

**TOWN OF GHENT
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE**

04 MARCH 2008

Chairman Galvin called the meeting to order at 7 pm. In attendance were Committee members Frank Mendelson, Phil Trowbridge, Nick Tipple, Gil Raab, Pete Nelson, John Fishman, Jim Beal and Aaron Groom. Town of Ghent Attorney Ted Guterman was present. Absent were members Janice Fingar, Jonathan Walters, Larry VanBrunt, Al Wassenhove and Kyle Wilber.

Public Input

There being no members of the Public present at the meeting, there was no public input.

Review of Draft Vision Statement and Goals (v3)

Members reviewed the document, with health and human services and quality education specifically in mind. After a general discussion, it was agreed to revise the Goals to incorporate the Committee's support of quality education and to recognize health and human services (in the broader sense) as a major employer in Columbia County (specifically, Ghent). Member Beal noted that services are 'woefully lacking.' Chairman Galvin stated that Columbia County is not attracting new industrial businesses; perhaps education should be considered as a business that would fit well with what the County has to offer.

Review of Build-out Information

Committee members reviewed the build-out information, based upon existing zoning requirements. It was questioned whether the potential complete build-out would be acceptable and/or workable.

Chairman Galvin queried whether members are comfortable with the Town's current zoning code. When asked, member Raab, Zoning Enforcement Officer for the Town of Ghent, noted that the number of building permits issued has markedly slowed, and that it is impossible to determine what will be happening to the housing market five (5) years from now. Mr. Nelson concurred. It was the consensus of the Committee to endorse the Town's existing **Conservation Subdivision** Code, and to include such language in the Comprehensive Plan.

Review Recommendations

Goal 8

It was noted that this should apply to more than just emergency services.

Goal 12

Members discussed the goal and decided that to 'enhance quality of life' should apply to quality education. It was agreed that the Town should support quality education and educational opportunities through access to local colleges, provision of early education (pre-school). Additionally it was agreed that quality education and educational opportunities be recognized as assets to the community.

Goal 7

Committee members reviewed the goal.

- To provide for small business development that provides quality employment opportunities in a manner that protects the environment and rural character of Ghent.

It was determined that literature, setting out Ghent's attributes, be developed.

Goal 10

It was noted that there is no performance criteria in the Town's existing code.

Additional Analysis

It was offered that the determination of what the Town of Ghent includes, in terms of portions of Chatham needs to be clarified. Specifically, this has a long-term effect upon future broadband availability and the potential for water districts.

After a discussion, it was agreed that the Committee will not invite Carol Legrasse, Property Rights Foundation of America, Inc. to speak, as had been suggested by Mr. Wassenhove **at the February 2008 meeting**.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Committee will be held on Tuesday, 01 April 2008.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

* **corrections made and approved at the 01 April 2008 meeting**