

Minutes

Copake Economic Development Advisory Committee
Thursday, April 22, 2021 at 4pm via Zoom

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

Excused: Rich Lee and Kevin Davis.

Minutes

The committee accepted the minutes of February 25, 2021 and March 25, 2021 as presented.

Real Estate Activity

Tom discussed a recent New York Times article describing pandemic migration during the past year. Several new businesses are underway in Copake as a result of this new migration:

- * Reid Kendall and his husband Jason Seiler are in contract to buy Johanna's Motel on Route 22 and have plans to renovate it and add a café or restaurant. They hope to close in two weeks.
- * There is interest in the Copake train depot at the southern end of Route 7. The prospective owners hope to make it into a vacation destination or some other type of public space.
- * There is strong interest from local businesses in renting the Copake Grange kitchen for commercial catering and baking operations.
- * Roberta noted that the former Dutch Treat restaurant has been purchased. The new owner plans a "dINETTE" with soft serve ice cream.
- * The Marina on Copake Lake has been purchased by investors who are Camp Pontiac owners. They plan to operate it as is, for the time being.

Richard asked the committee to consider the issue of cannabis legalization, particularly its impact on the community and potential to contribute to (or detract from) economic development in Copake.

Roe Jan School Update

- * Kevin had "a very productive conversation" with the owners of the Roe-Jan School. He reports that they affirmed their desire to sell the building and they would welcome CEDAC's help in identifying prospective buyers. In response to a question from Kevin, the owners said they would consider contributing the property in exchange for a partnership interest with hotel developers.

- Julie noted that the sale price has been reduced to \$2,250,000 from \$2,900,000, a substantial decrease.
- Tom reported on a conversation with Matthew White about preserving the school. In particular Matthew mentioned the success Victor Cornelius of Endeavor Municipal Development (EMD) has had as a grant writer for Hillsdale. Matthew suggested that Victor might be engaged privately to identify and pursue grant opportunities to preserve the property.
- Finally, Tom noted that he had taken Reid Kendall on a tour of the school. Reid has a background in hotel management and food and beverage operations and is interested in helping CEDAC explore the school's potential. As a result of that visit, Tom drafted a scoping document to begin to market the property on behalf of the owners. Tom will distribute the document to the committee for review, then present it to the Town Board.

Hamlet Road Project

Tom noted that Dean Knox, Columbia County Highway Superintendent, had died tragically from COVID-19. Nevertheless, it is expected that the Hamlet Road Project will move forward. Tom reminded the committee that parking in the “downtown” area is likely to be an issue. Discussion ensued regarding possible parking options.

Internet service

Deb reported that she is continuing efforts to find Federal funding for “last mile” high speed internet construction. She has had conversations with Congressman Delgado's staff who have provided her with a summary of possible funding opportunities. Deb shared that information with Rob Koester of Consolidated Communications. She continues to try to obtain an “as built” map from CCI showing exactly where they have already installed FTH, noting that it would be impossible to complete the build out if we do not know who already has access to fiber and who does not.

At this time, there was a power outage bringing the meeting to a premature conclusion.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Cohen
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