

MINUTES:

Town of Tusten Comprehensive Plan Committee

October 26, 2020

The October 26, 2020 Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting opened at 6:35 pm on the Zoom platform. Present: Ken Baim, Mike Farrell, Elaine Giguere, Arthur Hawker, Ben Johnson, Crystal Weston, Jane Luchsinger and consultant Peter Manning.

A motion to approve the minutes of the August 18 meeting was made by Mike Farrell and seconded by Arthur Hawker. The motion passed unanimously.

The primary agenda items were the UDC Grant Status related to Part I of the Comprehensive Plan; grant status of our request for funding for Part II, and review and discussion of the draft Housing Section that had been previously distributed.

Jane Luchsinger reported that the status of the grants for the plan. Part I was paid for with a \$10,000 grant from the Upper Delaware Council. Part II will be funded from the same source at \$9,000. It is expected that , with meetings being held on Zoom, that travel costs for the consultant will be reduced and the \$9,000 grant will allow the committee to complete its work.

Housing: The committee was pleased that the section led with Tusten's housing goals of quality housing, affordable housing, and growth through improvements of land use policies and infrastructure.

The charts and descriptions that followed, including occupancy/vacancy status, tenure and the year that structures were built, led to discussion about the data which was based on the 2010 census. Mike Farrell pointed out that April 1, 2010 is very different than April 1, 2020. Census data is based on occupancy on April 1. Over the past decade, and this year in particular because of COVID-19, many more second homeowners — especially snow birds, were occupying their Tusten-based homes on April 1. Also noted were: 1) the fact that more people have been able to work from home and therefore have avoided city apartments in favor of staying in the country and 2) the recent real estate boom that has created a surge in the price of housing because of competition for dwindling housing inventory. Consultant Manning will notate these issues to clarify the data.

Committee members requested changes in the language about affordability.

The proposed recommendation to establish a housing committee was discussed. Some members felt a committee was not necessary at this time but voted in favor of keeping the recommendation in the plan so that housing remains in the conversation after the plan is

completed. Such a committee would pay attention to rapid changes that might be happening and could work with local realtors to get a sense of the pace of growth.

Of the other recommendations, it was decided to combine recommendations 1 and 2 whose topics are: Explore options for building capacity and improving organization to address housing challenges; and Cultivate and enhance partnerships for housing in the community; and #6 and 7 which include considering adoption of incentive zoning and encouraging housing in adjacent hamlets.

After a question about acronyms, Manning offered to create an index of acronyms/agency names as a reference.

There was a discussion about short-term rentals (air b&b's) and the potential establishment of rules and regulations governing them. Such regulations were developed for Tusten but not implemented because it was felt that there was no avenue for enforcement.

Concerns about lifelong residents being squeezed out because there they are unable to maintain larger homes as they age and the number of second home owners who are now living here full time led to discussions about incentive zoning, subdivisions, open space plans, and land use and infrastructure to support expansion of the hamlet.

It was requested that updated zoning regulations be posted on the town's website.

Mike Farrell moved and Ben Johnson seconded a motion to adjourn. Adjournment was at 8:30.

The next meeting is November 9 and meetings will resume on the second and fourth Mondays.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elaine Giguere

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