

**Orange County Planning Board
Meeting Minutes
May 5, 2020**

Members Participating: E. McClung, M. Sweeton, T. Gottlieb, S. Turner, J. Joy, D. Niemotko

Climate Smart Task Force Members Participating: Carla Castillo, Elinor Hart, Kelly Collins

Staff Participating: A. Sorensen, J. Richmond, F. Budde, K. Morris, K. Schmidt, M. Tennermann, E. Russell

Meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM.

The minutes from the March 3, 2020 meeting were approved.

E. McClung introduced the new Planning Commissioner, Alan Sorensen. He discussed his background and experience in planning.

Review of General Municipal Law Planning and Zoning Permit Reviews – F. Budde prepared a GML 239 referrals report for the months of February, March and April, 2020. There were 118 mandatory GML 239 referrals sent to the Department by municipalities throughout the County. The Planners have reached out to their municipalities to determine if they are holding virtual meetings. At this time, only about 50% are. They are putting together information for boards to get up to speed on this. A total of 360 dwelling units and 2.2 million square feet of nonresidential development were proposed. Also referred was 1 utility scale 5-megawatt solar facility in the Town of Deerpark. There were over 50 referrals in February and March and only 9 referrals in April. A. Sorensen presented a power point presentation with details on some of the major projects: Medline 1,296,000 sq. ft. warehouse in the Town of Montgomery and Clovewood Development of consisting of 600 dwelling units in the Village of South Blooming Grove.

Department Updates:

Continued Discussion on County Comprehensive Plan Updates:

Housing – Currently there is no funding stream available for the Housing Needs Assessment Study. In the interim, the Planning Department will research another way to provide affordable housing. One idea is to encourage municipalities to use big box developments as an opportunity to have companies include workforce housing on some of these sites. To enable that to occur, initially it would be on a voluntary basis. For Amy's Kitchen for example, it might be a way for them to retain employees. We will research if this has been done in other municipalities. It could be set up as an incentive in the zoning. There were some environmental and scenic concerns. The zoning would have to be industrial and residential. The idea will be circulated to municipalities through the Planning Department newsletter and OC Municipal Planning Federation.

Open Space – K. Morris spoke to Attorney Rick Golden about the idea of having the IDA require solar installations on the roofs of large warehouses. The County, each City, the Town of Walkkill and the Town of Montgomery all have their own IDA's. He suggested writing letters to each of the local IDA's and outline the recommendations from the Planning Board, Planning Department or County Executive. They are trying to attract business and might not want to put more restrictions on the businesses. The County Ag Board is concerned about farm land being gobbled up for solar. It would make sense to put them on top of all these huge warehouses. The IDA could make this as part of their point system, rather than a requirement. K. Morris will draft a memo for review. Planning Department was ready to submit

an application to Hudson River Valley Greenway for a grant to help prepare the updated Open Space Plan. However, that funding stream has been closed.

Census - M. Tennermann said that as of Sunday, May 3rd the response in Orange County is 53.5%. The Census deadline has been extended to the end of November because of the inability to go door to door. The response from Village of Walden is 57.4%, City of Newburgh is 33% and Unionville is 26.1%. The internet response is hard for some areas.

LEED Certification Update – The application was submitted in March. We are waiting for review. It looks like we will be certified and hopefully we will get Silver. There is a remote possibility we could get Gold. We should hear back in about 20 days. We will not have to be certified again until 2025.

Climate Smart Communities Task Force:

Countywide Resiliency Plan – We have completed the RFP for this project and it will be published soon. K. Morris will take the lead. We received a NYS Department of State grant for \$250,000. \$225,000 will be for consultant services. We should receive proposals by late June.

Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Community Climate Action Plan - K Schmidt is taking the lead on this project. The Planning Department secured a \$100,000 grant from NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. We will be hiring a consultant to work on the Greenhouse Gas Inventory and the Department will prepare the Climate Action Plan with input from the consultant based on findings from the Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

These projects will take about two years. There is a direct role for the Climate Smart Community Task Force to be involved.

Climate Smart Communities Task Force Work Plan

The Task Force has been struggling with focus and direction. We prepared a draft work plan that will help to bring some focus. The Task Force was created as an extension of the Planning Board promoted by the Climate Smart certification activities. The involvement of the Task Force on the Greenhouse Gas and Climate Action Plan will form the basis of the work plan for this group. The Climate Action Plan will guide and implement actions the Task Force will take in the future. We drafted a mission statement and subject matter for smaller working groups. We are looking for input from the Planning Board and Task Force members. The working groups would meet outside of the Planning Board meetings. They would report back at the full Planning Board meetings four times per year.

Climate Smart Communities Task Force Additional Recruits

We currently have Eli Hart, Kelly Collins and Carla Castillo as active task force members. We need to recruit additional members.

The next meeting of the Planning Board is scheduled for June 2, 2020. The meeting was adjourned at 6:12 PM.