

**Orange County Planning Board
Meeting Minutes
July 7, 2020**

Members Participating: E. McClung, M. Sweeton, T. Gottlieb, D. Niemotko, S. Turner, C. Best

Staff Participating: A. Sorensen, J. Richmond, M. Tennermann, L. Burns, Z. Coleman, K. Morris, J. MacLeod, E. Russell

Meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM.

The minutes from the minutes from the June 2, 2020 meeting were accepted as circulated.

A.Sorensen announced that following the retirement of F. Budde, M. Tennermann will fill the position of heading the Land Use Section of the Planning Department.

Review of General Municipal Law Planning and Zoning Permit Reviews – M. Tennermann prepared a GML 239 referrals report for the month of June, 2020. There were 27 mandatory GML 239 referrals sent to the Department by municipalities throughout the County. A total of 137 dwelling units and 25,000 square feet of nonresidential development were proposed. Noteworthy referrals include: solar facilities in the Towns of Goshen and Hamptonburgh; site plan for conversion of 32 rental units to 30 hotel rooms in the Village of Goshen; site plan for demolition of existing structures and new construction of 72 multifamily units in 5 buildings in the Village of Kiryas Joel; and site plan and special use permit for new construction of 15,000 sq. ft. corporate headquarters in the Town of Wallkill.

Revision of County's 239 Procedures

A draft intermunicipal agreement was prepared and sent to Board members for review regarding regarding 239 submittals. A significant number of projects currently received by the County for review are for local determination. We are proposing to eliminate some of these referrals. The agreement will be submitted to County Executive and Legislature for approval. We will then reach out to each municipality. The agreement will be for one year, extending automatically for up to 5 years.

Department Updates:

Eight-year Review of Agricultural Districts

Changes since 2012 include removing properties in residential areas and large warehouse sites. The Ag parcels currently getting Ag exemptions, but not in an Ag District will be added. Maps were sent to all municipalities and they were to respond with corrections by 6/30/20. The department reviewed over 16,000 parcels and recommended 8,500 for removal, which represents about 10%. There was also a significant amount of land which was recommended to be added. J. MacLeod and K. Morris are working on the Ag District report which will be submitted to the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board and the Legislature. The Public Hearing is scheduled for 9/3/20. There is still an opportunity for revisions.

COVID Impacts on Transportation:

L. Burns gave a presentation discussing the impacts on Transportation and introducing some of the data sources they are tracking. She has been researching the COVID impacts on economic activity, vehicle miles traveled, transit ridership, non-motorized transportation and air quality.

Transit Orange bus operators have been following recommendations of NYSDOT to protect drivers and riders. New Jersey Transit also has protocols in place for cleaning trains and buses and for social distancing by limiting the number of people on the buses. We should have a marketing push to get the message out that the transit in Orange County are using these procedures.

Continued Discussion on County Comprehensive Plan Updates:

Open Space – The Hudson River Valley Greenway grant funding was suspended. The Planning Department will start working on updating the Open Space Plan in house.

Census - M. Tennermann said that the response in Orange County is 59.9%, which is two points under 2010. The City of Newburgh has the lowest response rate at 38.6%. Rates from other municipalities include: Hamptonburgh 70.9%; Warwick 64.4%; and Town of Newburgh 67.7%. The libraries and Newburgh Complete County Committee have been doing phone banks monthly calling homes requesting people to respond.

Letter to IDA's – A draft letter to the IDA's was sent to the Board for review. The letter encourages them to require or incentivize roof-top and/or parking lot solar arrays for warehouse projects that are applying for a PILOT program through an amendment to the IDAs point system. This would reduce impacts to agriculture and the landscape while retaining renewable energy. A motion was made by D. Niemotko and seconded by T. Gottlieb that the letter be sent to the IDAs, approved.

Discussion on COVID Impacts on Housing

Things are changing rapidly in real estate. Closings in June were down, but new listings are currently increasing. We are expecting to see an increase, as more people are working remote. There could be a push for people to relocate from New York City.

Policy Brief – Workforce Housing

The policy brief was sent to the Board for review and comments. The next step will be to submit it to the County Executive. We will have to find partners in big box and real estate developers. We will need education sessions or focus groups on how this can happen. The County and Planning Federation could have a couple of sessions to talk about it.

The next meeting of the Planning Board is scheduled for September 1, 2020. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 PM.