



Onondaga County
Planning Federation
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27th Annual Planning Symposium

March 5, 2015

SESSIONS

KEYNOTE Consensus Baseline Analysis: Who Does What and What It Costs

Kathy Murphy Pietrafesa, Board Chair, SYRACUSE 20/20

Hon. Mark Nicotra, Supervisor, Town of Salina

Hon. Mark Olson, Mayor, Village of Fayetteville

Consensus, the local government modernization commission, is helping to shape a vision for more effective and efficient governance across Onondaga County. Through the Commission's work, the community will take a leadership role in defining how it wants to be organized and governed locally – with public services that meet high quality standards at an affordable price. At this session, representatives of Consensus will discuss the recently released the baseline report outlining data that reveal government structure in Onondaga County including the number and types of local government, the costs associated with those governments, and the nature and extent of services delivered by various types of local governments.

A. Revising Zoning

Patricia Burke, Land Use Training Specialist, New York State Department of State

Kevin Gilligan, Esq., Partner, Costello, Cooney & Fearon, PLLC; Municipal Attorney

This course asks when it is appropriate to update a municipality's zoning regulations, and what you should be looking at when you review them; the importance of the comprehensive plan; and procedures for the amendment of zoning laws and ordinances, including referral to the county planning board, public hearings, and filing requirements.

Code Enforcement Officers may receive 1 hour of In-Service Credit.

B. The Wastewater System in Onondaga County

Tom Rhoads, Commissioner, Onondaga County Department of Water Environment Protection

This session will provide an overview of Onondaga County's Save the Rain program, including the Suburban Green Infrastructure Program (SGIP), and the sanitary sewer topics of common interest in the Onondaga County Consolidated Sanitary District. It will include a discussion of development and sanitary sewer infrastructure, highlighting issues associated with sewer pump stations, capacity issues at treatment plants and flow control assets. Additional topics will include how the Onondaga County Department of Water Environment Protection (WEP) is working with the Towns and Villages to avoid consent orders or regulatory moratoriums to new sewer connections that would halt all development and several of the cost effective options available to towns and villages to better preserve sewer capacity for economic development. The session will help planners understand the long term goals of sustainable partnership in protecting the receiving waters of our County.

C. MacIntyre Commons: A Case Study in Brownfield Redevelopment, Community Character, and Environmental Integrity

Jane E. Rice, JD, AICP, Chairperson, Village of Fayetteville Planning Board and Principal, edr Companies

Thomas Goodfellow, Goodfellow Construction Management Ltd.

Recently the Fayetteville Planning Board approved a redevelopment project for 22 residential units on an approximately 3 acre industrial brownfield site, on a hillside in the heart of the village. The Fayetteville Planning Board Chairperson, Jane Rice, and developer, Thomas Goodfellow, will share lessons learned on how the Planning Board and developer addressed complex public/private land ownership, topographic, stormwater, and community character issues.

D. Agricultural Districts Law and Local Zoning: What Agricultural Activities are Protected from Local Zoning and What Activities in Agricultural Districts Can Zoning Regulate?

Robert Somers, Ph.D., Manager, Agricultural Protection Unit, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

Catherine Hamlin, Land Use Training Specialist, New York State Department of State

John Langey, Esq., Partner, Costello, Cooney & Fearon, PLLC; Municipal Attorney

It's pretty universally agreed upon that a healthy agricultural sector is good for New York's economy, which is among the reasons why certain farm activities in state agricultural districts must be given special consideration by local zoning regulations. But this doesn't mean that farms and everything that happens on a farm is exempt from zoning. For example, barn weddings have become quite popular, but they aren't without controversy. The presenters in this session will educate those in attendance about Agricultural Districts Law and will talk about what activities are protected from unreasonable restriction by local governments and what "unreasonable restriction" is. They will also discuss the extent to which local governments can regulate certain activities that are associated with farms and, where they can, provide best practice examples.

The session will include a brief case study of a sample farm winery that had unanticipated impacts and the challenges faced by the reviewing officials (Town Planning Board, Town Attorney and Code's Official). It will include a discussion of the applicable local regulations that may or may not exist in a Town as well as managing expectations from potential deleterious effects of such uses if not properly considered by all parties.

E. Basic State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA)

Diane Carlton, AICP, Regional Director for Public Affairs and Education, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

This session is for the novice who has little to no experience with SEQRA and wants/needs to understand what SEQRA is all about, how it works and why it is important in the land use review process. If you don't know a negative declaration from a positive declaration or an unlisted action from a Type 2 action, this session is for you.

F. Introduction to Solar Policy

Justin Strachan, Solar Ombudsman, Sustainable CUNY

Adam Schnell, Solar Ombudsman, Sustainable CUNY

The workshop will provide a brief overview of the New York State solar PV market and incentives, nationally accepted planning and zoning best practices, strategies to reduce administrative burdens through transparent and streamlined permitting processes, and programs that expand financing options and drive adoption of cost-effective solar projects. Topics covered will include the NY-Sun MW Block Incentive Structure, the NYS Unified Solar Permit, Solarize and Pace Financing. Attendees who complete this course are eligible to receive free one-on-one technical support in designing and implementing smart solar policy in their municipalities.

G. Planning and Zoning: A Brief Introduction

Patricia Burke, Land Use Training Specialist, New York State Department of State

Nadine C. Bell, Esq., Partner, Costello, Cooney & Fearon, PLLC; Municipal Attorney

The most elementary of the Training Unit's course offerings, Planning and Zoning: A Brief Introduction is designed for new members of both planning boards and zoning boards of appeals. The course provides a basic overview of the functions of planning boards and zoning boards of appeals and the land use tools they work with, the role of the comprehensive plan, procedures for holding meetings and hearings, and the enforcement of the boards' decisions.

Code Enforcement Officers may receive 1 hour of In-Service Credit.

H. Advanced SEQRA and Endangered Species Act: Resources to Assist with Environmental Reviews

Diane Carlton, AICP, Regional Director for Public Affairs and Education, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Robyn Niver, Endangered Species Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation offers a new GIS-based mapping program called "The Environmental Mapper," which was especially designed for use in completing both the short and the full environmental assessment forms (EAF). Use of the mapper assists the applicant in completing Part One of the EAF by providing answers to questions about wetlands, endangered species, sole source aquifers, streams and rivers and other environmental resources. In this session we will use the mapper to help complete an environmental assessment form where a proposed action affects several different resources, including an endangered species.

Staff from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide some tips for reviewing projects to ensure that applicants have adequately considered federally-listed species. They will also provide information on federally-listed species that are known to occur in Onondaga County that applicants are most likely to need to address.

I. Land Prioritization and Conservation in Your Municipality

Zachary Odell, Director of Land Protection, Finger Lakes Land Trust

Elizabeth Newbold, Land Protection Specialist, Finger Lakes Land Trust & Local Food Systems Specialist, Cornell Cooperative Extension

Suzanne Beyeler, Ph.D., Research Associate, Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University

Jason Martin, Ph.D., Postdoctoral Research Associate, Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University

This session will provide an introduction to elements of a comprehensive approach to the conservation of significant land resources in your community. Staff from the Finger Lakes Land Trust will discuss the use of conservation easements and the acquisition of land within the context of the comprehensive planning process, supportive land use zoning, subdivision set-asides, partnering with land trusts, and policies that are supportive of farming and forestry. Specific examples of lessons learned from conservation projects within our region will be provided. This session will focus on farmland protection as well as Ag and Markets Farmland Protection Implementation Grant (FPIG) program, also known as PDR, which is available in some cases to fund the purchase of a conservation easement on viable farmland.

Population growth and the related expansion of urban and suburban infrastructure often result in the fragmentation, or outright loss, of natural habitat. This can lead to declines in wildlife populations and overall biodiversity, as well as disruption of important ecosystem services, such as water filtration. However, overall ecological health can be maintained in urbanizing landscapes by identifying and conserving habitat linkages that sustain connected, functioning ecosystems. Both natural habitat features and open space play important roles in maintaining ecological connectivity. Research Associates from the Cornell University Department of Natural Resources will present a case study where key ecological linkages were identified within the Town of Red Hook, Dutchess County, NY, and were incorporated into a conservation framework for the municipality.

J. White Elephants

Patricia Burke, Land Use Training Specialist, New York State Department of State

Catherine Hamlin, Land Use Training Specialist, New York State Department of State

Are you herding white elephants in your community? What's to be done with those vacant or underused architectural gems like churches, armories, and depots? This course examines the socio-economic reasons for their vacancies, and land use tools that can help restore their rightful places as revitalizing neighborhood anchors. Before you issue that demolition permit, take note of these creative examples of adaptive re-uses.

K. Mapping Resources Available to Assist with Planning and Zoning Board Reviews

Don Jordan, Deputy Director, Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency

Jason Deshaies, Senior Transportation Analyst, Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council

Aaron McKeon, Senior Transportation Planner, Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council

With the evolution of geographic information systems (GIS) and the advent of very popular and easy to use mapping tools such as Google Earth and Bing Maps, many people are now comfortable using, and expect to have access to, spatial data. This session will discuss and demonstrate several local mapping applications, including the County/City GIS on the Web site, Pictometry Online, and several transportation based applications, that provide access to spatial data that can assist municipal planning staff and planning and zoning boards with their reviews and long-range planning.

L. Shaping an Age-Friendly CNY

Charlotte (Chuckie) Holstein, Founder and Executive Director, F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse

F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse, along with others, believes that Boomers make significant economic and social contributions to our community. And to ensure our community is sustainable, we need to retain this population. Our research indicates that if the community does not act to retain the aging Boomer population, many might leave the community and we would lose their dollars, knowledge, time, taxes and other resources.

Funded by the CNY Community Foundation, The Dorothy and Marshall M. Reisman Foundation, KeyBank, Darco Manufacturing, City of Syracuse and Onondaga County, F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse launched its Age-Friendly CNY Research Project to identify how Central New York can retain the aging Boomer population as productive and contributing residents and to raise awareness of this issue in the community by providing information to support local planning across all sectors: government, academia, business and nonprofit organizations.

The final report provides an information base that identifies what we need to know about the demographic profiles of our area's Boomers, what incentivizes Boomers to want to continue to live in Central New York, what are the barriers and opportunities to retain Boomers, what should we plan for housing alternatives, health care services, educational and business opportunities for an aging population and how to incorporate philanthropic and citizen engagement involvement.

Closing Plenary Session: Case Law Update for Planning and Zoning

Robert F. Baldwin, Jr., Esq., Partner, Baldwin & Sutphen, LLP

Jamie Sutphen, Esq., Partner, Baldwin & Sutphen, LLP and Planning Board Attorney, Town of DeWitt and Village of Baldwinsville

This session will summarize recent cases pertaining to land use and explore the implications of these cases on land use regulation at the local level.