

**Minutes of the Zoning Commission of the Town of Caroline
Meeting on Tuesday, August 24, 2021
7:30 p.m.–9:00 p.m.**

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 p.m. by Jean McPheeters via Zoom. N.B., we met by Zoom because there had been a potential exposure at the Town buildings.

Attendees:

Zoning Commission Members: Michele Brown, Barbara Knuth, Bruce Murray, Jean McPheeters Val Warke, Bill Podulka, Wil Lawrence, Ernie Bayles & Patrick Braga (7:48 pm), Tim Murray, Town Board Liaison

Others: Consultants Nan Stolzenburg and Rick Lederer-Barnes, Town Supervisor Mark Witmer

Attendees: Cal Snow, Ellen Harrison, Barry Goodrich, Renate Ferro, Tasmin/Janice,
Excused: Evie Weinstein

- 1) Privilege of the Floor: No speakers.
- 2) Approve Minutes of the August 10, 2021 meeting (Knuth, Brown, unanimously approved)
- 3) Town Board Liaison Report: Tim Murray reported that the Town closed the Town Hall and Clerk's office because of a potential COVID exposure. Also reminded everyone that we did have an election 2 years ago and that those who supported the concept of planning and zoning were elected. There also was a petition with more than 750 signatures presented in favor of the plan.
- 4) Town Planning Report: Bill Podulka reported that battery permit and checklist were done and that the document was under final proofreading now.
- 5) Jean asked Nan S., our consultant for comments about our purpose for the evening—to go through the maps and suggested districts and note what we found useful or not; which plans we liked. There are 4 working zoning plans that we are using for discussion
 - a. Ernie Bayles: wants to throw out Plan 4. Likes the simplicity of Plan 1. Thinks Plan 2 is the likely scenario, but sees the Route 79 corridor as a different issue that needs a separate consideration. Also likes Option 3
 - b. Bill Podulka noted that Option 1 (one big zone) is simple, but that the overlays are complex and could be confusing. Also, there's no fine control over commercial areas. Option 2 is relatively simple but does a disservice by not recognizing differences between and among the hamlets. Likes Option 3 and 4, but wants to better understand the differences between overlays and zones. Option 4 may be too overbearing.
 - c. Barbara Knuth has questions about commercial vs. residential and retail. Needs clear definitions. Perhaps mixed-use zoning would be beneficial. Option 1 has simplicity and may be easy politically, but she is not in favor because it doesn't provide direction. Option 2, feels that all hamlets are not the same and need some differentiation. Option 3: would like to modify it to 2 types of hamlets: Type 1—highly mixed use such as Slaterville Springs; and Type 2—the other hamlets—more residential with some mixed use. Also, would like limits on the Route 79 corridor, so

that it is concentrated in Slaterville and W. Slaterville towards Thomas Road and then towards the eastern county boundary. Option 4: Concern is that it confines uses to certain areas. Suggests that for the first public meeting perhaps Option 3 (modified to include two types of hamlets) and 4 could be discussed to show the differences in these approaches and to prompt people to consider what type of hamlet they think “their” hamlet should be in.

- d. Val Warke: Option 1 doesn’t meet the needs of this complex plan. Option 2 isn’t accurate in that all the hamlets are not the same. Option 3: agrees with Barbara that the idea of 2 types of hamlets would be very useful and that there should be fluidity so that hamlets might over time become more mixed use, more like Slaterville. Option 4 is too much.
 - e. Patrick Braga: He likes Options 2 and 3 the best because of the fluidity of land use, the ability to preserve rural character, and notes that there is the presence of industrial uses in agriculture because it essentially extracts, transforms and stores (like corn or silage). Likes the freedom of design. Prefers focusing on USE rather than FORM. Notion of hamlet boundaries should be fluid. Homeowners should be able to petition to join a hamlet. Has issues with how BZAs don’t sometimes use waivers and variances correctly.
 - f. Bruce Murray: Option 1 would probably work; Option 2 would probably work but is too complicated. Doesn’t like Option 3, Option 4 is very complicated. Likes Mixed Use.
 - g. Michele Brown: She agrees with Bruce that Option 1 is too simple. We need to develop standards for each overlay. She prefers Option 3 and Option 4 is too prescriptive. Has questions about overlays: Nan says the overlay benefit is that they are mappable and the overlay means that landowners in that district with a particular overlay then have to do X (a particular thing, such as building at least 50’ from a stream. Rick says that you can have overlays as well as descriptions of the areas.
 - h. Patrick Braga: asked about residential clusters such as Boiceville
 - i. Barbara Knuth: asked about bordering other towns. Nan responded that there is no requirement to have our zoning consistent with other towns, but it is good practice to understand their zoning and not be completely inconsistent.
 - j. Wil Lawrence: note that she has a tenant in a residential area who makes lighting equipment. How do you deal with such issues as this?
 - k. Jean McPheeters: likes Barbara’s idea of the 2 types of hamlets; like Plan 3 and likes overlays plus descriptions.
- 6) Jean stated that she would like the Zoning Commissioners to consider working in small groups on specific topics in order to move the process forward. She will be in touch by email. Also, she will ask everyone if they would consider 2-hour meetings.
- 7) Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Next meeting: September 14, 2021 7:15 to 9:15 p.m. We are increasing meeting times to 2 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean McPheeters