jim Galvin, Gil Raab, Al Wassenhove and Nick Tipple.

Absent were Committee members J. Aaron Groom, Jonathan Walters, Phil Trowbridge, John Fishman, Frank Mendelson, Jim Beal, Janice Fingar, and Kyle Wilber. Absent was consultant Nan Stolzenburg of Community Planning & Environmental Associates.

Town Council members Pete Nelson Sr, and Linda Schlegel-Hess, and Town Supervisor Larry Andrews were present.

Absent were Council members Larry VanBrunt and Matt Torrey.

Town Attorney Ted Guterman of Guterman, Shallo & Alford PLLC, Laurie Quinn of Technology4All, Ghent resident Joan Wassenhove and Debbie Meyer, reporter for The Independent, were also present.

REVIEW OF DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

It was noted that Town Council members had been provided with copies of the draft Comprehensive Plan in advance of this evening's meeting. At Chair Galvin's request, Town Attorney Guterman led Council members in a review of the draft Plan materials. Attorney Guterman noted that the report was divided into two (2) parts, for easier handling. Part One includes an Introduction and Overview, Vision Statement, and the fourteen (14) specific Goals and Recommended Strategies proposed by the Committee, based upon public input. Part Two provides support documentation, an example of which is: Profile and Inventory of the Town of Ghent, the Town's history, Land Use, Agriculture, and statistics such as 'Demographics, Housing and Labor.'

Attorney Guterman went on to explain that the Comprehensive Plan Committee wanted to provide the Town Council with more than a simple list of issues; to provide specific items and possible actions for consideration. It was noted that after Comprehensive Plan recommendations are formally presented, Committee members will continue to be available to assist the Council.

Town Council members agreed that Nan Stolzenburg should prepare an 'executive' summary of the Plan, which will be made available, in addition to the full Comprehensive Plan report.

Town Supervisor Andrews reported that Columbia County is presently conducting an inventory. Upon completion, updated information will be available for inclusion in the report.

TOWN'S WEBSITE

Ms Laurie Quinn, of Technology 4 All, joined the meeting. There was a discussion of documents to be placed on the Town's website. It was determined that the existing draft Plan be on the website, along with a link to the Community Planning & Environmental Association's website, where copies of meeting minutes, agendas and geographic information system (GIS) mappings are currently available. It was also agreed that Committee members be contacted and requested to provide suggestions relating to the posting of information on the Town's website.

Mr. Nelson offered that Town Attorney had well depicted the Committee's development of a new Comprehensive Plan.

Attorney Guterman lead attendees through an agenda of outstanding actions. By law, the Committee must hold a formal Public Hearing. Next, the Plan must be presented to the Town Council for adoption. Then, the Town Council must hold a formal Public Hearing.

Town Supervisor Andrews observed that no one document can possibly solve all the issues in the Town's future. The submitted draft Plan is a review of the Town's history, a good overview of present day Ghent, and offers directions the Town may take. Town Attorney Guterman noted that the language of the Plan is intentional in offering suggestions; presenting material for consideration. It is not a statement of required actions. It was reiterated that the needs and opportunities that lie ahead of Ghent can change over the next 10, 15, 20 years. Committee and Council members spoke to the importance of unity when attending Public Hearings.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.