



Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Zoom Hybrid Meeting

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2026

Approved: _____

Committee Members Present: Chair Ann DiPetta, Elizabeth Weatherby, Alison Weaver, Roxanne Marino, Karl Klankowski, Karen Meador, Mo Klein, Diane Cohen, Katelin Olson (arrived at 5:52),

Committee Members Absent: Kim Moore, Tai Basilius

Quorum Present

Comp Plan Consultant Present: Matt Horn, Jessica Geary

Town Staff Present: Lori Asperschlager, Niels Tygesen

Members of the Public Present: Linda Liddle, Bob Howarth, Janice Frossard, Sarah Adams, Sigrid Pauen, Cat Lambert, Cowders, Helen McLallen

Members of the Public Present on Zoom: Deborah, Susan Ritter

Proceedings

Chair Ann DiPetta called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm at the Town Hall.

Approval of Agenda

Amended agenda to table the approval of past minutes to the next meeting.

Motion: Klein motioned to approve the amended agenda; Klankowski seconded. **Passed unanimously.**

Privilege of the Floor

No members of the public spoke.

Motion: Klein motioned to close privilege of the floor; Weatherby seconded. **Passed unanimously.**

PUBLIC HEARING (Continued Hearing of the Draft 2025-2045 Comp Plan)

Bob Howarth spoke to the committee (see attached comments).

Sarah Adams spoke and will be submitting written comments. Adams is concerned the vision in the plan is contradictory to maintaining the rural character and agricultural land while also providing housing. Would like to see the comp plan have an agricultural section since a large portion of the Town is in an Ag district.

Helen McLallen spoke about her concern that her property is classified as low density residential while being the agricultural district.

Janice Frossard, current village historian, wants to preserve the environmental protections along the lakeshore and limit agricultural land from being subdivided.

Linda Liddle, Town planning board member, would like clarification on what is in appendix F and the land use requirements. Concerned Appendix F opens the possibility of spot zoning.

Motion: Klein tabled the public hearing until next meeting; Klankowski seconded. **Passed unanimously.**

DRAFT LAND USE ELEMENT & FUTURE LAND USE MAP PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

Matt Horn from MRB spoke up the draft future land use map. Prior to the meeting Tygesen suggested building a table that cross-references current zoning district with the future land use designation which MRB will do. Olson confirmed the town attorney said the future land use map is conforming to the comprehensive plan and zoning. Horn clarified that spot zoning is illegal and the comp plan does not allow for that.

Marino expressed concerned that the future land use map designates the same type of character area (Low Density Residential) for land near the lakeshore (due to steep slopes and special environmental needs) and for flat land near agriculture areas. Verbiage for Residential Density in comp plan may need to be change for clarity (ex. Residential density: ≤1 primary dwelling unit/2 acres)

Klankowski expressed that recognizing the current zoning districts of Lake Shore and Conservation should show up as their own entities on the future land use map, keeping that clear for residents that no changes are being made to those areas. Consensus from the committee that this is the right direction to go in for the future land use map and MRB will make those changes.

Committee discussed the public comments on the Industrial character area on the future land use map. Industrial can be considered manufacturing, production, warehouses, storage facilities, etc. Weatherby suggested the use of Light Industry based on what is already in the Town.

Much discussion ensued and the committee came to the consensus that Commercial Mixed Used and Industrial could be joined into one character area and adjust the language to encompass both appropriately for the town. MRB will make this change in the next draft.

Discussion of Neighborhood Mixed Use and residential density. Weatherby suggested waiting for this discussion once the planned housing study is done. Olsen commented that the survey from residents wanted agriculture protections and a diversity of housing options. It could be beneficial to incentivize building in areas of the town to encourage development where housing already exists. Marino expressed concern that the way the description of the Neighborhood Mixed Use with a maximum of 30 units per acre. A consensus was reached to remove explicit statements of density in the character area narrative so it is not confused with zoning references.

Committee discussed the character areas on the map that are currently noted as industrial and what those areas would change to since the industrial character area is being removed from the plan and map. After a quick poll of committee members MRB will change a parcel on Brook Road to Neighborhood Mixed Use on the next draft version. A consensus was reached for the Cayuga Compost parcel on Agard Road to split the parcel between Commercial Mixed Use and Medium Density Residential. MRB will use mapping to differentiation where to split the parcel and will change the map for the next draft version to bring back for consideration.

Marino brought up the topic of housing designation of Rural Residential and Low Density Residential. After some discussion there was a consensus that the portion of the town that is the Tompkins County Ag District 2 needs to be changed from Low Density Residential to Rural Residential. MRB will make that change for the next draft map.

Next meeting will be on January 28 at 5:30pm.

Public comments have been closed on the draft released in October 2025 and MRB are reviewing those comments. MRB will work on incorporating tonight's edits into a new draft to release to the public. This will be available in 2-3 weeks.

Motion: Klein motioned to adjourn; Klankowski seconded. **Passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:37 PM.

Lori Asperschlager
Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Secretary

DRAFT

Statement to Town of Ulysses Comprehensive Plan Committee

By Robert Howarth, Reynolds Road, Town of Ulysses

January 14, 2026

I urge the Committee to reconsider three major changes in land use categories in the Town that have appeared in earlier drafts of the new Comprehensive Plan.

First, I strongly believe that the Town should continue to recognize the Lake-Shore Zone and the Conservation Zone as areas that require special protection, in part because of often-steep slopes, erodible land, and proximity to Cayuga Lake. The Town spent a considerable amount of time in defining these zones, and it would be tragic to simply turn away from this.

Second, I feel it is inappropriate to set up a new land use described as “Industrial.” The Town has not had industrial areas in the past, and this has served us well. For instance, the lack of an approved industrial land-use category assisted the Town in developing our ban on fracking. I find it particularly inappropriate to take any junkyards and redefine these as “industrial.” Apparently, the Committee was informed that the junkyards currently in the Town are legally non-conforming. This is simply not true. Below, I have copied all relevant sections in the current zoning that apply to junkyards.

Town of Ulysses Zoning Code

“HISTORY: Adopted by the Town Board of the Town of Ulysses 12-17-2013 by L.L. No. 3-2013; amended in its entirety 12-10-2019 by L.L. No. 3-2019. Subsequent amendments noted where applicable.”

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Definitions: “JUNKYARD — An open area used for the storage or accumulation of wastes, used and secondhand materials, including, but not limited to, building materials, scrap metal, plastic, paper, rags, glass, broken appliances and electronic equipment, rubber tires, bottles, refuse, inoperative vehicles and other machinery, and other debris that is not generated by or used in any ongoing agricultural operations on the premises. For the purpose of this chapter, an automobile wrecking yard is also considered a junkyard.”

Town of Ulysses, NY

§ 212-152

ZONING

§ 212-153

ARTICLE XXIII
Nonconformance

§ 212-170. Discontinuance of **junkyards, open storage, automobile sales lots.**

- A. Notwithstanding any of the provisions of this chapter, any motor vehicle or other junkyard, including an open area for the outdoor storage of motor vehicles, used building materials, scrap metal, plastic, paper, rags, glass, broken appliances such as stoves, etc., refuse and other debris for any purpose in existence in any zone shall be discontinued. The Board of Zoning Appeals, however, may grant a special permit for the continuation of such use, pursuant to the provisions of Article III, § 212-18. Farm operations within a county-adopted, state-certified agricultural district where such materials are generated by or used in an ongoing agricultural operation are exempt from this provision.
- B. Any automobile sales lot or any billboard or nonconforming sign or advertising device in existence in any A/R — Agricultural/Rural, R — Residential, RM — Multiple Residence, or HC — Hamlet Center, or Hamlet Neighborhood at the enactment of this chapter shall be discontinued within one year of enactment of this chapter, and shall not be considered a legal nonconforming use.
- C. No lot may contain one or more abandoned, partially dismantled or nonoperative motor vehicle in any open area. Farm operations within a county-adopted, state-certified agricultural district where such materials are generated by or used in an ongoing agricultural operation are exempt from this provision.
- D. No lot may contain in any open area more than one unregistered automobile, truck or other motor vehicle subject to registration with the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles. Farm operations within a county-adopted, state-certified agricultural district where such materials are generated by or used in an ongoing agricultural operation are exempt from this provision.

The zoning as amended on Dec 17, 2013 and as currently still in effect clearly states that junkyards that existed prior to Dec 2013 must be discontinued and must be cleaned up. They are not allowed as legal nonconforming uses, unless granted a special permit from the Board of Zoning Appeals. I was on the BZA in 2013 and continued to be on the BZA through Dec 2024, serving as Chair for many of those years. To the best of my recollection, the BZA never granted a special permit to allow any junkyard to continue. It is wrong for the Town to continue the operation (or lack of cleaning up) of current junkyards, and it would be further wrong to take this illegal use and reclassify it as “industrial.”

Third, I oppose moving land from primarily agricultural uses to “mixed density residential” uses, as proposed in Map 3 from the draft Comprehensive Plan (the dark orange swath). Most if not all of the area now proposed for this development is in the State and County approved ag district. As the Town of Ulysses Ag and Farmland Protection Plan (2013) clearly stated, the purpose of this ag district under State law “is to encourage the use of farmland for agricultural production and to discourage the conversion of farmland to non-agriculture uses” Map 3 seems to encourage reasonably dense housing along a water line, but again as noted in the Ulysses Ag and Farmland Protection Plan, “ the State “Department of Agriculture and Markets policy specifically discourages water main laterals in agricultural districts.”

I reached out the Department of Agriculture and Markets and communicated by phone and email with Jason Mulford, who is responsible for reviewing how water districts and

pipelines affect agriculture in New York. He sent me the 4 pages of communications between the State and the Town from 2003, which relate to approval by Ag and Markets (with restrictions) to water district 3 along Rt 96. I asked further about the water pipeline that serves the Cayuga Addiction Recovery Services center (which seems related to the proposed change in the Comprehensive Plan for residential development in the western part of the Town). Mulford replied that the State had no records on this or any other water lines or districts in the Town of Ulysses, beyond district #3. He further wrote "Reasons that the other lines may have not been reviewed may be due to the timing and the enrollment in the county adopted State certified agricultural district. Perhaps, the town simply did not know to submit. One would have to look into the utility approval date in comparison to the establishment and enrollment of the parcels involved, to determine specifically what should have happened. Despite the history, if new work is proposed, we should get an NOI if impacting agricultural districts."

Given State law and policy, and given the clear statements in the Town of Ulysses Ag and Farmland Protection Plan (2013) on water pipeline encroachments into agricultural areas, it would seem that the Town should tread very lightly before reclassifying any land from agricultural to residential uses, if a water line is involved. And again, personally, I believe the Town should not reclassify any land in the agricultural district from primarily agricultural to primarily residential use.



STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS

George E. Pataki
Governor

Nathan L. Rudgers
Commissioner

July 18, 2003

Hon. Douglas Austic, Supervisor
Town of Ulysses
P.O. Box 721
Trumansburg, NY 14886

Dear Supervisor Austic:

Pursuant to Agriculture and Markets Law (AML) §305(4), the Department of Agriculture and Markets has completed its review of the Final Notice of Intent submitted by Barton & Loguidice on behalf of the Town of Ulysses, in connection with the advance of public funds for the construction of water mains within Tompkins County Agricultural District #2.

The Final Notice of Intent was sent to the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation, the Advisory Council on Agriculture (ACA), and the Tompkins County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) for their review of the proposed action. The Commissioner of Environmental Conservation and the AFPB did not submit any comments. The ACA indicated that it does not appear that land will be lost to development, except, possibly, for two agricultural parcels included in the water district, because the area has already been subdivided into smaller parcels. Based on all relevant information before me, I have determined that the proposed action would not have an unreasonably adverse effect on the continuing viability of farm enterprises within the district; or state environmental plans, policies and objectives. This determination is due, in part, to the Town's adoption of the Department's construction standards and a commitment by the Town to adopt a lateral restriction policy.

Please be advised that in order to complete its filing obligations under §305(4), the Town must certify to me at least ten days prior to advancing the funds to construct, or constructing, the waterlines, that it has made an explicit finding that the requirements of §305(4) have been met, and that to the maximum extent practicable, adverse agricultural impacts revealed in the Notice of Intent process will be minimized or avoided. This certification shall set forth the reasons in support of the finding and is more fully set forth in AML §305(4)(g). Furthermore, prior to submission of the certification required pursuant to §305(4)(g), the Town of Ulysses must submit to the Department a copy of the resolution adopting lateral restrictions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nathan L. Rudgers".

NATHAN L. RUDGERS
Commissioner of Agriculture
and Markets of the State of New York

cc: McCrea Burnham, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Charlie Wille, NOI Reviewer
Russ DeMond, Chair, Tompkins County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
Brian Skidmore, Barton & Loguidice, P.C
NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation
File: 01/036NOI

May 7, 2003

R E C E I V E D

MAY 09 2003

Dr. Robert Somers, Chief
Agricultural Protection Unit
State of New York Department of Agriculture and Markets
1 Winners Circle
Albany, New York 12235

Ag Protection & Development
NYS Dept of Agriculture & Markets

Re: Town of Ulysses Water District No. 3 Water System Improvements
Tompkins County Agricultural District No. 2

File: 586.006

Dear Dr. Somers:

We are in receipt of your letter dated March 19, 2003 requesting additional information regarding the Final Notice of Intent for the above-referenced action. In response to your request, we offer the following, referenced by item number from the annotated Final Notice of Intent Checklist attached to your March 19th letter:

1) Item #8a:

- Parcel #24-2-8.2: parcel has been split into Parcel #24-2-8.2 and Parcel #24-2-8.3; Parcel #24-2-8.2 is classified for field crops, and Parcel #24-2-8.3 is classified as a single family residence; corn was grown on the old Parcel #24-2-8.2.
- Parcel #34-1-7.22: no longer actively farmed
- Parcel #20-4-3: corn
- Parcel #21-1-4.22: no longer actively farmed
- Parcel #24-3-5: corn and soy beans
- Parcel #26-2-15.23: no longer actively farmed
- Parcel #33-3-1.192: corn
- Parcel #34-1-44: corn
- Parcel #34-2-1: corn





Dr. Robert Somers
May 7, 2003
Page Two

- 2) Item #8b: The property class codes listed were obtained directly from GIS tax data supplied by the Tompkins County Department of Assessment, and should be correct.
- 3) Item #9a: There have been no concerns expressed by the farm landowners directly affected by the proposed action.
- 4) Item #13: The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets construction standards have been incorporated into the Contract Documents for the construction of this project. The Town Planning Board has reviewed the Department of Agriculture and Market's lateral restriction guideline, and has agreed to incorporate the same into the new Town Zoning Law, which is currently in the process of being updated.

The above information should be considered as Addendum No. 1 to the Final Notice of Intent dated February, 2003. To update you on the current project schedule, bids are to be received for the Water District No. 3 Water System Improvements Project on May 29, 2003. Award of the Contracts for this action is scheduled for June 10, 2003, with notice to proceed with construction anticipated on or about July 8, 2003.

Please do not hesitate to contact either Eric Pond, P.E. or me should you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

BARTON & LOGUIDICE, P.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian J. Skidmore'.

Brian J. Skidmore, P.E.
Project Engineer

BJS/gmr

cc: Douglas Austic, Supervisor - Town of Ulysses
Eric A. Pond, P.E. – Barton & Loguidice, P.C.



Appendix
A
Project
No.
586.006

Water District No. 3
Project Location Map
Town of Ulysses
New York

Barton
& Tognidice, P.C.
Consulting Engineers

