TOWN OF STANFORD TOWN BOARD

SPECIAL MEETING

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PUBLIC HEARING

Thursday, December 7, 2023

The Town of Stanford Town Board convened for a Special Meeting / Public Hearing on the draft Comprehensive Plan on Thursday, December 7, 2023 at the Stanford Town Hall at 7 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

 Roll Call: Wendy Burton – present

 Margaret Fallon – present

 Anne Arent – absent

 Nathan Lavertue – present

 Corey Clanahan – present

 Also present was Town Attorney Robert Butts.

 Supervisor Burton read the following motion regarding the expansion of the RC zone, seconded by Margaret Fallon: **"Extend the current Rural Center (RC) Zone in the following manner: east and west along NY Route 82 from Gristmill Lane to Cold Spring Road, north and south of NY Route 19 from NY Route 82 to Grist Mill Lane, east and west along Millis Lane from Hunns Lake Road to NY Route 82, north and south along Hunns Lake Road for 0.6 miles from the intersection of NY Route 82, and the eastern portion of Duell Road from Bangall Amenia Road to the existing western edge of the RC Zone, allowing for more opportunities for businesses, including those that have larger space requirements".  Motion carried with all present voting in favor.**

A motion was then made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Nathan Lavertue, to accept the agenda as presented. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

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A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Nathan Lavertue, to open the Public Hearing. Motion carried with all present voting in favor. Supervisor Burton thanked all those came out to this meeting, and thanked the generations of committee members who had worked on the Plan, such as Mark Burdick and many more, some here tonight, and added she was very grateful to Councilman Lavertue for his input.

Amy Singer, read a letter from Nate Kimball, chair of the Climate Smart Task Force - was in definite support of the Plan and thanked the Town Board for their responsiveness from the last public hearing, while listening to the peoples’ concerns. Also thanked the Board for eliminating the requirement regarding visual impacts analysis, the RC zone expansion, and the pre-existing business and tradespeople. He added that the Town will need to expand housing throughout the community as there has been a decline in the younger population needed homes here, as well as childcare, and relying on our outdated zoning has not been successful. Climate changes can leave the Town vulnerable to outages and weather damage. This is an advisory document only, a framework for a successful future.

Diane Duffus, read a letter from Curtis DeVito, vice-chair of the CAC – on behalf of the CAC, was in support of the Comprehensive Plan, which would recommend the preservation of critical environmental areas, priority habitats and other natural areas. The CAC also suggests expanding several of the CEAs and designate new ones such as the Whitlock Preserve, the Gary Lovett Park and the Town landfill area, however are disappointed of the revisions made in Chapter 5 but are consistent with the Plan’s purpose. We fully support and hope the Board adopts it.

Conrad Levenson, Hunns Lake Road – as a 34-year resident and former Planning Board member and on two Master Plan Committees, consisting of a diverse cross section of the town. All were heard and considered, from elected officials to residents to business owners. This is an aspirational document, does not give regulations, but seeks balance between keeping our rural character and growth, and identifies options. A zoning commission is a first step in the process to revise the code. Encourages all to continue to participate with a new zoning code that we can be proud of.

Johanna Shafer, Decker Road – as a 30-year resident, I have seen what has happened to this plan in the past, but we all want the same goals. In favor of passing this now and moving forward. The details will be in the zoning laws, this is only a vision. Was struck by the responsiveness of this committee with my concerns about B&B’s, but I was heard and my

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comments were listened to and they are considering options. The plan wants home businesses expanded and people respected in what they are doing to grow the community. I am in full

support of this plan but people should get involved with the details of the zoning laws.

 Catherine St. John, East Hunns Lake Road, a resident for 22 years. Excited to get this plan to fruition, was pregnant with her son when it started, now he’s off to college. Hope this gets done soon. Not prescribing policy but hopes it will allow auxiliary dwelling units for the future.

 Mike Shafer, 21 Decker Road – over 30 years here, and if you have a Comprehensive Plan, it says that you know what you like, very powerful. We care about what we’ve been, and we’re keeping that, thanks to people like Gary Lovett. Also Route 82, large, fast and we can’t

have trucks barreling through. We might not need sidewalks, but maybe natural cinder paths, a natural walking area. Spoke of the “road to nowhere,” Noller Way. It’s a wonderful plan, carefully done for a long time, support it wholeheartedly.

 Martina Deignan, read a letter from Catherine Baldwin, 26 Decker Road – agrees with her statements too. In support of the plan, and thanked the Board for the transparency and opportunities to learn about the plan and share their views. Loved the natural environment in the Town, parks, trails, backyards, and shows the importance of it and at the same time slowly grow businesses. It balances ways to support aquifers and drinking water, which should, get tested regularly, and appreciates all that is in the plan. Ms. Deignan added that she also agreed that protecting our water supply with voluntary yearly water testing. Were weekenders at first but full time 8 years ago, and I love the area. The Comprehensive Plan is a framework to define where we are going; great idea to get involved with the zoning committee. I also strongly support this and thanked all the Board for their work.

 Supervisor Burton then read a letter from Tom Angell and Issac Angel – As our family have been operators of Bentley Farm for nearly a century, the Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance of agriculture in the Town and how farmers are dependent on each other, and we need the infrastructure to support them. They also wrote that the Town should restore the Farmland Protection Policy and suggest that you be careful considering minimum lot sizes to create more affordable housing but may just make more density. Housing flexibility with smaller lots is more conducive to protecting farmland, and gave examples of land currently for sale on smaller lots. Adopting this plan makes a significant crossroad for the Town but best served by preserving the rural character, like those before us, but concentrate growth in our rural center and keep the open spaces.

 Janet Allison, Patricia Lane – lived here since the early 90’s, three efforts to make a new plan since my deceased husband, Gary Lovett, was involved in all three. This effort was done by people with good will, and this plan aspires to keep the rural character and ecological health as well as smart growth. This Town Board, unlike a previous hostile Board, has listened to our concerns and made adjustments. We need this plan and fully supports it so that we can do something more fun, like rebuilding SPARC Park.

 Betty Cosgrove, Charwill Drive – supports the Plan, support rural residential neighborhoods and home businesses. After the plan gets approved, we can move on to updating the zoning codes, by a diverse group of people, to improve the wording and content of the codes. This can stop money being wasted on lawsuits with improper zoning. It will stop people doing what they wished and had splintered neighborhoods. The one-acre idea is well intended but you need municipal water and has already seen subdivided properties have low water. If you have a nursery in a rural residential area, it is threatening local wells with pesticides and chemicals.

Jim King, Charwill Drive – a 36-yr. resident, thanked the Town Board and everyone before them for putting the Comprehensive Plan together, logical and an attractive package, but has questions: legalizes home businesses in rural zones by special permit or by right, doesn’t like this. We have many small businesses in neighborhoods where their businesses do not bother everyone but if you legalize them it could expand over time. Any irregularities with the new zoning should be corrected then, and have the Zoning Enforcement officer do his job, see what’s going on and using common sense.

Julia Descoteaux, Haight Hill Road – thanked all for coming here, as well as all the members of the past Plan committees and the Town Board. Has been a resident here since 2016 when my son was 3-months old, loved the natural beauty and hope we keep that vision with the beautiful landscape. Someone had mentioned “Standstillville” and never though of it like that. The Town has strength with this plan, its grows agri-tourism and welcomes small businesses, and also has SPARC Park, an incredible asset. This plan gives us room to grow with momentum, for

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future housing needs, natural resources protected and keeps Stanford balanced and attractive to all. Some see restrictions and options but I see momentum to grow, a balanced plan to grow with a unique identity. I am proud to live here and proud to support the Plan.

Jim Griffith, read a letter from Ted Fox, 49 Willowbrook – but added on his own that his daughter, in the audience, was a baby when it started out and will be going to college this year. Mr. Fox’s letter stated all agree that Stanford is a beautiful town and in the 11 years living here, has seen the small town center and Rec. Park beginning to thrive. The plan protects and accounts for sustainable growth, encouraging home businesses while respecting neighborhoods. It is not a law, merely a guide created for the years ahead. It has been sufficiently heard and

discussed, and I strongly support that it to be enacted. Mr. Griffith agreed with Mr. Fox’s statements and thanked the Town Board.

Eric Haims, Upton Lake – stated that he was in favor of the plan and thanked all for their input as well as the Town Board. You asked for public comment, then heard them and made changes. The old 40 year plan, worked on for the last 10 years, is now overdue. As a newly elected Town Board member, I look forward to having it in place, and urge you to pass it.

Regina Connors, Hunns Lake Road – read a letter from Lynn Tondrick and Lynn Massimo, 210 Hunns Lake Road – they were not able to attend this meeting but wanted to express our support for the Comprehensive Plan, particularly the Part about preserving our water resources, something we take for granted, and cited examples of problems with water in various places in NYS with chemicals and other toxins that cause cancer risks. Protect our wetlands and uphold the existing Federal guidelines to keep our aquifers healthy.

Councilman Clanahan read letters from Jon Bloomberg, Richard Kaufman and Jeff Spahn:

From Jon Bloomberg – supports the Plan and its well past time to be addressed, long past due. Loves the character of the Town and wants to keep it that way. Hopes people understand that this is not a law but just a pan going forward. Also, updating our zoning laws to allow a 3- yr. non-conforming business use is important. There is a parking area on Willowbrook Road for large trucks, this should be moved elsewhere. Traffic on Fancor and Charwill also ruins the roads and bothers people along with domestic and wild animals.

From Richard Kaufman – he built a spec house on Hunns Lake Road and most of the restrictions came from the State and the County. This plan works within these restrictions and can allow the Town to determine how they will be applied. This is a guideline, not a mandate. You can’t stop change, you can manage it.

From Jeff Spahn – could not attend the meeting but supports the Plan. The old one is far out of date and the world and the Town are different from 40 years ago. Added that not every part of this plan will satisfy all, but the plan gets it mostly right.

Supervisor Burton read the following letter:

From Bud Barnes: He enjoys your communications throughout the year but felt that the Comprehensive Plan is the “beginning of the end” for Stanfordville. As a retired home builder and former land developer in southern Dutchess, he spoke of the changes that have happened in other parts of the County like LaGrange, Hopewell and Pleasant Valley. Wanting one’s children to be able to afford living here has no merit. He has now nine houses that he can see when there were none when he built. He implores you to leave the Town as it is or we will be faced with more financial burdens and services required by more people moving in. Take a look at Westchester and Long Island, it didn’t happen overnight but was rather a “slow erosion” of the quality of life.

Anthony Sarnicola, Hunns Lake Road – when we moved here as weekenders 30 years ago, the demographics seemed to be hill-toppers and laborers. Now our 28 year old daughter wants to live here. We’ve watched businesses close, new ones open, tradesmen come and go, blue-collar families. We ran from the gentrification of NYC run by developers and we don’t want to see that here. We care about the Town but welcome new demographics, affordable housing. Amend the current zoning laws to include accessory structures to allow young families to stay here or come here, and supports this adoption of the plan.

Gary Hattem, Bowen Road – as a 24-year resident he thanked the Board for the opportunity for input, and is proud of the volunteerism and the Board’s reception . Has a farm on Bowen and Bulls Head Roads, near the Snake Hill CEA. Would it expand? Zoning should consider areas next to a CEA with its environmental assets. Is in support of affordable housing and maintaining open space within a framework of a plan for the future.

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Henry Boehringer, Thompson Lane – remembers when the Rec. was vibrant, full of kids. Had a couple of concerns with zoning laws, they need additional back-up with notes, minutes. No guidance, no direction. Accessory apartments are unrealistic, new septic systems, this has a few flaws.

George Carmel, Hunns Lake Road – newest resident here but lived in Columbia County many years. Delighted to live here, beautiful area and loves its quirkiness and is very unique. Just joined the Rec. Capital campaign. Being mindful of others interests, was bowled over on how professional the document was, shows care and effort. Heard revisions covered, expressed concerns from the July public hearing. More inviting Town center, support for young families, etc. and safeguarding the Town’s beauty. Supports adoption of the plan 100%.

Ben Rathjen – people have a misunderstanding about the Zoning Board of Appeals, but questions if everyone read the updated plan. Seems like a foregone conclusion that it will pass. Zoning amendments can be made at any time, the Board has been aware of ambiguities in the laws, and the Town Board has done nothing. A Comprehensive Plan must be available 10 days before a public hearing, but now questions the changes made tonight regarding the rural center, and asked the opinion of the Attorney since it has changed. Many commented about affordable housing but not over-development, discussion about small lots from Tom Angell’s letter. Putting property into PDRs, smaller lots might not be more affordable, 5-acre is a happy medium.

Attorney Butts spoke of the statements made from Mr. Rathjen, that the law only requires one public hearing but this Board has held three and is in full compliance of the statute.

Claudia DeBellis, Charwill Drive – family has been in the Hudson Valley since 1915. When we retired we wanted to live here with the rural character we wanted, hospitals nearby, house improvements made for when we get older. Progress and preservation is important, and I see it in this town. More businesses coming in, preservation in the Rec. Park and adding more, its history is an important part and the Comprehensive Plan covers both. Absolutely supports this plan.

Councilwoman Fallon read letters from Bradley Ralston, Lucy Kasofsky, Martin Kasofsky and Patty Wineapple:

From Bradley Ralston, Route 82 – supports the Comprehensive Plan, and appreciated all the people involved in its progress and shows a balanced consideration of many peoples’ viewpoints. Agrees with many of the concepts but not all and is only a foundation for future conversations in the community and thinks the plan is a good start.

From Lucy Kasofsky, Decker Road – is also in support of the plan which fosters and sustains the best interests of the town she grew up in. We live in a beautiful area with a strong community that cares about preserving our rural character and allows families to stay here. This plan has the flexibility we need to protect our resources while allowing for growth and change which is inevitable.

From Martin Kasofsky – is in favor of the Comprehensive Plan. The Town is wonderful but we must preserve and expand what is good here. Zoning is important but absolute liberty for all is impossible. The plan needs to be adopted and acted upon.

From Patty Wineapple, Klein Drive – was disappointed that the previous administration blocked the crossroad idea on Rt. 82 which would have allowed more of a rural center. We may not have the infrastructure to support major changes, but minor ones will prevent us from standing still. Having safe paths between the Library, McCarthy’s the Post Office, Big Rock and the Bank is important and a huge addition to the community.

Lea McCauley, Creamery Road – has not read the Comprehensive Plan, and not sure how many really have, but her brother Mark Burdick certainly has and was hoping he would be given more time to speak. He was accused of fear mongering at the last public hearing which is very far from the truth, the majority of people are not informed, busy living their lives. Was happy that some changes have been made but more changes are needed. There is an influx of weekenders that do not use the schools and hopefully middle-class families wont be forgotten, the self-employed, teachers, nurses, and hopefully attract more middle class families.

Jane Cottrell, Rt. 82 – supports wholehearted the Comprehensive Plan. Appreciates the balance as she grew up in a farming community like Stanford with similar challenges. The plan is not prescriptive but rather offers suggestions for housing which is very important, and hopes that the new zoning commission will consider multi-family housing, “tiny houses,” and adjusting minimum lot sizes, but does not envy the huge task ahead of them, and supports this Plan.

Kathy Zeyher, Shelley Hill Road – is chair of the ZBA, but speaking for herself. The changed language for the rural center, will this public hearing be kept open? Will it be on the

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website tomorrow? Supervisor Burton stated that she changed the language to make it clear for John Hughes’ property. Councilwoman Fallon also added that anyone was free to send comments anytime but the public hearing will close tonight. Ms. Zeyher stated that she had been to 4 of the 5 workshop meetings and questioned the rapid revisions. Have other boards or committees been involved? A certain paragraph has not been included in the revised copy of the plan. And questioned the legalities of the meetings and posting of the minutes. Mentioned marks on page 125 – needs a final draft and perhaps County review again; this is obviously not a final draft. Her family has been here for 80 years and seen a lot of changes but when 600 acres of family property was divided into large parcels and there were no regulations to preserve the rural character. These regulations are not needed.

Attorney Butts added that the previous draft was sent for the County to review and they came back with no recommendations and just said it was a matter of local concern. Unless there was a drastic change, no other County review is needed and they have essentially signed off.

Jeff Brouws, Hunns Lake Road, read a letter from Maeda Bloomberg: wrote in support of the Comprehensive Plan, a living document that will address the future. It is critical that the community think about addressing housing for young families, one way by addressing an updated zoning code. We also need to address businesses with amenities for our residents, and also to protect our natural resources such as our water supply, and keep the rural character and quality of life in our town.

Patricia Sherwood – had signed up to speak but she had left, someone said that she wanted an explanation of the smaller lot sizes. Supervisor Burton responded that only in certain circumstances would smaller acreage be considered.

Mark Burdick, Burdick Way – has had many comments about the Comprehensive Plan process over the years and has been called a “fear mongerer,” monopolizing the microphone and not telling the truth about the expansion of the RC zone. My comments have always been what’s best for the Town. Spoke of the development planned for behind McCarthy’s and the Town Hall years ago and it was in an engineer’s report but never came to fruition thankfully, was made chairman of the Master Plan committee but was fired by the Norton administration for supporting the Library road. I then submitted a 19-page document to the Board and had spoken for 52 other town residents last year but there were disparaging comments by a Board member. The July public hearing did not allow ceding of speaking time to someone else. I was labeled a fear mongerer and helped write speeches for other people and changes were then made related to many of those comments but I was criticized for writing them. As far as not telling the truth, after many emails that that part was left out and was just an error, and thanked Wendy for that. Additional changes are needed such as lots for young families and protecting family farms, the SEQR process, and asked for additional time to speak.

Steve Leon – also had left.

Steve Horowitz, Rt. 82 – a neighbor of the Hughes’ property and was here to speak about the RC expansion, described by the Supervisor at the beginning of the meeting. We’ve been here for years and has the flower farm. Concerned about the expansion on our farm and balancing growth and the rural character. This component is very specific, others are just general policy and this would replace the current zoning. Rural center prohibits certain farming operations and may become a non-conforming use. Not opposed to this Plan, but we need to have more balance, but it does not need to prohibit certain agricultural operations. Uses in the rural center could have gas stations, self storage facilities and we don’t need to have them in an agricultural zone. We can do a better job, have some, leave others. (Time ran out.)

Councilwoman Fallon read a letter from Dennis Wedlick - writing in support of the plan. He wrote at length about the history of the Town and was grateful to all those who contributed towards working on the Comprehensive Plan over the years, and continue to keep what we love about this small town and support its passage. (ran out of time)

Supervisor Burton read a letter from Monica and Michael Hampton: now recent residents to Bangall and love the natural beauty and access to natural resources and outdoor activities as well as the cultural and historic heritage and preservation since we are both involved in the creative arts. We love the community that we now call home. We strongly support the Comprehensive Plan because of the preservation of the rural character, have more businesses and a more accessible and prominent town center with biking areas, protection of our natural resources and Stanford’s history and the respect that this community already pays to their past. (out of time.)

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Mark Burdick – spoke of the scenic view sheds such as on Layton Road and other visual impact maps which can almost be the whole town, but then SEQR kicks in and that’s not considered in there and can stop projects. The Governor spoke of streamlining the environmental process and we’re introducing more. Spoke of the hamlets – concentrate development in our 15 hamlets, six are in CEAs, six in the scenic view area and one on a scenic road. The easiest way to create lots would be on existing town roads and that may be the only place, cannot build a development that is affordable.

Stacey Adams, Millis Lane – just a question about home based businesses, verbiage about those businesses, those people before the new zoning, grandfathered in? What about new businesses allowed? Ms. Burton said that her business is in the character of the neighborhood, all currently protected now, Councilwoman Fallon said she would get back to her on this.

Supervisor Burton added that they will be looking for people to serve on the new zoning commission with a wide variety of backgrounds, and then made a motion to close the Public Hearing, seconded by Corey Clanahan. Motion carried with all present voting in favor. Several Board members thanked everyone for coming this evening.

A motion was made to go back into the regular meeting by Wendy Burton, seconded by Corey Clanahan. Corey Clanahan then made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 PM, seconded by Wendy Burton. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Ritamary Bell

Town Clerk