

Minutes

Zoning Commission of the Town of Caroline

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Attendees:

Zoning Commission Members: Ernie Bayles, Michelle Brown, Barbara Knuth, Bruce Murray, Val Warke, Evelyn (Evie) Weinstein, Tim Murray (Town Board Liaison) and Jean McPheeters (chair)

Meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

1. *Privilege of the Floor: Opportunity to bring forward matters of concern*
 - a. No one spoke from the public. It was brought to our attention that due to a death of a Town of Caroline staff member, there had been a delay in some email announcements being sent.
2. Approve Minutes of the April 13, 2021 meeting
 - a. Moved by B. Knuth, seconded by V. Warke. Approved unanimously.
3. *Adopting Zoning for the First Time* Jean McPheeters
 - a. Jean reported on reviewing this publication. She noted that the report emphasizes that the Comprehensive Plan is our guide, and that our work is to review the comp plan, write a report, hold public meeting(s), and review
4. Town Planning Board report Val Warke
 - a. Val Warke reported that the Solar Siting report was presented to the town board. This may not have a great deal to do with our work at this point, but will have at some point. There are home sites, and medium and large sites that would have height restrictions, fencing, and de-commissioning of these solar arrays. The report is encouraging of these arrays, but not in prime agricultural areas.
5. Town Council Liaison's Report Tim Murray
 - a. Tim Murray reported that this will be a stand-alone law and there will be a public hearing soon, and that this could be wrapped into a zoning law at some point.
 - b. The board has not yet received applications for a planner to help us. They are actively looking for applicants.
6. Review Town of *Caroline 2020 Comprehensive Plan, Livability Section* Barb Knuth
 - a. Comprehensive plan is our blueprint. We should pay close attention to it.
 - b. We should keep in mind the welfare of the community as a whole.
 - c. Must hear from landowners and be sure that the zoning law isn't arbitrary or capricious but reflects due respect for landowners and the entire comprehensive plan.
 - d. Zoning can have an implication on surrounding towns and neighboring communities. We should consider this as we proceed.
 - e. If and when zoning is adopted, the Town should try to avoid spot zoning or rezoning, which can benefit just an individual rather than the entire community.
 - i. Evie Weinstein noted that reading the Town of Ulysses Zoning made her think a great deal about the establishment of a Board of Zoning Appeals and how critical that is. We will look to attorney or planner to guide us on this.

- ii. Val Warke noted that Zoning variances are sometimes used for taxation purposes and the variances themselves can be taxed. A good reason to consider this.
 - iii. Bruce Murray said that he had spoken with the Town Code Officer, who had said that Route 79 is our major commercial corridor. Bruce also noted that the Zoning Commission must be very open to the public and public comment. Public should be notified very soon that this Commission is under way. Jean noted that she will speak with Mark about how we or the Town should communicate about this, and will bring this back to the next meeting.
 - 1. The Zoning Commission has been announced in the Old Mill newsletter and the new quarterly newsletter.
 - iv. Jean mentioned that she doesn't understand if there are defined borders for hamlets and asked for comments. Val said he doesn't believe that there are defined borders, but there are 3 "viable" hamlets (Brooktondale, Slaterville Springs, and Speedsville because they have most of these things: a store, a P.O., an emergency services, a church or something that pulls the community together. The other 4 hamlets are Besemer, Caroline, West Slaterville and Caroline Center are the other 4.). Evie mentioned that there are cultural and historical identifications with the hamlets and that we need to honor those.
 - f. Val Warke then spoke about the Comprehensive Plan and the pieces from the Comprehensive Plan that will need to be addressed by the Zoning Commission. We need to look at those carefully and prepare something to present to the
 - g. Jean asked a question about the types of zoning and what we are looking to prepare. We probably want "use" zoning in the most part and will probably need some "form" zoning as well. We want to look at zoning laws from nearby communities. Jean will put up some.
 - h. Val noted that the Comp Plan created 3 sections from the many topics in the 2016 community survey. He discussed the Livability Section and the Rural Character sections. Issues that came up were walkability, sidewalks, crossings, design guidelines, economic impact reviews, locally owned businesses, residential development guidelines. Barbara commented that language for a new Site Plan Review Law and Design Guidelines were developed, but without zoning these must pertain town-wide and are now only for commercial development. With zoning these guidelines or standards could be for particular zones and could extend into non-commercial structures.
- 7. Time Line: Jean asked for comments on the draft Time Line she developed. Ernie Bayles noted that it provided a good outline for us.
 - 8. Jean said she would get the minutes out by Sunday.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean McPheeters