

Minutes

Copake Economic Development Advisory Committee
Thursday September 24, 2020, 4pm
via Zoom

Present: Tom Goldsworthy, Chair; Julie Cohen; Austin Urban; Kevin Davis; Rich Lee; Roberta Roll; Richard Wolf (Town Board Liaison)

Absent: Deb Cohen; Roberta Roll; Austin Urban.

The committee approved minutes from prior meetings.

1. Roe Jan School Re-use. The committee discussed the following:
 - A. Jeanne Mettler, Supervisor, has proposed a meeting between CEDAC members and others previously involved in seeking an adaptive re-use of the Roe Jan School. The meeting will be Wednesday, September 30 at 1PM via Zoom with Meredith Kane (an commercial real estate attorney with the law firm, Paul Weiss), Jack Alvarez (architect and historic preservation expert in Albany), and Todd Wolfarth (from Hillsdale).
 - B. Kevin Davis talked with Main St Hospitality Group, a hotel operator that manages 9 hotel properties in western Massachusetts and Rhode Island, including the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, MA. Main Street was familiar with the property and would like a tour, which Julie Cohen will arrange. Kevin will seek out their thoughts on the economic viability of renovating
 - C. the school for hotel use.
2. Copake Lake Parking Area. Tom Goldsworthy suggested we put together a conceptual design for what we might envision for this area to help guide discussions on its possible use. He will approach a landscape architect friend.
3. Copake Hamlet Retail. Tom Goldsworthy informed that the Copake Hamlet Revitalization Task Force discussed do something temporary for empty retail spaces in the Copake Hamlet, perhaps holiday pop-up gift store. Robert Roll will reach out to some contacts who might have an interest.
4. Sewer District Information. To gather background information about how a sewer district project might be done, Tom spoke with Augie Sena, former town board member in Hillsdale, who was responsible for organizing that Town's water treatment project. Highlights of the information learned were:
 - The project took 2-1/2 years to organize, including a construction period of 10 months.
 - A Sewer District would need to be created and approved by referendum with a 51% to get it formed.

- Residents within the Sewer District currently pay a monthly fee of \$65 while commercial properties pay more.
 - Overall cost of the project was \$1.6 to \$1.8 million. Initially funded by by state and federal grants with the bulk through bank financing, repaid by the issuance of long-term Municipal Bonds.
 - It is a hybrid system with each property having a separate septic tank, and liquids are pumped to a central leach field property run by the Sewer District. Tanks are pumped on a schedule to remove solids off-site.
 - About 50-70 homes and businesses are needed to make it economically feasible.
5. Housing. Tom will be having a conversation with representatives of Hillsdale's Housing Committee on Friday, October 2 to find out what they have learned and done about area housing.
 6. Survey. Rich Lee and Tom will work on the proposed Copake business survey to limit it to 10 questions that can be answered online. They will develop a master list of businesses to contact. An email solicitation, the Copake Connection newsletter, and social media will be used to reach business owners. Also a physical mailing will be done to businesses unable to be reached online.
 7. Copake Identity Exercise. Tom suggested this not as a public slogan, but as unifying working theme that helps guide CEDAC toward what works for Copake and what doesn't. Suggested was "Nature is our Nurture" or something similar that would emphasize the natural beauty and rural resources of Copake for business, recreation, agriculture and tourism.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 4PM via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Rich Lee