

**Dutchess County Planning Board
MINUTES – April 12, 2023**

Present

Dale Culver
Phil DeRosa
Edith Greenwood
Hans Klingzahn
J. Patrick Lambert (*via Teams*)
Ken Migliorelli
Jim Nelson
Chris Pantano
Jill Way

Absent

Randall Williams
Rick Wilhelm

Ed Hauser, *County Legislative Liaison*
Linda Fakhoury, *County Attorney Liaison*
Chris Baiano, *County Executive Liaison*
Christie Bonomo-Gose, *Staff*
Jen Coccozza, *Staff*
Mark Debal, *Staff*
Heather LaVarnway, *Staff*
Devin Rigolino, *Staff*
Charonique Roberts, *Staff*
Dylan Tuttle, *Staff*
Eoin Wrafter, *Staff*

Hans Klingzahn called the meeting to order, and a roll call was taken.

Approve Minutes from February 8, 2023 Meeting

A motion to approve the minutes from February 8, 2023, without changes was made by Edie Greenwood and seconded by Dale Culver.

With no nays, the motion passed and the minutes were adopted.

Planning Department Project Updates:

Staff members from the Department of Planning and Development briefly presented the following updates to the Planning Board:

Christie Bonomo-Gose, Community Development Administrator, shared an overview of the Community Investment program. Through the program, several federal and county grants that address community needs and priorities are administered. The HOME Investment grant program is available to developers for the creation and preservation of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families in the County. The Community Development Block Grant program provides funds to municipal and non-profit organizations for projects and programs that primarily benefit low- and moderate-income populations. The Municipal Investment Grant program funds

entities with taxing authority and that address community priorities, which are reviewed annually. Lastly, the Agency Partner Grant (APG) and APG-Infrastructure programs are available to non-profit agencies which fulfill unmet community needs.

Dylan Tuttle, Planner, discussed the highlights of the draft 2022 For-Sale Housing Report. The report showed that, overall, housing sales have decreased from 2021. The City of Beacon saw the steepest decline; sales went down by about 50% and the median price of homes in Beacon also declined. The median price of homes in the County increased by about 5%. The number of homes for under \$300k, which might be obtainable for a first-time homebuyer or a moderate-income household, is the lowest that it has been in recent history. The current median price of a home in Dutchess County is \$400k. The construction of owner-occupied units has also declined, which could be due to several factors including increases in the costs of land and materials.

Heather LaVarnway, Senior Planner, shared an overview of the 2022 Rental Housing Survey, which presents data on market-rate, tax credit, and subsidized complexes with twenty or more units. The report is still in draft form, but it has shown that the vacancy rate for the County has increased to 2.1%, which is similar to rates we saw pre-COVID. Overall, market-rate rents have increased by at least 9% across all unit sizes. The number of units constructed in 2022 decreased compared to 2020 and 2021. However, there are over 1,200 proposed units that may be built in the next few years. Chris Pantano asked about the average rent for apartments in the County. Heather responded that the average market rate is \$1,656 for a one-bedroom unit and \$1,995 for a two-bedroom unit. Chris also asked if there is a maximum amount by which rent can be raised. Heather answered that there is no rule for market-rate units. The rents for tax credit units have compliance requirements so they don't increase as sharply.

Heather also provided an update on the Housing Trust Fund, which was created after the Housing Needs Assessment was completed last spring. The Housing Trust Fund is a funding source which provides funding for three different programs, the first of which is Housing Creation and Preservation (HCP), which helps build more affordable rental units. The first application round for HCP was in Fall 2022. Up to \$9M in Federal ARP money was made available. Six applications were awarded and the information for them was shared with the Planning Board. Three projects are in the city of Poughkeepsie, one is in the Town of Poughkeepsie, one is in the Town of Wappinger, and one is in the city of Beacon. All of the projects, which are at various stages of development, are for the construction of affordable rental housing and the rents will range from 30% to 80% of Area Median Income (AMI).

Devin Rigolino, Senior GIS Project Coordinator, updated the Board on several projects, starting with Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Task Force. This State program supports municipalities that pursue clean energy and carbon-reducing projects. In 2018, Dutchess County formed a CSC Task Force, applied, and was awarded Bronze certification. Next summer, the County will apply for Silver certification and will pursue realistic goals and actions to reach that goal. There are a variety of actions that could earn points, such as having a green fleet, installing solar arrays, in addition to outreach and training opportunities. Chris Pantano asked what the County gets for becoming a certified CSC, whether Bronze or Silver. Devin responded that along with the certification, the County would receive grants which can be used for new projects or to reimburse the County for eligible projects that have already been completed.

Devin also explained that the County is pursuing a Climate Action Planning Institute (CAPI) project, which is funded by a grant from the DEC. Nine municipalities have partnered with the County to create a greenhouse gas emissions inventory, which is the first phase of the project. The data from that can be used to create a Climate Action Plan, which will describe what the County can do to pursue clean energy projects in the future. The CAPI project will also help the County earn points toward Silver certification.

Lastly, Devin presented an update on the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI). The NRI is a catalog of all the natural resources within the County. The last time the NRI was completed was in 2010 and some of the data is still relevant. The main update will be in the format. It will be presented as a series of webpages with an environmental mapper and will be more interactive, engaging, and accessible. Devin shared a mock-up of what the new NRI homepage would look like. Since the NRI will be in electronic format, it can be updated as often as the sources of information are updated. Completing the NRI will also contribute points toward our CSC application for Silver certification.

Mark DeBald, Transportation Program Administrator, explained that the Dutchess County Transportation Council (DCTC) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the County and that its primary function is to administer federal planning and project funds to meet local priorities. One federally funded project that is currently underway is a Vulnerability Assessment called Resilient Ways Forward. It will look at the impacts of climate change on our transportation system, including roads, bridges, sidewalks, bus routes, airports, etc. The consultant, ICF, is analyzing the climate data at the national, state, and local levels to help us understand what the climate change impacts are for us in the future. Some of the information will also feed into the NRI. One of the goals of the assessment is to create a product that is usable for state, county, and local agencies. As such, it will be oriented towards highway superintendents so they can use the data to build resiliency into their systems. It will be presented electronically, and Mark shared a screenshot of what the website will look like.

Mark also briefly discussed three current planning tasks that are underway with the on-call planning consultants, Creighton Manning and HVEA. They are working on a pedestrian plan for Dover Plains, including the improvement of two intersections. The second project is a sidewalk feasibility study on Spackenkill Road in the Town of Poughkeepsie and various concepts for the sidewalks. Lastly, the Columbus Drive weave in the City of Poughkeepsie is being analyzed to see what can be done to make it safer for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.

Partnership for Manageable Growth (PMG) Updates:

Eoin Wrafter explained that one of the aspects of the PMG is the preservation of farmland. Agricultural districts in the county must be reviewed every eight years and the process for the review will begin imminently. All parcels in the agricultural districts will be reviewed for inclusion, modification, and/or removal. To be included, the land must be agriculturally viable or a buffer to a property that will help to preserve the agricultural land. It differs from the annual process in that the annual process is for inclusions only. It must be adopted by the DC Legislature and approved by the NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets. The review is conducted by the Agricultural Farmland Protection Board, but the process is administered by the Planning Dept. with assistance from Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County and the Soil and Water Conservation District. The parcels will

be reviewed and owners of other eligible properties that could be added will be notified. There is also an enrollment period of May 1 through May 30 for parcels that would like to apply for inclusion in an agricultural district. In total, approximately 5,000 parcels will need to be reviewed.

Eoin also described the upcoming Schatz Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) study. It is a state-funded program to investigate previously contaminated sites. Eoin shared a map of the BOA and explained that the goal is to bring the site to its best possible use. Community outreach will be done to get ideas to enhance the development. The site is also immediately adjacent to the Northside Trail that is currently under construction so it will be able to connect to job opportunities in the City of Poughkeepsie and Hudson Heritage, but also to Marist College, the Poughkeepsie waterfront, the DC rail trail, and Walkway over the Hudson. It will be mostly affordable housing with mixed-use retail space included. There are many stages, beginning with outreach, which will result in a nomination study to the NYS Dept. of State to become identified as an approved BOA. After that, further action can be taken, and additional funding opportunities will become available.

Lastly, Eoin shared that there will not be a PMG application round this year, but the public hearing for the Bennett Park project was held it will be sent to the Legislature soon. Hopefully, that will close in the next three to four months. We also hope that at least two more projects will close this year.

Correspondence

The members of the Planning Board did not receive any correspondence.

Adjournment

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on September 13, 2023.

Dale Culver made a motion to adjourn; Ken Migliorelli seconded, the motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Charonique Roberts