

**Town of Ulysses**  
**Planning Board Meeting**  
**FINAL Meeting Minutes**  
**March 3, 2020**

**Approved:** April 21, 2020

**Call to Order** 7:00 p.m.

**Present:** Chair Linda Liddle, Rebecca Schneider, Rodney Bent, Mo Klein, Jonathan Ferrari, Town Board Liaison Michael Boggs and Town Planner John Zepko.

**Agenda Review:** Ms. Schneider requested the Board have a conversation about the Coronavirus (COVID 2019) in Ulysses.

**Minutes Review (February 18, 2020):** Ms. Liddle requested the clerk add detail of the Board's discussion about a bigger footprint in the Agricultural (AR) Zone and site-plan review regulations.

**Privilege of the Floor**

Resident Lawrence McCann thanked the Planning Board addressing the 2,000 sq.ft. "restriction." He noted hearing a sentiment that all residents on the lake are rich and can afford new requirements. Actually, McCann said, "many people are middle class, struggling with taxes; we would appreciate it if people were aware that everyone in community should be treated equally."

Resident Richard Figel requested the Board consider creating a bypass for trucks around the village of Trumansburg. Mr. Figel noted said he is pursuing the issue because of his own observations – as well as anecdotes from other people -- of how hard and unsafe it can be to cross Main Street. He noted that he had had encouraging conversations with Department of Transportation regional manager and the director of Tompkins County's transportation Committee. Figel briefly described a possible route that would run east of the village and down the abandoned road behind the McGuire dealership and gave a detailed proposal to Mr. Zepko.

**Business**

**Request by Ms. Schneider to discuss planning for the CoronaVirus.**

Mr. Zepko described resources listed on the Town's home page and said that the County's Health Department pages is still the lead point of contact for questions and recommendations. Mr. Boggs added that the Town Board will host an information session on the virus at its 3/19 meeting.

**Referral from the Town Board to make recommendations in amending the maximum allowable building footprint of the Lake Shore and Conservation zoning districts. The current maximum**

**allowable building footprint in the LS and CS zones (Section 212-47.N and Section 212-54-I, respectively) is 2,000 sq.ft.**

Discussion continued from last week's meeting, with members again debating the merits of loosening restrictions (raising maximum footprint for small-acre parcels) versus the drawbacks of complicating the site-review process (using review process for people building on unusually sized parcels). Mr. Zepko passed on a letter he received from resident Peter Houghton, who opined the Board should add to proposed zoning a low-end cap of 2,000 sq.ft. on half-acre parcels.

Some members said a complex review process will deter people from moving to and building in Ulysses, with Mr. Ferrari again stating his belief that restrictions are not a useful way to get the type of buildings wanted in a particular area. Having performance criteria in zoning is more productive and easier for those looking to build, he said. Mr. Bent agreed, noting that performance criteria is there to avoid burdening people with unknown expense. Mr. Klein added that placing a "cap here, a cap there" is too confusing for would-be residents.

Ms. Schneider also expressed support for using the site-review process, saying she hesitated to weaken restrictions in the Conservation Zone (CZ) because it is land that deserves so much protection. She wondered why the possibility of a 5,000 sq.ft. maximum-footprint was even considered for the CZ. (Ms. Liddle noted that the number 5,000 was mentioned because it is the limit for the Agricultural Zone, which covers most of the rest of Ulysses.)

Ms. Liddle interjected here that members seemed to be favoring using the site review process as opposed to giving an exact number for footprint size.

Mr. Ferrari said yes, a limit could backfire and providing flexibility allows people to find ways to live with nature, such as building an earth-berm house, which could be as big as 4,000 sq.ft. Ms. Schneider warned that a flexible cap like 2,000 - 5,000 sq.ft. could result in people saying, "If can build to five (thousand sq.ft.), I will."

Mr. Zepko suggested the Board propose a 3,000-sq.ft. (the average current footprint-size in the CZ) limit combined with 5% lot coverage.

After more discussion, Ms. Liddle proposed the Board table the conversation, add words of performance criteria, and establish a 3,000-sq.ft. limit in the Lakeshore and leave the limit open in the Conservation zone.

Mr. Klein MADE and Ms. Schneider SECONDED the MOTION; motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Liddle then opened allowed for more privilege of the floor, as a number of residents were in the meeting. Resident Karen Metter stated a percentage limit makes much more sense than a sq.ft. limit as homeowners need freedom to design a space that works for them. She said that the Board's proposals are micromanaging and are punitive to taxpayers. Mario del Rosso said he is glad to see the Board really thinking about the issues, as he sometimes feels "targeted" when new restrictions and overlays "keep popping up."

Jane Houghton expressed her support for the percentage coverage.

Meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Maria C. Barry, April 23, 2020.*