

**Joint Meeting**  
**Town of Union Planning Board/Town Of Union Town Board**  
Thursday, June 26, 2008

A special joint meeting of the Town of Union Planning Board and Town of Union Town Board was held on Thursday, June 26, 2008 at the Town of Union Office Building, 3111 East Main Street, Endwell, New York.

Planning Board Members Present: S. McLain, T. Crowley, A. Elwood, L. Miller, B. Seliga, R. Signorelli

Planning Board Members Absent: J. Rotella

Town Board Members Present: J. Bernardo, M. Arcangeli, N. LaBare, R. Sotak, T. Augustini

Town Board Members Absent: None

Others present: Paul Nelson; Planning Director, Marina Lane; Senior Planner, Alan Pope; Town Attorney

Mr. Nelson began the meeting by welcoming the Town Board. Supervisor Bernardo thanked Mr. Nelson, Ms. Lane, and the Planning Board for their diligence in preparing the draft Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Nelson summarized the preparation that had been done for the Plan as beginning with neighborhood meetings where issues were identified and laid out, distribution of surveys to test issues on a town-wide basis, demographic data gathering and analysis, completion of a preliminary draft of the plan with a meeting held for public comment, and an invitation to residents to a series of open house meetings to present the Plan. He stated that the next phase before forwarding it to the Town Board for consideration will be to prepare a final draft to be released for public comment, release of a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS), and the holding of a public hearing. He further explained that the Town Board would have to have a minimum of one public hearing before adopting it.

Mr. Nelson then did a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the important steps in developing the Plan. The presentation included in part:

- A general overview of the history, goals, and purposes of zoning and state requirements for Comprehensive Plans.
- Information about the survey that was distributed to residents early in the planning process with concerns that had been gathered at prior neighborhood meetings. The survey, which had a 40% response rate and margin of error of only 4%.
- A description of the inventory and analysis process for the plan, including issues such as:
  - Historic and Cultural Resources

- Population and Housing
- Land Use and Zoning
- Vacant Land Areas
- Water Resources
- Ecology
- Community Services
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Recreational Resources
- Economics
- A slide identifying survey results that had responses of “Strongly Agree” of at least 51% of respondents. Some of these major issues of concern were:
  - The Town/Villages should encourage high-quality mixed-use development of abandoned, vacant, or underutilized industrial or commercial sites (64%).
  - The Town/Villages should require that commercial/industrial development be compatible with the scale and character of surrounding areas and that design standards should be implemented to promote more attractive signage, landscaping, and building facades (58%).
  - When new regulations are adopted to improve the quality of development, business should be required to bring their properties into compliance within a specific amount of time (54%).
  - Governments should be required to maintain or improve public facilities to the same standards imposed on businesses (67%).
  - The appearance of the building, parking lots, landscaping, cleanliness of premises, etc. are factors in selecting where they buy goods or services (51%).
  - The Town/Villages should be proactive and aggressively ticket code violations rather than wait until a complaint is received about a specific property (53%).
  - Fines for code violations should increase for repeat offenders (69%).
  - The quality of neighborhoods and business districts would improve if code/zoning ordinances were strictly enforced (54%).
- Flood Zone Map
- Steep Slopes Map
- Topography Map
- Land Use Map
- Generalized Future Land Use Map
- Sanitary Sewer System Map
- Water Lines Map
- Map Showing Process of Suburbanization
- Maps Showing Functional Classification of Road Network

Mr. Nelson then asked the Boards for any questions or comments. They were as follow:

1. Mr. Bernardo questioned the process that would be followed if the Town Board wants to make changes to the Plan. Mr. Nelson replied that the

Town Board has the ultimate authority to make any changes and would work with the Planning Department to make those changes.

2. Mr. Bernardo asked for clarification to the wording in the Introduction to the Technical Background section where it discusses a number of recently developed areas where density and slope characteristics have not been kept in their proper relationship. Mr. Nelson said the exact wording may have been from the original study done in 1979; however the general issue is that development in areas with steep slopes has created storm water runoff complications as impervious surfaces such as rooftops and paved driveways were developed.
3. Mr. Bernardo asked Mr. Nelson to provide him with a printout of the Steep Slopes Map. Mr. Nelson explained that anything above a 15% grade can drive up site development costs significantly which is why development should be, as stated in the section, "discouraged."
4. Mr. Bernardo asked for clarification of the wording that "areas where land use does not adequately buffer its own undesirable characteristics from adversely affecting adjacent land uses." Mr. Nelson used an example where there was a neighborhood with a solid residential border and someone wanted to come in with outdoor storage of pipe, creating a conflict. Buffers might include landscaping, fencing, or perhaps a low berm with plantings on top. He explained that there needs to be a transition between land uses in order to buffer sound, light, noise, etc.
5. The Economic Development Policies section suggests to "disapprove extending commercial zoning unless there is a shortage of useable and affordable commercial space within the market area." Mr. Bernardo asked who makes that determination and questioned if the market should dictate this from an economic perspective. Mr. Nelson explained that the goal is to redevelop existing commercial areas such as Main Street that need upgrading rather than simply zoning new commercial areas. What may be in the best interest of a developer may not necessarily be best for residents of the town/neighborhood. The proposed Walgreen's on Hooper Road area was discussed at length as an example. Mr. Nelson stated that the Planning Board has been supportive of new commercial projects along Hooper Road where the impact on the existing road network was minimized because the developments did not require any new curb cuts. Mr. Bernardo felt "disapprove" was a strong word and should perhaps be softened (limited?). He stated that as a mission statement for the future of the Town the wording must be carefully prepared since development should not necessarily be discouraged.
6. Under Emergency Services it discusses exploring the feasibility of Endicott and Johnson City providing police services to the Town. Mr. Bernardo said he completely crossed out the statement and stated he would never support the idea. Mr. Nelson explained that results of the survey strongly suggested that it should be looked at.
7. In the Emergency Services section, Mr. Bernardo asked that the Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) organization be added. CERT is a well-respected emergency response training program

that the Town uses and should be included. Mr. Nelson said he believes it has already been added but that he would double-check.

8. Mr. Bernardo was concerned about the "Rural Residential" designation for the areas currently zoned Agricultural. He had received several negative comments about the term. Mr. Nelson explained that the future land use designation of Rural Residential is intended to identify the areas that cannot support high density development due to lack of water and sewer. Mr. Nelson said that in conversations with residents he learned that one fear is that it may bring a higher assessment. Ms. Lane added that the phrase can also be deceiving to people who move into the community not understanding that farms and farm animals are acceptable. Ms. Sotak said that in this area buyers have to sign something as part of their contract that they understand that farming is allowed. Ms. Lane asked Mr. Nelson if it might be clearer to use an Agricultural/Residential designation and not allow any duplexes. He responded that since the survey showed that residents felt that zoning should accurately reflect existing land use patterns that it should be Rural Residential because there are so few farms.
9. In the Union Center Neighborhood Plan there is a proposed action item that PUDs which have already been approved but not constructed should be rezoned to the underlying zoning category. Mr. Bernardo asked Mr. Nelson to identify some of these properties. Mr. Nelson mentioned six different properties that fall into this category. Right now they have no permitted uses and some do not even meet the required 10 acres needed under the current ordinance. He said that under new ordinances PUDs will be streamlined. Ms. Lane suggested putting an expiration date on a PUD, much like what is done with a sub-division.
10. In the North Endicott section, Mr. Bernardo asked for clarification to the wording that front doors on new units must be oriented toward the street. Members agreed it is important.
11. Mr. Bernardo asked about the Main Street business district. Mr. Nelson explained that the survey overwhelmingly indicated that people are making decisions on buying goods and services based on condition/appearance of businesses. Main Street has nothing cohesive that pulls it together, including signage. Enforcement and education is necessary in this area. Redevelopment needs to be encouraged.
12. Mr. Bernardo asked for an explanation to the suggestion to rezone the area north of the railroad tracks in South Endwell from Commercial Industrial to Medium Density Residential. Mr. Nelson explained that there are several single-family homes on small lots. It is the predominant existing land use for the area. Assembling small lots and demolishing the structures is extremely expensive. If a commercial business were to replace any homes it would create land use conflicts where they don't need to be. The current zoning also makes it difficult for existing and prospective homeowners to get mortgages since residential uses are not permitted by right under the current zoning.

13. Mr. Bernardo asked about the Hooper Road area. Ms. LaBare praised the Planning Board for the amount of time and energy put into looking at the best uses for the area. Mr. Bernardo questioned the language that no commercial zoning changes be permitted along Hooper Road until such time as Broome County has completed the work program recommended by the study. He stated that it is too indefinite a statement as the time frame could be excessive.
14. Mr. Bernardo asked about the Watson Boulevard corridor from the Johnson City line to Hooper Road and the many changes that are anticipated for that area. He asked for clarification on the future land use for the corner of Watson Boulevard and Country Club Road. Mr. Nelson said it is Mixed Use/Residential-Office. Ms. Lane added that the properties had been rezoned to Residential Multifamily/Office two and a half years ago by the Town Board when Roger Steen had petitioned for it.
15. Ms. LaBare asked about the Town's plans/vision on architectural design, a land use tool that many communities are using now to create continuity and flow. Mr. Nelson said that it is a concept that could be incorporated into future development.
16. Mr. Crowley asked about the demographics of those who responded to the survey. Mr. Nelson said that 68% were homeowners.

Mr. Bernardo again thanked the Planning Board for the hard work done on preparing the Comprehensive Plan and thanked both Boards for their attendance at tonight's meeting. The meeting ended at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Foti