

Minutes

Copake Economic Development Advisory Committee
Thursday, November 12, 2020 at 4pm via Zoom

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

Minutes – The committee accepted the minutes of October 8, 2020.

Survey of Copake Business Owners – Tom reported that the survey is ready to be distributed within the next week. We have 99 contacts, 74 of whom have email addresses. Those without email address will receive a USPS letter. Before the survey is issued, a letter introducing the CEDAC will be sent out. The survey will be distributed thereafter.

Municipal Sewer District – Deb reported that the Copake Conservation Advisory Committee has also been discussing this topic. She suggested, and the committee agreed, that an information meeting be scheduled with at least two members of the CAC and two members of the CEDAC.

Landmarks/Historic Preservation – Tom noted that he feels a landmarks/historic preservation local law should be a priority interest for our committee because it is the best opportunity to save the Roe Jan School from demolition. In that regard, he reported that the Hamlet Committee had met with New York State Historic Preservation Office representatives Jennifer Betsworth and Linda Mackey who provided a review of the differences between, and relative merits of, State and National Historic Register listing versus the creation of a local law to establish a local historic preservation commission. Of note:

- Register-listed districts or properties (“assets”) are eligible for State (and some private) grant monies.
- Register listing is an “honorary designation” that calls attention to an asset but doesn’t protect the asset from demolition – a disadvantage.
- Register listing provides some tax benefits to incentivize an owner to opt for preservation, but it does not prevent asset loss.
- Register listing of private property requires an owner’s approval.
- The major advantage of a local historic landmark law is that it protects a designated asset. On the other hand, a local law requires a great deal more public buy-in.
- A property or district can be both register-listed and protected by local law.
- Kevin noted that the Roe Jan School would be an ideal first candidate for historic preservation under a local law.

Roe Jan School - Kevin reported that he, Julie and architect Jack Alvarez (a Roe Jan alumnus) had visited the school on Tuesday, November 10th. Jack took measurements of the classrooms in order to estimate how many hotel rooms could be built there. Kevin will share the information

with a hotel management company to get their input about the feasibility of a hotel project. Jack is also reviewing other possible uses.

Copake Lake Mini Park – Tom presented a preliminary inspiration package created pro bono by a design firm. Austin noted that it appeared that a lot of parking area would be lost. He also noted that the Copake Lake Conservation Society would prefer an area that invites quiet contemplation rather than an amenity that promotes any kind of additional boating use. Tom noted that the illustrated landscaping is intended to inhibit public docking and launching of boats. Tom also noted that the plan could use more pedestrian access and that any ultimate design would require DEC, County Department of Public Works, and Town Planning and Zoning Board approvals.

Solar Project – The committee discussed the economic impact of Hecate’s proposed utility scale solar power development and agreed that there was no apparent short or long term economic benefit for Copake.

Hamlet Road Project – The Copake Road Advisory Committee is providing local input to the Columbia County Highway Department on this project that will bring improvements to Church Street, Main Street and the two spurs of Route 7 that run north and south to Route 22. Among the planned improvements are new curbing, drainage, parking areas, sidewalks, streetlamps, re-routing of traffic patterns around the clock. The County Board of Supervisors has approved hiring Greenman Pedersen, Inc. (GPI), a huge public engineering firm, to advance the project.

Copake Hamlet Retail Pop-up Event – Roberta reported that the event has gotten bogged down, partly because the invited artisans do not have the required insurance. Roberta agreed to ask Kirk Kneller about one-day event insurance. The event had been proposed for the first or second weekend of December, but now is more likely to happen later in the winter.

The next meeting of the Committee will be Thursday, December 3, 2020 at 4PM via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Cohen