

LAND PRESERVATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

JANUARY 23, 2006 – 2:00 P.M.

Present: Chairman Peck; Supervisors A. Johnson, and Sausville; Tom Lewis, David Miller, At-Large; Spencer Hellwig, Mgmt. Analyst; Larry Benton, Jamie O’Neil, Planning Department; Stan Weeks, Greenfield; Susan Sutch, Galway; Jennifer Viggiani, Open Space Coordinator, Clifton Park; Heather Mallozzi, Malta; Sarah Clarkin, Wilton Wildlife Preserve; Pieter Litchfield, Wilton Open Space Committee; John Behan, Melissa Barry, Behan Planning Associates; Press.

Chairman Peck called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

Mr. Behan gave a brief overview of the Green Infrastructure Plan for Saratoga County as follows: There has been good turnout at the public workshops providing a lot of input. One of the goals is to create a vision of what is a green infrastructure for the county. Mr. Behan said he was very pleased with the process and product to date. The project has gone from not having any real clarity as to what the vision is, to shaping up some ideas. The ideas presented today have been drawn from the big ideas of various local plans, as well as, ideas from the public.

Ms. Barry gave a brief overview of the concept maps for Natural Systems, Trails & Recreation and Working Landscapes.

Natural Landscapes

The vision for natural systems is an interconnected web of functioning natural systems sufficient to enhance and preserve clean water, clean air and healthy living environments for flora and fauna for current and ongoing generations.

The following goals were sited:

1. Conserve and enhance a diverse system of natural communities, wildlife habitats, and natural heritage.
 - A. Support the Protection of existing nature preserves in the county and support their expansion where feasible.
 - B. Support the recovery and long-term protection of rare, threatened, endangered and other unique species and natural communities, including research, management, education, and other efforts to protect and restore critical habitat.
 - C. Protect a system of interconnected wildlife “hubs”.

- D. Provide for wildlife connectivity.
 - E. Secure permanent protection of large unprotected areas of natural communities.
2. Protect Unique Natural Habitats and geological features of the county.
 3. Protect our waters.
 - A. Continue to recognize the importance of drinking water in Saratoga County.
 - B. Maintain or enhance the function of the county's waterbodies, rivers, streams, springs, and wetlands as natural communities/habitat areas.
 - C. Recognize and collaborate to continue to conserve the important natural aspects of the major surface waters in the county.

Trails and Recreation

The vision for trails and recreation is an interconnected greenway, park and trail system that provides diverse opportunities for recreation, enjoyment, health, economic development, heritage tourism, and alternative transportation and meets the needs of the County's growing population.

The following goals were sited:

1. Create an interconnected regional trail system.
2. Create Blueway Systems along major river corridors in the county. Provide access to water for multiple uses.
3. Help local communities establish new parks or preserves to fill the needs of the population and expand upon existing parks where possible.

Working Landscapes

The vision for working landscapes is to maintain a productive core of working agricultural and forestry lands that provide substantial benefits to Saratoga County's economy and communities.

The following goals were sited:

1. Maintain large blocks or tracts of land adequate to support the viability of the agricultural and forestry industries in Saratoga County.
2. Encourage a supportive business environment in Saratoga County for the continued economic viability of farming and forestry enterprises.

3. Support continued growth of the agricultural and forestry industries and build connections between these economic sectors and other components of Saratoga County's economy.
4. Maintain the scenic and other unique qualities of the working landscape that supports the quality of life for residents in Saratoga County and attract tourist to the region.
5. Encourage positive connections between farm and forestry businesses and county residents and tourists.

Mr. Behan said a part of the Green Infrastructure plan is to recognize the different resources and to find ways to secure the land. Saratoga County is home to a diverse farm community that grows dairy, livestock, fruit, vegetable and horticultural products. Horse farms are also a growing element in Saratoga County – supporting local horse racing and the region's tourism industry. The county is also an important link to the large-scale northern forests and forestry industry of the Adirondacks and the Northeast.

Mr. Peck said the county is at a critical time and juncture for this plan to go forward and for the process to begin. There is a reason why companies from outside the area and state are coming to Saratoga County, because the quality of life is so good. It is important to continue to inspire the development of the plan through the quality of life issues.

Mr. Behan gave a brief overview of the Vision, Goals and Strategies for Historic, Cultural and Scenic Resources as follows:

The vision for historic, cultural and scenic resources is to preserve and celebrate, for future generations, the rich diversity of cultural heritage and visual character of the County through a network of significant historic sites, cultural landscapes and scenic corridors.

The goals for historic, cultural and scenic resources is as follows:

1. Protect historic buildings, sites and landscapes from demolition or loss by neglect or development pressure.
2. Promote the adaptive re-use and rehabilitation of historic buildings and structures.
3. Identify and protect archeological sites.
4. Link historic and cultural resource areas through a countywide heritage trail system.
5. Preserve significant scenic qualities of regional working landscapes.
6. Develop a countywide program for Heritage Tourism.

7. Provide guidelines for development that incorporate and/or preserve historic/cultural/scenic resources.
8. Promote the creation of partnerships and collaborative efforts in the protection and preservation of historic and cultural resources.

Ms. Barry encouraged additional comments through either e-mail or telephone. There will be a county planning conference held on Wednesday, January 25th, at the Saratoga Hotel and Conference Center. A public outreach series will be held the Spring. She encouraged all local representatives to submit their comments on the materials and attend the meetings. It is projected that the draft plan will be completed by April, with a final plan in place by late summer or early fall.

Mr. Sausville suggested the committee develop a clear, achievable priority to better lobby for funding.

The next meeting is scheduled for, Monday, February 27th at 2:00 p.m. at the Board of Supervisors Committee Room.

On a motion made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Miller the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Sansom