

Colden Planning Board Meeting

11-16-21

Planning Board
Members Present: Walt Kammer (Chairman), Andrew Gow, Jackie May,
Peter Newsom, George Reinhardt, and Bobby Walker

Excused: Frank Hrycik

Also Present: Jim DePasquale (Town Supervisor), Rachel Chrostowski,
(Farmland Protection, Specialist WNY Land Conservancy),
Jesse Hrycik (Town Councilman), Ashley Smith (GoBike-
Buffalo), Patti Zurbrick (Councilman) and Dennis Robinson
(2022 Elected Town Board Councilman)

Walt called the November 16, 2021 Planning Board Meeting to order at 7:02 PM in the courtroom at the Colden Town Hall. The meeting was also hosted via GoToMeeting.

Minutes

October 19, 2021 Planning Board Meeting Minutes

The Board Members reviewed the minutes from the meeting held on October 19, 2021. Bobby clarified that he didn't motion to approve the September 2021 minutes as he was absent from the meeting and Peter made the motion. But this time Bobby motioned to approve the revised minutes and George seconded, all were in favor.

October 19, 2021 Justin's Minutes

Peter mentioned that Frank needs to be removed from the attendance list and Jesse needed to be added. Walt also mentioned that Rachel Chrostowski was missing from the attendance list. Andy motioned to approve the revised minutes and Peter seconded, all were in favor.

New Business:

GoBike-Buffalo

Walt turned the meeting over to Ashley to discuss the GoBike-Buffalo organization. Ashley's the Deputy Director for GoBike-Buffalo and was invited by the Planning Board to give a presentation on the Southern Tier Trail (STT) initiative as well as clarify the relationship, if possible, between GoBike-Buffalo and the ECRT activity. The formal presentation was started.

Ashley stated that the trails are beneficial for anyone with disabilities, small children, and for people that no longer able to drive. The starting points of the trails and trail head was discussed as Planning Board Members wanted to know where the trail access points were located. Ashley reviewed a slide from her presentation to help clarify the starting points of the Colden segment as well as the several access points within the Town. Access of the trail has many in different locations, several of which are in the Colden segment.

The projected costs for the trails and maintenance were reviewed by the Board using GoBike's excerpts from the published Alta report funded by the Ralph Wilson Foundation. Ashley reviewed the costs and estimates that were done in 2020. Walt asked if material cost escalation will be included with the inflation from 2021 at some point. Ashley stated that costs will be updated once the Engineering firm (Alta) updates the drawings in the next phase of their services.

Pete asked if the trails will be open for bicycles and horses. Ashley mentioned that it's in review as there's interest. There are a lot of equine groups that are interested in accessing the trails with their horses both in Colden and in other segments of the STT. Walt mentioned that the Town will need to decide regarding equine operations but it would seem due to the many horse farm parcels and parcels with horse ownership in Colden it would, barring other factors, seem to be a good opportunity for Colden's equine landowners. While the STT is open to equine users, it was stated that currently, the ECRT doesn't support Equine operations with their trails. Other portions of the trail in the Alta report show significant equine facilities.

Ashley reviewed grants that were given to start the project and the Town might be able to apply for grants in the future. Walt mentioned his concern that maintenance will be the Town's responsibility. Ashley reviewed that some towns and villages requested to do the maintenance on the trails so that the activities are under the Town's control and workforces without reliance on 3rd parties for that work. It is unclear what Colden's position would be on this.

Andy asked about the surface material that will be used on the trail from the GoBike perspective. Ashley reviewed that stone dust is popular but will require a different surface if snowmobilers will be allowed to access the trails. The Town will be allowed to decide on the material used and the Town will have the ultimate decision as to if snowmobiles will be allowed on the STT segment within the Town of Colden. Andy also asked about safety and if anyone will be patrolling the trails; he referenced the ECRT informal meeting held in September where they stated they will have volunteers to oversee the trails. Walt mentioned that it depends on the Town and forces available, but per comments previously made by ECRT in September, it most likely it would be up to the Sheriff Department to maintain security the Colden segment. ECRT previously indicated they also would rely on the State Troopers to patrol in their service vehicles.

The Planning Board reviewed funding options, as it's a concern since some of the funding requires a match. Private sources have already donated for other portions of the trails in different areas. Ashley mentioned that more funds are coming from Albany and she doesn't

know when they will be available but is monitoring it. Ashley made a note to ask her resources and referenced the Letchworth Gateway Villages. She encouraged the Planning Board Members to review the data.

While Alta did a significant amount of soliciting feedback and suggestions/concerns from Colden citizens during their engineering work, Ashley plans on collecting feedback and documenting concerns at local events. Ashley stated that if Colden Citizens have any concerns they can call, email, or send a letter. Walt did ask Ashley about First Responders and the proper correspondence since they must be brought into the planning at the earliest possible stage so that EMS and other services are deployable when the Colden segment opens. Ashley will communicate with the Town of North Tonawanda on how they coordinated their First Responders with the trails and perhaps supply an example document.

Walt shared the upcoming meeting schedule before Ashley departed the meeting at 8:56pm. It is our intention to continue a mutual coordination with GoBike on the developments and options available to the Town of Colden. As feasible that same process will continue with ECRT.

Other Topics:

Walt reviewed that Bobby Walker was added to the NYSDAM ECDEP Agricultural Overlay District Southeast #15. Congrats Bobby. It is nice to have another, hopefully multigenerational, family farm in Colden.

The Planning Board and John Kotlarsz are working on the lighting problem in the historic district so that when new NYSEG grant funding is available in early 2022 we can upgrade the historic lighting to LED fixtures maintained by NYSEG instead of Town forces.

NYSEG submitted revised paperwork for the building permit and the FCC signed off again on the minor position change for the new tower; it is noted that the old tower is already removed, awaiting construction, weather permitting, of the new tower. The archeology study was revised for the NYSEG Tower. Bobby asked what might trigger an archeology dig and Walt stated that it's by federal regulations for the FCC permitting process; a debate on that followed.

The final landscaping for the new Dollar General north and south boundary contour will be difficult to mow until remediation is completed in the Spring. The wet weather prohibits grooming of the final slope contours until after winter. The developer has already supplied a maintenance plan to the Town, but to complete the landscaping has provided a letter guaranteeing completion of grounds and plantings by May 15th, 2022.

Walt mentioned a Highway Department memo stating that mailboxes that are placed in the road right away will be replaced case by case if they get knocked down by Town plows. Roads maintained by County plows will contact Erie County Highway Department for service.

Walt mentioned that all Land Owners in Colden received the mailing regarding the meeting to be held on December 1st, 2021 at the Colden Fire hall which solicits Colden citizen input for our Comprehensive Plan update process by consultant CPL, and for our Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan by consultant WWS Planning. We are hoping for a good turnout.

New Business

Walt asked Dennis Robinson to introduce himself to the Planning Board. Dennis is the newly elected member of the Town Board. He looks forward to serving the Town Board. He wanted to attend the Planning Board to meet the Board Members this evening.

Peter asked Walt a question regarding the earlier resolutions about ECRT when it was presented to the past Town Board(s) to approve the recommendation in years past. Walt gave a brief history of the process and basically stated that back then the concept was new and there were no specific details or engineering reports to go along with the early Planning Board recommendation. Years later, that information is still pending from ECRT. Lack of details and inadequate citizen coordination are some reasons two different Colden Town Boards passed resolutions of non-support for the rail-trail project in the past. At the time Walt was a member on the Planning Board and not the Board Chairman. But he commented that's it likely any present Town Board would need have to have many trail details, and a compelling Planning Board rationale supporting it, to consider passing a new resolution of Colden support for the trail, negating two prior Board resolutions of non-support. While it appeared that Peter and others wanted a quick support recommendation done, Walt feels that it is premature until more details emerge from ECRT (as the owners of the rail bed to trail lease); and we need to confirm GoBike's defined details in the Alta report, and the GoBike funding for the STT are indeed consistent with our expectations of cooperation from ECRT. ECRT has lacked details and funding specifics. Walt deferred further discussion on this topic as the evening is late.

Walt reviewed an unauthorized ECRT rail bed bridge construction update north of the Colden-Concord townline, and reports of snowmobilers traveling on rail bed. The bridge could be a concern for Colden Code Enforcement in the future. A comment was made that snowmobile trials need to have proper markers to keep snowmobilers off private property. The new bridge in Colden is considered a snowmobile only bridge.

Peter motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:36 PM, and George seconded. All were in favor.

Submitted by: Crystal Barrett