

Town of Constantia

Meeting Minutes – July 7, 2023

The purpose of the meeting was an introduction to Zoning 101 from the Tug Hill Commission.

Attendees

- Frank Tomaino
- Tom Moran
- James Peck
- Joe Markham
- Martin Godzwon
- Dan Poné
- Sandra Williams
- Matt Johnson
- Terri John
- Paul Baxter
- Heidi Tompkins

Call to Order

Supervisor Tomaino called the meeting to order at 2:03pm.

Discussion

Supervisor Tomaino stated that he called the meeting to discuss the idea of Town wide zoning. It has been on the to do list for awhile and he feels that the time is right now firstly, because the Town currently has a full Planning Board with members willing to take up the massive endeavor. Secondly, because Micron is looming in the shadows and he feels that we need to take steps to maintain and protect the integrity and character that our waterfront community deserves. He asked the Tug Hill Commission to the meeting to begin to guide the Town in beginning this process.

Councilmember Moran, stated that the Town Board has voted on a resolution requesting that the Planning Board look into the feasibility of zoning for the Town.

Supervisor Tomaino asked Mr. Johnson what the steps are to creating a zoning plan.

Johnson- The only formal thing that needs to happen is that the Town needs to create a Zoning committee. Most Towns utilize their Planning Board for this process. You don't have to, you can create a committee of other people.

Tomaino- I would like to utilize a new committee with people not on the Planning Board already. Is there a specific number of people needed?

Johnson- No, but more than 10 tends not to work well. Town Board members are not permitted to be on the committee. I would recommend that the Town Board stay apprised on what is happening on the committee. As they will not want to create a law that the Town Board would reject. The Committee writes the draft law, holds a hearing on it, and then the town board votes on adopting it as a local law. The good news is that the Town already has LDL (Land Development Law) which does a lot of the things that Zoning does. Zoning does 3 things. Regulates the use of land, the density of development, and the placement of structures on lots. 2 of those things are already covered in the LDL. You kind of have 1 zone zoning law currently. A Town of this size, population, and diversity, this one size fits all law doesn't serve well any more. Process is to set up a

committee, do a resolution naming the committee. LDL already has lot size, parking, signs, solar regulations. New aspects would include what you want different zones to be, how many and where they would be located.

Tomaino- How many zones? West Monroe has 4. I would think you don't want to have too many?

Johnson-Correct, you would probably want 3 or 4. (Passed out a map from the Comprehensive Plan.) If you have zoning in NYS, it has to be in sync with the CP. This map gives an idea of what difference zones might be. You have Hamlet areas, waterfront, and everything else. A typical zoning map for a town like this would have hamlet zones, rural zones...

Tomaino- Does it have to be identified similar to a district?

Johnson- Yes. It can't just be circles, it needs to be defined. Hands out zoning maps of Vienna. Vienna has hamlet zones, waterfront, commercial, and multiple rural zones.

Areas of Constantia and Bernhards Bay hamlets mentioned, as well as Panther Lake as residential waterfront.

Johnson- It would be up to the committee to figure out where the zone boundaries would be. Zone boundaries tend to follow either parcel lines or specific distance from center lines of roads.

Tomaino- Would Tug Hill show up for every meeting or come as needed?

Johnson- We can show up for every meeting. We strongly recommend that you get help to do this.

Tomaino- What type of help? You guys or engineering firm?

Johnson- You can hire someone. We (Tug Hill Commission) can do it and it would be free.

Mr. Baxter -One of the advantages of working with Tug Hill is that we have worked with West Monroe, Vienna, and Amboy, your neighbors. You can be consistent with neighboring towns and much of the background research has largely been done.

Tomaino- Should we notify county planning that we are working on this?

Johnson- Yes, that's a good idea. They will need to approve the law. It would be a good idea to have county planning attend a meeting of the committee.

Can zones overlap?

Johnson- Yes you can have overlay zone.

Sewer, water, easements for utilities should help delineate where zones will be but need not be zones themselves.

Moran- Glad to see the inventory of existing businesses . Sees the big problem in Constantia, the highway corridor, residential area, and Lakefront are all in a very condensed area. It is concerning what businesses might come in to these residential neighborhoods.

Peck- This is one of the first challenges we will need to confront. In addition to our neighbors in West Monroe and Vienna, I looked at Cazenovia, Volney, Amboy, and Richland as possible examples. Oswego County planning has links to some of those zoning plans on their website. Grandfathering of existing uses into future zones where those uses would be prohibited will have to be carefully done. Existing Site Plans will be important to this process.

Tomaino- What do we need to know to get phase 1 underway?

Johnson- That about covers it. (Distributes another handout)

Peck- Videos on Tug Hill Commission currently has 3 videos on YouTube channel about zoning.

Peck- Next step is really to establish the members of the committee, correct?

Tomaino-Jim Do you want to be the Chair, of this committee? This is a big job.

Peck- Willing to be in for the long haul.

Mr. Peck praised Mr. Tomaino for committing to attending most of the public meetings that happen in town. Welcomes his attendance and finds it valuable for maintaining communication between Town Board and others.

Tomaino- Plans to attend the meetings even though not a voting member.

Baxter-Just because a person is not a voting member does not mean that they cannot give input at meetings. It's also beneficial to have members of the public come to the meetings and give input to the committee. The more public involvement through the process, tends to be a smoother end of the process.

Peck- Once the committee has been established. An announcement will be written and posted around town. Possibly an ad purchased. What types of people would you like to see on the committee?

Tomaino- A business owner. Either with a business in the town of a resident who owns a business elsewhere.

Moran- Do most of the zoning plans have to fill out a detailed SEQR?

Johnson- No, most of them are a negative declaration. When you do adopt the law you do need to complete a full EAF SEQR review. But I have never seen one that has resulted in a positive declaration and an environmental impact statement.

Lengthy discussion on who should be included as member on the committee and how it can be worded on the official resolution.

Adjournment

Supervisor Tomaino closed the meeting at 2:53pm.

Amy Connolly

Secretary

Town of Constantia Planning Board

Date of Approval