

III. Training – Discussion with Darren Richards, Code Officer, Towns of Colton and Pierrepont

Larson introduced Richards and noted that the impetus for the discussion tonight was a conversation with the Executive Committee on how land use regulations are actually enforced at the local level. The thought was that better communication between the CPB and local municipalities may help with implementation. Richards started with an introduction of himself. He has been a Code Officer for 12 years in Colton and 2 years in Pierrepont. Most recently Colton has moved to an on-line code presence with General Code. Richards identified the various roles that he plays, which have helped him prepare grant applications and local laws. The work is varied by season, with the winter being slower and the summer more busy. Most violations are with property maintenance. Many municipalities do not have full time code officers, which is what is needed to ensure rules are followed. Code Officers are careful not to get too involved with property value challenges as that is the role and responsibility of the assessor. Well written codes are critical for proper administration. Road right-of-ways and setbacks were discussed and how important it is to ensure adequate setbacks are met. It was noted that road right-of-ways are measured in rods, many being 3 rods (49 feet, 6 inches). Lot size should be driven by the ability to adequately accommodate water and sewer and other infrastructure.

Richards stated that training is critical to ensure that code officers know what to do. He would encourage an iterative process and continuous communication between developers and the Code Officer. Code Officers need to be people persons and care about development. Municipalities need be willing to pay Code Officers more to ensure that they are more conscientious. The Board noted that Municipal Boards need to be as connected with the Code Officer and Planning Board as they are with the Assessor. Also, local Planning Boards should be paid, as volunteering is less common. Planning Boards also need to be valued more than they are now. Communication between neighbors is critical for neighborhood harmony. The Code Officer can broker discussions between neighbors. Richards gave an example of a dispute between a logging operation and a neighbor that was worked out with the Code Officer acting as a mediator. Richards suggested adding conditions to special use permits to address specific problems. Good land use regulations are driven by current trends. New regulations are coming into place to address tiny homes. He noted that municipalities should give more flexibility developing laws that allow for second residences on lots. Code language should be specific, ambiguous language is hard to enforce. Good definitions are also critical to good land use codes. Richards tries to move people toward conformity; not taking too hard of line initially will allow for the better relationship building and people will be willing to come to Code Officer first the next time. Richards suggested that the some towns feel that the County comes down to hard because they don't understand the process and sees the County Planning Board as an asset. He suggested that he has success because he will go and assess projects in person. He tries to move people to understand that there is only one neighborhood and it does not have to be us vs them, but rather us and them (not kayaks or ATVs but Kayaks and ATVs.).

Members of the Board thanked Darren for his presentation. The presentation satisfied 1.25 hours of the annual 4 hour training requirement.

IV. Project Reviews

- a. **Referrals Returned Pursuant to MOU.** Pfothenhauer summarized projects in the MOU list, and reviewed staff comments for projects listed in the addendum.
- b. **Full Reviews.**

Waddington (V): 47 Lot Subdivision, former Twin Brooks Golf Course. Pfothenhauer presented the Staff Report. Several concerns about the proposed subdivision were presented. A lengthy discussion ensued and the Board identified four conditions and two recommendations for the project. The conditions were: 1. all lots within the proposed subdivision shall be connected to the municipal sewer system; 2. the project be submitted to the State Department of Health for review; 3.a storm water pollution prevent plan (SWPPP) be prepared; 4. the northern access road be built to Village standards from its intersection with Franklin Rd. The two recommendations were: 1. the Village should consider requiring the applicant to have a percentage of open space accessible to all residents; 2.the Village should consider requiring the applicant to construct sidewalks and/or pedestrian/bike lanes along the subdivision streets. The Board voted unanimously to conditionally approve the subdivision (Gilbert/Shatraw).

Pfothenhauer brought up a use variance request for a reader board sign at the Canton VFW in the Village of Canton. The application is still incomplete, but may be presented at the February meeting.

V. Reports

- a. **Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee did meet. In attendance were K. O'Neil, J. Rose and Planning Office Staff. The topics discussed were the agenda and the work program for 2023.
- b. **Board of Legislators.** D. Fay reported:
 - The BOL held its organizational meeting was held on January 3, 2023.
- c. **Highway Department.** D. Chambers reported:
 - The Potsdam outpost is nearing completion with all outside work done.
 - The recycling transfer station in Ogdensburg in progressing as well.
 - Don will be attending a conference in Albany to discuss future CHPS funding.

d. **State of the County Roundtable.**

- An application from EDF for the Rich Road solar project is expected sometime early in the New Year.
- The Northside Solar project is currently off the table.

e. **Staff Report.**

- Pfothenhauer reported that finding Staff has been challenging and a candidate that was interested in the open position took a job in Oswego County instead. An additional vacancy will open up at the end of July with the retirement of Long time Staffer John Tenbusch.
- Staff has been appointed to the Ogdensburg Correctional Facility Repurposing Committee.
- Planning Board vacancies were also discussed and a request for names was made.

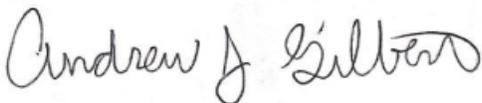
VI. Other Items

- a. **2023 Work Program.** Several Board members made comments on the draft Work Program. Three new topic areas were identified and will be added to the document. The additions were: County Land Use Plan Addendum topics (location and number of EV charging stations, tiny homes); Examine expansion of the State bottle redemption law; Affordable Housing needs and challenges. The 2023 Work Program was unanimously adopted (Rose/Gilbert)
- b. **Announcements.** Larson stated she will forward an announcement of January webinars sponsored by Cornell and Penn. State Universities.
- c. **Next meeting dates.**
- i. Executive Committee: Thursday, January 26, 2023 at 4:00 pm via Zoom.
 - ii. Planning Board: Thursday, February 9, 2023 at 7:00 pm in the 2nd floor conference room of the Public Safety Complex, located at 49 ½ Court Street in Canton.

VII. Adjourn

- a. The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m. (Gilbert/Bisonette).

Respectfully Submitted,



Andrew J. Gilbert, Secretary