

Genoa Comprehensive Planning Group Notes

Monday, 6 April 2009

Present: Maria Bachich, Peggy Bradley, John Bruce, Dan DalCais, Barb Patchen, Charlotte Reeves, Dave Stilwell, Dan Thayer, Susan Tosto, Karin Wikoff.

1. Review and approval of previous meeting notes.

2. Reports from Subcommittees:

A. Survey 2 (Maria Bachich): Ralph has asked Maria to take the helm as chair of the committee. She reported on the group's progress to date. They had put together a new version of the old survey, with some more provocative questions based on concerns which came from the first survey. Discussion ensued. The main focus of the discussion was the issue of the impact of large corporate agribusiness, as it came up in the comments from the first survey. One person said that that topic is the elephant in the room which no one mentions in open talk in public, but which needs to be addressed. The survey needs to have a question which addresses it, but it needs to be neutrally worded. We want to frame questions to draw out the issues, but we have to be cautious, as it will be an emotional topic.

Also discussed was the wording in the proposed intro to the draft new version of the survey, which said that without a plan, there is no legal precedence for making changes to existing laws, which is not true. The plan is a guiding document, but laws can be made without one, though it is very difficult to obtain grants without a comprehensive plan. The subcommittee will re-work the wording.

Another part of the discussion covered the fact that the first survey is closed and over. We may not have had as many responses as we had hoped, but Drake has crunched the numbers and it is done. Survey II needs to be a new set of questions which incorporate the big issues which came out of Survey I. The Survey II subcommittee will take our discussion into account as they re-work their draft. Finally, Drake is willing to work with the raw data again when we are ready, but will not be available for planning and on-going work on the survey.

Notes on this topic from the previous meeting read: Someone asked why we are doing a second survey, and was answered that we hope to reach more people and to focus more on the main issues which came out of the first survey as well as getting new ideas. We hope to use info from the first survey, along with info from the inventory group in terms of trends to give people something to which to react.

B. Inventory (Dave Stilwell): The Inventory group met with Steve Lynch and Geoff Milz of the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development on Friday 27 March 2009. Steve and Geoff shared some ideas of what kind of information they will have available for us, but could not give us a timeline as to when they can provide what information. Dan DalCais had some GIS maps from previous work, and we agreed that we would meet again to assemble and consolidate what information we already have, such as the maps, the previous plan, etc. We all agreed that we would read the Dryden plan as a potential model. We will use the results of the first survey to focus and prioritize our requests for further information.

We also discussed the possibility of the subcommittee going on some "field trips" to give us more first-hand experience and credibility. We need to think of our part as like gathering information for a research paper.

We might also consider a focus group for the Fours Corners in King Ferry.

C. Marketing (Susan Tosto): Ideas for presenting our work to the public included using a synopsis of the data we have gathered, and using focused survey questions. If we “chunk” the information according to the 5-6 areas identified in the first survey, provide some solid factual information, then solicit a response, this may be a more productive approach. Another idea was to run a “Did you know...?” column in the local paper as a sort of informational approach.

3. Jeannie Gleisner from the Central New York Regional Planning Department was our guest. She is currently working on plans (collating data and actually writing the plan) for 5 other communities, 3 in Cayuga County, including Scipio, where they were interested in counting both farms and cows. She won't be able to take on another community's plan for about another year. She advises us to keep gathering information, to try to find common ground between various constituencies in the community, making sure we get those things we ALL value written down and protect. She also advises us to do all we can to market our work and bring more people into the process. Some of her ideas included aligning meetings with a speaker on a topic of interest, coordinating scheduling, raising interest with articles in the newspaper and tying articles to events. She notes that a person has to see an ad 12 times before s/he really SEES the ad.

She also advises us to use the plans from other communities as a reference point, then look for things which are unique to our town, and to actively recruit young people in our community from high school and junior high.

The history portion of our plan should be well-researched and accurate. We should set an individual or a small group to working on this part of the plan, and someone mentioned that we should ask assistance from Marilyn Mann, as a local expert on our community history. Peggy volunteered to contact Marilyn for help.

Finally, Jeannie indicated that the plan should be revised in no more than 5-10 years; that it is hard for a Town Board to make good decisions without the guidance of a plan, and that it is not how fast that a plan comes together but rather how good it is that makes the important difference.

4. Wrap-up

A. Confirm Date/Time/Agenda of next meeting: Our next meeting will be Friday, 1 May 2009 at 7 PM at the Town Hall.

B. Action items: Who is doing what by when

- Karin will type up notes and distribute them via e-mail.
- Karin will send a copy of the County Planning Committee's PowerPoint Presentation to Dan Thayer, and will add him to the Inventory Subcommittee.
- Dave and Maria will have a conversation to coordinate the efforts of the Inventory and Survey II subcommittees.
- The Inventory Subcommittee will meet again to consolidate what info we have already and to decide what info to request from the County first, based on the top concerns which came out of Survey I.
- Peggy will talk to Marilyn Mann (history), to some folks in King Ferry about a Four Corners Focus Group, and to see if she can get in touch with some kids from the high school or junior high who might be interested in becoming involved in the planning

- process for their community.
- Everyone will read the Dryden Plan as a possible model from which to work. Karin Wikoff and Barb Patchen have copies.

Respectfully Submitted,
Karin Wikoff, Secretary