

Village of Hastings on Hudson  
Comprehensive Plan Committee

Draft Minutes of Meeting No. 13  
April 23, 2008 at 8:00 pm

Media room of the James Harmon Community Center, 44 Main Street

Present: Jim Metzger, Rebecca Strutton, Kathy Sullivan, Harry Thomas, Carolyn Summers, , Richard Bass, Bob Mayer, Ellen Hendrickx

Excused: Lynda Merchant, Betsy Imershein, Steve Corrigan

**8:00 Welcome /Roll call/ Acceptance of Minutes of April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

**8:05 Report**

**School Board Questions: Harry Thomas & Rebecca Strutton:** The tentative meeting with the School Board is scheduled for 5/19/08 at 8 PM. Kathy will let us know where in the school the meeting will be held. Harry and Rebecca prepared some questions for review, to be presented to the Board of Education (BOE) in advance. Harry will e-mail the draft questions to the members of the CPC for comment and additions.

Harry noted that there is a great deal of overlap between the schools and the Village. He stated that the School Board and Village have separate budgets. The School Board has three (3) times the budget of the Village.

He expressed the opinion that January's Community Budget Forum, and the work done by the BOE as a result was quite extensive as noted in the mailer "Your Schools" and on the BOE website., leaving very little to question. Kathy mentioned that she'd had a recent conversation with Eric Sweeting, President of the BOE. He advised her that the BOE has had a Strategic Plan in place for the last few years. Kathy expressed the opinion that it appears that it has broad goals and would like feedback on more specifics as to how it works. Rebecca suggested that we prioritize questions since the BOE can allocate a limited period of time to the CPC during its meeting.

Bob posed the question "What else besides housing development, and the potential for more families with children, affects the school district and how can the Comprehensive Plan impact the schools?" Carolyn responded that the recreational facilities and the overlapping use requirements and maintenance might be an issue, as well as the fact that they incorporate large tracts of land. It was also pointed out that transportation to and from school is a large issue, impacting traffic and parking. It also raises the issue of encouraging walking to school as an alternative. Richard noted that one of the things learned by the Hunter Studio is that while there has been more development since 1970, families are smaller and the school population hasn't grown as a result. He suggests that a better question might be "What is the capacity of the schools". He also suggested that in the Hunter survey, 65% of adults expressed the desire to retire in Hastings. A larger elder population could potentially affect the number of students and

might also create a segment of the population that could not and would not afford escalating school taxes. The CPC should therefore look at trends carefully.

Ellen took the opportunity to clarify remarks made last week in which she expressed the need for clarity as to how the information gathered during visioning sessions will be used by the CPC in the development to the Comprehensive Plan.

**Hunter Update Richard Bass:** The students' survey has received 370 to 400 responses. They are now collating the results. The responses represent roughly 40% of the recipients of the Village e-mail, and 4% of the population. Distribution was mostly via the Village e-mail, though some groups such as the Little League filled them out as a group. Richard noted that the responses and comments were very enlightening. He was very encouraged that the survey has started the community thinking about, and engaging with the Comprehensive Plan process. Kathy suggested that the CPC get copies and review. The students are hard at work preparing for their presentation on May 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM at the Community Center in Hastings. The presentation will be a half hour with an additional Q & A session and refreshments. Kathy stated that there will be a CPC announcement about the meeting in upcoming Village e-mail.

**RFP for Planning Consultant: Richard Bass and Ellen Hendrickx** prepared a proposed outline for the RFP, using several RFP's from other communities as reference. Kathy noted that we can use data already compiled by the county ie: maps and GIS' as one way to expedite the process and reduce the amount of time a consultant would have to spend. She also suggested that the CPC consider submitting the RFP to consultants outside the immediate area, in order to get a fresh perspective. She mentioned that Village Manager, Fran Froebel had used a consultant from the West Coast in developing the Comp. Plan for his former Village in Rhode Island and it was quite successful. Ellen mentioned that in an effort to economize and to expedite, the Greenburgh Comp. Plan Committee has begun cleaning up it's Zoning Codes ie: clearing up duplications, making note of outdated statutes, etc. even though they are still in the process of writing their Plan.

**Budget Update: Jim Metzger:** Jim attended the most recent B.O.T. meeting on Tuesday. The Board approved a budget of \$50,000.00 in addition to the \$15, 000 Greenway Compact Grant for 2008-09. He noted that it will create a slight increase in taxes; however the Board unanimously agreed that the Comprehensive Plan is too important to shortchange. It was recommended that the CPC, along with other community volunteers, try to complete as much of the background work as possible so as to reduce the cost of the consultant and create a savings. Kathy volunteered to speak to John Dennehey for further.

### **8:30 Topics**

**Nature Conservancy Work Shop: Carolyn Summers** attended a workshop called "Rising Waters" which was enlightening both because of the procedures employed and for the information that came out of it. The procedure consisted of creating scenarios for the future; a process that in this case was intended to identify how the Hudson Valley would react and what steps it would take to address the results of climate change. It was pointed out that the effects are generally so gradual, most people won't pay attention. The scenarios successfully clarify what can and will happen, with the goal of getting people to start implementing changes earlier. Some of the data shared: since 1970, there has been a 1.4 degree increase in temperature nationwide. New York State has experienced a 2

degree increase. The temperatures during the winter have increased by 5 degrees. It is important to note that our infrastructure isn't set up to accommodate the results of climate change. Another finding is that by 2100, most conservative estimates predict a 3 foot rise in sea level. However, changes are proving to be happening faster than predicted. Carolyn suggests that the Comprehensive Plan address adaptation scenarios in order to anticipate and prepare for the effects these changes will have on Hastings' infrastructure. Michele Hertz who attended the workshop as well, will continue with the rest of the series and will update the CPC.

In a relevant discussion, Hastings' budget increase was in part precipitated by the sharp increase in energy costs. H-o-H recently had an Energy Assessment and was found to rate well in conserving energy. The Comprehensive Plan might steer the Village into additional ways to conserve energy.

**Large Tract Study:** At Harry Thomas' suggestion, the CPC reviewed the Draft Large Tract Study completed in March 2004 and revised in January 2006. Carolyn Summers was on the subcommittee of the Planning Board which prepared it. It evolved from the Vision Plan. The focus at the time was more specific to the area North of the Central Business District and South, near the Yonkers border. The intent was to maintain the greenspace located along the major roadways. It addresses potential cluster housing and setback options. It also identifies issues regarding steep slopes and wetlands with the idea that if legislation were created for each, zoning to reduce the number of housing units wouldn't have to change. Jim mentioned that the Zoning Board has been grappling with these issues for years. Rebecca questioned the definition of "cluster housing" and how taxes were assessed on this category of housing. Kathy pointed out that the Comprehensive Plan must take this and concerns for subdividing properties into account when recommending how to protect and make the best use of large tracts. It is important to be aware of the long reaching affects of any zoning. Richard recommended that there should be an impact analysis done.

Rebecca questioned what payment practices for properties such as Andrus in the 5013C zones are in place. This led to discussions of tax exempt properties ie: religious institutions, services for these areas (ie: fire department and police protection) and how these institutions contribute. Carolyn indicated that PILOTS (Payments in lieu of Taxes) were employed. Affordable housing is assessed in the same manner, according to Jim. Richard asked if there was an analysis of tax exempt properties. It was noted that the CPC should examine these issues.

**Tentative Small Meeting Schedule:** Kathy Sullivan indicated that she has arranged the following public meetings:

Hillside School Cafeteria	Tuesday, May 6, 2008 @ 7:30 PM
Library Orr Room	Thursday, May 8, 2008 @ 7:30
Community Center	Saturday, May 17, 2008 @ 9 or 10:00 AM – 1 or 2:00 PM

She has spoken to Ray Gomes about setting up a booth for Spring Fling on June 1, 2008. Additionally she will be speaking to Jenny Murphy to set up dates for a presentation to Seniors. She is also arranging to use of the Union Town Fire Station. Lynda Merchant will make arrangements at the High School.

Five people, including Lynda have offered their homes for small private home presentations. They have yet to be scheduled.

Ellen mentioned that she'd been approached by some residents with concerns that the large visioning meeting scheduled for June 18<sup>th</sup> may not get the hoped for participants because it is so close to the end of the school year. Kathy pointed out that the summer would be an ideal time for the CPC to digest the results of that meeting, along with the smaller meetings, the Hunter Studio report and enable the drafting of the RFP. It was decided that waiting would slow down the momentum, along with the fact that we will have another visioning meeting in the fall for those who can't attend in June. One suggestion was that we have sign up sheets so that the CPC can gauge the number of attendees to expect. We also discussed ways to advertise besides the website. Suggestions included posters, a banner at 5 Corners. Kathy will consult John Dennehey for ideas. Kathy will confirm all dates via e-mail.

**Process Discussion:** Kathy has been made aware that some members of the committee are interested in holding part of our meetings off camera to discuss process. Kathy noted that she had done some research into the Open Meetings laws of NYS which seem to dictate that in addition to issuing notices of meetings open to the public, that there are specific reasons when meetings can be non-public and discussion of process is not one. The issue how to choose to broadcast or not broadcast meetings when precedent for broadcast is established is not clearly outlined. She asked that the committee investigate this. Richard suggested that the committee speak to the village attorney to clarify. Jim and Ellen volunteered to speak to the Village Attorney for clarification. Depending on the clarification, Bob suggested that the first five minutes of the next meeting be off camera so that we can have the discussion about process when more members of the committee are present. It was agreed to by a majority.

**9:20 Public Comment:** There was no public comment this evening.

10:00 PM Adjourn

Next Meeting April 23rd, 2008 8:00 pm

#### Action Points

- Harry and will e-mail the list of questions for the BOE for review and comment.
- Ellen will e-mail the RFP outline for review and comment so that they can further develop the RFP.
- Kathy will finalize information meetings – locations and dates.

Comprehensive Plan Committee Broadcast Schedule for WHOH-TV Channel 75

Saturday and Sundays at 10 AM and 8 PM

<http://Whoh-tv.org>

