

# May 7, 2009 Comp Plan Committee-Planning Board

## Joint Meeting

Suzanne Bressler, PB Secretary, will produce the official meeting minutes, but here are my notes. Those of you who were there on Thursday, please review for content and tone.

1. Mr. Bassin asked each PB member to discuss Comp Pan issues from the perspective of the PB, not from a personal perspective.
2. Mr. MacLean noted that the Comp Plan would require more work by the PB, as it would have expanded site plan review standards, design standards and responsibility for special use permits
3. Ms. Israel noted that the Plan offered more flexibility, especially in lot sizes.
4. Mr. Boyles asked about the 1/2 acre lots -- Mr. Bassin responded the Comp Plan Committee was inclined to leave them in, as some parcels would be able to take advantage of them subject to county board of health approval of septic and water.
5. Mr. Stickle noted that single-wide trailers were not permitted in the hamlets in the 1 acre zone. Mr. Bassin commented that the Comp Plan treated mobile homes like any other single family houses.
6. Mr. Stickle asked about permitting one subdivision for parcels under 3.5 acres. Mr. Bassin noted that the CPC had discussed this but concluded that allowing accessory apartments in homes, garages and barns would be a less expensive way to meet this need, but indicated that if there were a future demand for more small lots, the town could revisit this during one of the annual zoning reviews.
7. Mr. Sigler noted that "open space" was highly valued today, but there was no way to tell what value people would place on open space in 50 years. Mr. Bassin noted that the town could change its' open space laws any time it became clear that the community no longer valued open space and wanted something else.
8. Mr. Stickle asked Mr. Miller how Harold Miller liked the Plan. Mr. Miller said Harold likes it -- especially the smaller more flexible lot sizes and the efforts to protect open space and agricultural land.
9. Mr. Bassin asked what this "business verses agriculture" issue was all about, noting that agriculture was a business like anything else. Mr. Sigler noted that there seemed to be too may prohibitions against non-agricultural businesses in the Plan which seemed unnecessary. Mr. Boyles commented that the "floating zone" seemed to be a good idea, and suggested that businesses qualifying for the floating zone could be anywhere in town. There was concern that only "ag-related" businesses would be allowed in the ag zone. Mr. Bassin noted that ag related could be a very broad definition, and in some sense, most businesses could contribute to supporting agriculture and be sited in the ag zone, or could qualify as a "home based business" and qualify in the ag zone. Mr. MacLean suggested the floating zone be made more specific, and pointed out that the FZ gave people the flexibility to do what is not envisioned in zoning.
10. Mr. Sigler suggested the Comp Plan had to be less specific, not more specific, because the more specific the Plan was the more chance some lawyer in the future could find a way to get around zoning by claiming the zoning did not conform to the Comp Plan. Mr. Bassin suggested that it was more likely to work the other way -- that if the Plan was vague and not specific, a

lawyer could claim whatever the zoning says was not intended by the Comp Plan and was therefore invalid.

11. Mr. Chase pointed out that the Comp Plan provided for annual zoning reviews and 5 year Plan reviews and revisions, so the zoning laws and the Plan could be kept relatively current and responsive to the community's needs. Mr. Sigler suggested it was not likely the town would mess with zoning or the Comp Plan too often, as it was a complex thing to do.

12. Mr. Stickle noted that any business should be allowed in town, and there should be few rules prohibiting any business or how it operates. Mr. MacLean suggested we needed rules to protect the community and maintain property values for everyone's benefit. Ms. Israel asked Mr. Stickle if he believed in planning...Mr. Stickle replied that in a small town he thought it could be too restrictive if we were not careful. Mr. Boyles noted that Mike Hoosier was having trouble with the building department as he has been trying to expand his machinery repair business. Mr. MacLean noted that Mr. Hoosier's problems may date back to his having failed to get building permits for prior construction.

13. Ms. Purinton commented that the "property rights" argument against any "rules" was all about self interest and personal concern, while the Comp Plan process was about defining and protecting the community interest and maintaining the spirit of the community. Ms. Purinton noted that the Comp Plan was an intelligent, flexible document which did an amazing job of balancing the protection of the environment, water, stream side buffers, vernal pools, agriculture and open space with providing for affordable housing, residential development and businesses. Ms. Purinton commented that she supported the need for design standards, lighting standards, control of logging to prevent erosion and stream side buffers. She also noted that excluding golf courses from open space made sense because golf courses did not support anything environmentally, and were artificial environments.

14. Ms. Bressler noted that the Plan was a long term process and it would get better as we worked on it over time as long as we focus on doing what was good for the community as a whole.

15. Mr. Miller noted that we were just half way through the process and still had the zoning revisions to complete to put the Comp Plan into action.

16. Mr. Clark suggested we shoot for significant improvement, not for perfection, and that the more detail we could put into the Plan the better off we would be, the more clear our "guidance" to the ZRC would be. In addition, Mr. Clark suggested more detail in the Plan would result in less ambiguity and fewer legal complications in the future. Mr. Clark noted we had pretty clear guidance from the Community on the vision and goals, and we should stay true to the community's guidance, especially in the area of limiting businesses to those of a size and scale consistent with our rural character.