

Town Board/Plan Commission Meeting January 18, 2010

James Parent called the Town Board/Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:30PM in the meeting room at the Town Hall. Present were James Parent, Robert Schultz, Dale Williams, Barbara Anschutz, Peter Jacobs, Douglas Smith, Cal Oldenburg, Dan Krowas, Jeffrey Sanders and 11 visitors.

Jim explained that the meeting was posted as a joint meeting, but after posting, members of the Plan Commission called in that they were unable to attend and the alternate could not be reached. Therefore, the Plan Commission does not have a quorum and they will not be voting on anything, but their input will be accepted.

Clerk verified posting. Motion made/second Dale/Peter to accept the agenda. Carried.

Meet with Jeff Sanders of Community Planning & Consulting LLC to discuss goals and objectives of Smart Growth Plan review – Jim gave a history of the Plan and explained that it states reviews are to be done on a routine basis, but that hasn't really been done. He also explained the controversy in relation to the core area designation. Jeff gave a description of his background and went over things he's done. He has been a planner for 17 years, in both the public and private sector. He is now giving it a go on his own. He has mostly dealt with rural towns, with occasional small villages and cities. One of Jeff's main goals is the promotion of public participation. He also looks to achieve informed consent, meaning even if some people don't necessarily agree with what's in the plan, they will support the process because their voice was heard through the process.

In terms of revising the plan, there are general revisions that occur once every 5 to 10 years, which entails someone like Jeff takes the entire planning process that was gone through and shrinks it down to an abbreviated form. You still have meetings with the community, but you go through the entire plan in a much abbreviated form. Other communities that are still happy with their plan, but have specific issues to address, becomes a targeted revision. He has read through the current plan and feels the planners and the community did a great job. It's up to the Board to determine which kind of review we need. Jim would feel much more comfortable going through the entire document again. Not necessarily to change everything, but to just revisit things to see if they still apply. Peter agrees and feels there are some inconsistencies and contradictions in the current plan.

Dale wasn't on the Board at the time the plan was done, but had the understanding that it was complete and just waiting for County approval. He also mentioned that Jeff brought up an interesting point about the fact that a Comprehensive Plan isn't set in concrete. Jeff explained that a Comprehensive Plan is a guidance document. Zoning and Future Land Use tends to be indistinguishable to some people. Zoning is an ordinance with penalties attached if you don't follow the ordinance. The Comprehensive Plan doesn't have that sort of power. It's a guidance document. That's why the process itself is so important because it informs and educates. The power of the Comprehensive Plan comes from the Comprehensive Planning Law, which states all local land use decisions must be

consistent with an approve and adopted Comp. Plan. It also means that all local land use ordinances must be consistent with the Plan. However, it can be reviewed and revised at any time and for any reason and it should be reviewed. Jeff feels the review schedule in the current plan is a little more aggressive than what he's done in the past. If the clock were turned back to when the housing market was on fire, he may have looked at a more aggressive review schedule as well. The way it is right now, an annual or biannual review should be sufficient. The key is making sure the document is relevant.

Jim asked what's mandatory as far as reviewing. The only statutory requirement is once every ten years. Dale would like to take what we have in place and review everything. Peter feels the current plan isn't real cohesive.

Jim asked Jeff about the process. Jeff explained the statutory requirements. Public must be informed, involved and invited to participate. All intergovernmental partners need to be notified. It would be a one page letter that goes to each partner. Finally, a public hearing must be held with a 30-day notice. As far as how much time it would take, on the short end it would be 3 months, but on the long end, it could be as long as we like. It depends on the level of review and how many community meetings you want. A kick off meeting would be held where everyone would be invited to attend. It would be in a big room, centrally located. The kick off would be a focus on the existing plan and identifying things, particularly in the implementation section, that may or may not still be wanted by the community. Once he has that information, he would put together a first draft review which would be presented at a public meeting. He feels strongly about making information available to the public as early as possible. There could be potentially a third meeting. The very last meeting would be the public hearing.

Jeff's suggestion is to focus on the implementation section. The two most important things are the Future Land Use Map and the implementation section. The remainder is supporting and resource documents. The second part is if the Plan fits the needs of the community today. Jeff feels that surveys are incredibly helpful tools. He wouldn't go back to step zero with this Plan. Jeff's success comes when he has communities that tell other communities about him. He explained that planner's job is to provide and describe tools that will assist in accomplishing the Plan's goals.

The Town Board feels the presentation was very good and thinks this is the right way to go. Cal Oldenburg spoke and agreed everything needs to be looked at.

Bryan Nelson commended the Board for pursuing this path.

Carol Schmidt asked about the survey that Jeff mentioned. Jeff explained it could be as broad or as narrowly focused as the Town desired. He would suggest that it go out to every tax parcel and every rental unit. That way everyone is included. 25% response on surveys is considered a success. Jeff's experience with Door County is that the response rates are very high. Jeff has created a survey that's evolved over time. He would put together a draft survey and present it to the Plan Commission and Town Board.

Ellen Witteborg asked how far the community input goes and can the Board go back and change whatever they choose. Jeff explained that yes, they can, but the Board should be looking at all input received. The public hearing is the official meeting where the public speaks in favor or against. They could ignore it, but at their own peril.

Joan Holiday spoke about the timing of meetings. She feels it's really important that all seasonal residents be included and to move the meetings towards the summer. Jeff's intent is to maximize opportunities for people to participate in any form they can. He would leave the overall decision to the Town Board. The website could be used as a very interactive tool to receive input from people who can't be here.

Dale asked how detailed the survey would be. Jeff explained that what he would do is put together the key issues make sure those items are in the survey and decide from there what else should be included. He is fond of 20 to 25 questions, since it's not a big committal of time. When it gets up to 40 or 45, the turnout goes down. With 10 or fewer, it's not helpful.

Based on what Jeff has learned, he will put together a working agreement. He would bill monthly and bill for the actual hours put in that month. The Town wouldn't be paying for anything that hasn't been completed. Travel time and mileage to get here will be charged, but not the other way. He will never charge for phone calls or emails.

Bill Hanusa asked when other communities become involved. He wouldn't anticipate a survey being directed to anyone outside of the community, but it would be on the Town website so if others wanted to participate, they could. The communities will be alerted of the fact that the review is taking place. Other Towns and the County cannot dictate what the Plan is. The statutes do not provide anything allowing the County to dictate anything.

Roy Cole asked about the information that was gathered in the original process. Jeff would look at it all and gather that information, which would be an integral part of the process.

Bryan Nelson asked if there was a mechanism for incorporating ideas in the initial part of the process that come from season residents and if they'd have an ability to influence the discussion by email, by phone, etc. Jeff explained the survey would inform everyone of the process, how to participate, where to go for info and a comment sheet.

Jeff will get an agreement drawn up and send it to Doug. The Board and Commission will then schedule a meeting.

Motion made/second Dale/Bob to adjourn at 8:02PM. Carried.

These minutes are subject to correction at the next regular monthly Town Board meeting.

Douglas Smith
Town Clerk