

RED HOOK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES –April 26, 2007
Red Hook Town Hall – 7:30 P.M.

The Meeting was convened at 7:30 P.M.

Committee Members in Attendance: R Burnswick, W. Cordier, B. Mitchell, D. Moat, L. Page, K, Zulch and H. Ramsey representing the Town Board.

Members of the community in attendance: Jeff Ackerly, Robert McKeon, Susan Simon, Kathy Stewart, and, by video, *Citizens For A Concerned Red Hook*.

The Minutes of the March 22 meeting, having been previously distributed were approved.

On May 9th, the Inter-Municipal Task Force (“IMTF”) will hold the fourth of its community meetings. At this meeting it will continue to inform the community of its proposals for protecting open space and controlling future growth. In anticipation of the meeting, the EDC was asked to listen to a presentation by John Clarke of the Dutchess County Planning Department of the planning concepts to be recommended. Accordingly, the meeting was given over to Mr. Clarke.

Mr. Clark opened his presentation by indicating that he had been asked to review the opportunities and make recommendations for the expansion of our residential and retail/commercial base in such a way as to preserve a substantial portion of our farmland and open space.

The site plans presented followed respected and desirable concepts that would be based on traditional neighborhood development within multi-use “circles” that could be expected to minimize vehicular traffic, encourage pedestrian traffic and be supportive of our existing retail/commercial establishments. Furthermore it was believed that by designating the growth areas, establishing predetermined standards for development and construction that development could proceed more quickly, more efficiently and at less cost.

At this stage, the plan envisioned the development of three discrete areas: south of the Village of Red Hook, north of the Village of Red Hook and in the eastern section of the Village of Tivoli. The planned area south of the village envisioned 400 units and in the range of 200,000 to 400,000 square feet of commercial/retail space. The northern area would be entirely within the village boundaries, contemplated 216 units and would save 70% of the existing Cookingham farmland.

A critical aspect of the plan was that the developer(s), in addition to providing the usual infrastructure, would finance, in whole or part, the development of a sewer system for the Red Hook Village business district. This would have the desired benefit of facilitating expansion of this commercial area.

The general consensus of the meeting was that planning for growth was a necessary and important step and the Board and the IMTF were to be complimented for the steps being taken. Additionally, the proposed site plans were deemed attractive and those listening to Mr. Clark expressed support for the underlying concepts. Nonetheless, numerous critical questions arose. Without attempting to be all inclusive, these included:

- Is there really a demand for this many units concentrated in village-scale lots and housing types, especially, as was pointed out by Ms. Stewart, that there are so many proposals before the planning board?
- There appeared to be insufficient consideration given to such important amenities as parks, recreation and “open space” within the “circles” of concentrated development.
- While the increased retail/commercial space is extremely desirable it seems insufficient to begin to achieve a more realistic balance between the residential and commercial tax bases.
- If such extensive build-out is to be carried out over an extended period, is it realistic to expect the developer(s) to provide much support for the building of sewers into the village business area? Given that this aspect of the plan is a “must” if we are to enhance and expand our existing retail/commercial base in the Village where will the funds come from if it cannot be incorporated in the developer’s plans?
- As one motivation for this planning was the preservation of farmland and open space the extent of this objective was questioned. Mr. McKeon indicated that to express it in simple terms he believed that a desirable objective should be 1/3rd of our acreage would be in the Villages, 1/3rd would be used to support the planned expansion of our residential/retail/commercial base and the remaining 1/3rd would be preserved for Agriculture and open space.
- While the issue of incentives for maintaining farmland and open space were mentioned briefly, they were identified as the subject of Peter Fairweather’s feasibility study.

In conclusion, the Committee could be said to be impressed with the work done but had many open questions that would have to await a presentation of the more complete proposal May 9th.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

**THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE IS SCHEDULED
FOR MAY 24 AT 7:30**