

**MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE
TOWN OF GHENT**

16 JANUARY 2007

The Tuesday, 16 January 2007 meeting regarding the Master Plan was brought to order by Chairman Galvin at 7:10 p.m. In attendance were members Mark Clarke, Janice Fingar, John Fishman, Frank Mendelson, Pete Nelson, Gil Raab, Nick Tipple, Phil Trowbridge, Jonathan Walters, Al Wassenhove, and Chairman Jim Galvin. Town Counsel Ted Guterman, Town Engineer Ray Jurkowski, and Nan Stolzenburg of Community Planning & Environmental Associates (CPEA) were also present.

Mr. Raab and Mr. Tipple reported that they are completing their analysis of data pertaining to the history of the Town of Ghent, plus local roads and highways.

Counsel Guterman reviewed 1994 Master Plan data that had been mailed to committee members in late December 2006. He observed that while the Town did not formally adopt the Plan, many of the recommendations had been incorporated into Town Code during the following years. When questioned, Ms Stolzenburg stated that some of the 1994 material can be applied to the present-day profile inventory.

There was a general discussion of subjects that included: the decreasing Columbia County population, tax exemptions and their effect on Town income, identifying and inventorying secondary conservation areas, and housing, including the expansion of the Hamlet.

Ms Stolzenburg suggested that while a town can consider forms of its own local economic growth, Town growth should be considered in relation to the larger, regional scale. While a town can set code relating to land use, lot size and density, housing, for the most part, is driven by the market and ever-increasing construction costs. Town Engineer Jurkowski pointed out how housing is affected by the required infrastructure and availability of utilities. Ms Stolzenburg stated transportation decisions are driven by the county and, ultimately, the state. It was suggested the Town of Ghent can use the Master Plan as a forum to state its policy.

Ms Stolzenburg also recommended the Committee should recognize current conditions, learn what the Ghent community wants and then decide upon actions necessary for that to occur. The actual survey is but one piece of the puzzle. Chairman Galvin concurred. The various sub-committees need to research what is available **now**. Sub-committees should then prepare a written summary of their findings. It was pointed out that there are many, many different sources of data. Committee members should contact Ms Stolzenburg directly if they require assistance.

When asked, Ms Stolzenburg suggested the Committee hold two initial workshops – one to be held on an evening during the week, and one to be held during the day on the weekend. These should be used to determine the public's thoughts on the town's strengths and weaknesses. She will format these meetings. It was strongly suggested the meetings be well advertised (newspapers, word-of-mouth, radio, a community bulletin board/sidewalk sign stand in front of the Town Hall). The VFW and the West Ghent Firehouse are two local places capable of handling large a public gathering. Data collected at these workshops will be used by the Committee to form focus groups.

It was agreed that data collected from the various sub-committees will be used to update the Town's profile. Sub committees should touch base with Ms Stolzenburg or Mr. Meltz to eliminate/reduce chances of duplicate data collection. Town Engineer Jurkowski will be responsible for mapping.

Following a discussion, it was determined the Town of Ghent will use the website services provided through CPEA. Information placed on the website will be approved by the Committee prior to posting.

Suggestions of possible sources of names and addresses for the survey were made by Committee members.

The question was raised about inviting members of the Town Board, Planning Board and Zoning Board to Master Plan meetings.

Jonathan Walters offered to put together a summary of the '94 Master Plan for Committee members.

It was reiterated how important it is to involve all residents in affirmative action, on behalf of the Town.

The next Master Plan Committee meeting will be held Tuesday, 06 February 2007.

The January 2007 meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.