

Town of Tusten
Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting
Minutes, July 13, 2020

The meeting was held via zoom internet communication.

Attendees: Ken Baim, Mike Farrell, Art Hawker, Ben Johnson, Jane Luchsinger, Crystal Weston

Consultant: Peter Manning

Approval of minutes: A motion was made by Ken Baim, seconded by Mike Farrell to accept the minutes from the previous meeting. Motion passed.

Review of Environmental Resources Section

Parts of the contents of this section relate to the work of the zoning re-write committee although, at this time, all draft zoning amendments have not been adopted by the Town Board. For purposes of the Comprehensive Plan it is imperative the amendments to the zoning law be approved/disapproved so the Plan may accurately reflect current regulations. The current draft assumes the amendments will be approved. Adjustments, if necessary may be made before the final plan is completed.

Peter related the conversation he had with Bill Rudge from the DEC on the topic of the Ten Mile River Boy Scout camps. Mr. Rudge serves in an advisory role to the UDC. The DEC has expressed interest in the BSA property should it become available. The 12,000 acre parcel is listed on the NYS Open Space Plan as a priority project area, perhaps for its natural resources and biodiversity. Speculation: should the State acquire the parcel it may be designated as State Forest land and not State Park land.

Ken reported Tusten has approximately 40 properties (8,000 acres) designated as forest exempt parcels (under the 480-A tax law).

Tusten has developed a Natural Resources and Open Space Inventory, which is the underpinning for a town-wide Open Space Plan. Members of the CPC were not familiar with the inventory document. The Town Board should reactivate the Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) to develop an Open Space Plan to recommend specific actions to be taken to preserve natural resources and open space.

On the topic of ridgeline protection it was noted that special use permits are currently needed if a structure is visible from the river. The proposed amendments to the zoning law further support ridgeline protection.

LED street lights are scheduled to be installed in Tusten. Once installed they will provide light only but have many future applications which include: reporting of current weather conditions, highway conditions, noise, traffic accidents, etc.

The community composting machine (HORSE) should be noted as an anaerobic digester.

The Open Space Plan will recommend protecting and conserving green infrastructure, a “greenprint”. One way to accomplish this is to offer incentive zoning for new developments. The incentives could connect to the open space plan. Open space planning may involve more than one township and should reinforce Sullivan County policies. Tusten may wish to partner with the Delaware Highlands Trust to achieve green infrastructure goals.

Peter requested that Jim Crowley, Tusten Code Enforcement Officer, review the Comp Plan document and provide comment where needed.

The committee is on schedule to complete Part 1 by the end of the UDC grant cycle.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 27, 2020 at 6pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:17pm.