

**Minutes of the Zoning Commission of the Town of Caroline
Meeting on Tuesday, July 27, 2021
7:30 p.m.–9:00 p.m.**

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 p.m. by Jean McPheeters in person at Town Hall and via Zoom.

Attendees:

Zoning Commission Members: Michelle Brown (in person), Barbara Knuth (in person), Bruce Murray (in person), Jean McPheeters (in person), Evie Weinstein (in person), Tim Murray (Zoom), Town Board Liaison

Others: Consultants Nan Stolzenburg (Zoom), Town Supervisor Mark Witmer (in person), Others in person and on Zoom: Wil Lawrence, Cal Snow, Bill Podulka, Mary Kobler, Ron Spada, and Ken Miller

Excused: Ernie Bayles, Val Warke

- 1) Privilege of the Floor: No one spoke during privilege of the floor. Opportunity to bring forward matters of concern. (3-min limit)
 - a. _____ voiced his concerns that no one in the community knew what was going on with the zoning commission. Said that there should be farmers on the commission. Asked how people would know. Chair McPheeters responded that the Town website has a Zoning Commission page with all the videos of the meetings, as well as agendas and minutes. The Town Board receives a report from the ZC liaison Tim Murray at every meeting. Also, the town's new newsletter, which is delivered to every home in the town has had an article about the ZC in each of the two issues so far. Also, the Brooktondale newsletter has had an article, and publishes the dates of the meetings.
- 2) Approve Minutes of the July 13, 2021 meeting (approved with no objection: Weinstein, Brown)
- 3) Town Board Liaison Report: Tim Murray noted the Planning Board is finishing up its work on battery siting, etc. and that several members would be joining the Zoning Commission.
- 4) Jean McPheeters apologized for not being able to attend the last meeting and thanked Barbara Knuth for chairing. She explained that Bill Podukla, Wil Lawrence, Patrick _____ and Jonathan Comstock, who are present Planning Board members, will be joining the Zoning Commission as voting members when they complete their work on the battery issue. Jean has invited them to attend ZC meetings when they can.
- 5) Jean then explained the various scenarios that our consultants had presented at the last meeting. These are not the only possibilities for a plan, but they provide a framework from which we can work. The scenarios are:
 - a. One big zoning district with overlays for environmental issue
 - b. All the hamlets (suggested Besemer, Brooktondale, W. Slaterville & Slaterville together, Caroline Center, and Speedsville) in one district and everything else in another district with overlays

- c. 5 different districts for each of the suggested hamlets and one district for everything else, plus overlays
 - d. Multiple Zoning Districts: hamlet(s), commercial, everything else, overlays
- 6) Jean accepted some questions from the floor and attempted to answer them but asked that they use the privilege of the floor in the future. Topics included: commercial entities should be kept along Route 79 West of Slaterville, would citizens be voting on the plan, rural character and what it is.
- 7) Barbara Knuth made a motion to not accept questions from the floor during the meeting, Michelle Brown seconded. No further discussion; approved 4-1 (Murray nay).
- 8) Jean then asked each voting member to speak about their response to the plans that had been presented at the last month. Each of the members of the ZC as well as Wil and Bill spoke; Tim did not. Most favored either plan C or D. There were questions about hamlets: are they the same or different; how do you deal with water resources and septic systems in hamlets; a lot of confusion about overlay zones and how they work, questions about definitions.
- 9) Nan Stolzenburg responded to each comment and question made:
- a. We will get public input on rural character and create a definition. A large part of the ZC's work will be writing definitions.
 - b. DEC does not have as much control over water and water quality as the public often thinks. This is an area that zoning can help with.
 - c. Zoning laws always have a mechanism for non-conforming and existing use. These are usually "grandfathered in." Generally, landowners can rebuild on the existing building area.
 - d. Site Plan Review is very necessary, but not the same as zoning.
 - e. Zoning laws should be reviewed annually or at least bi-annually with Zoning Officer and Town board in case changes should be made.
 - f. Perhaps we should have some hamlet-oriented focus groups or meetings.
 - g. Nan will investigate Bill's question about biodiversity and ask Rick about this.
 - h. We could use mapping in our zoning law and/or text describing the areas.
 - i. Critical to think about areas and locations as they are now, but also with a focus on potential growth.
- 10) We ended the meeting discussing public outreach and creating a public outreach plan.
- 11) Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Next meeting: August 10, 2021 7:30p.m.