



March 24, 2015

**CITY OF SARATOGA SPRINGS**  
**Comprehensive Plan Workshop**  
**City Council Room**  
**6:00 PM**

**6:00 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**ROLL CALL**

**SALUTE TO FLAG**

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD / 15 MINUTES**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Nothing at this time.

**MAYOR'S DEPARTMENT**

1. Set Public Hearing: New Code Chapter #205 – Street Performances
2. Discussion: Comprehensive Plan Workshop #2
3. Presentation – D'Andrea Parcel
4. Presentation – Saratoga National Golf Course Expansion
5. Presentation – Sustainable Saratoga
6. Discussion: Public Comment

**ACCOUNTS DEPARTMENT**

Nothing at this time.

**FINANCE DEPARTMENT**

Nothing at this time.

**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

Nothing at this time.

**PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

Nothing at this time.

**SUPERVISORS**

**ADJOURN**



March 24, 2015

CITY OF SARATOGA SPRINGS  
Comprehensive Plan Workshop  
City Council Room  
6:00 PM

PRESENT: Joanne Yepsen, Mayor  
Michele Madigan, Commissioner of Finance  
John Franck, Commissioner of Accounts  
Anthony Scirocco, Commissioner of DPW  
Christian Mathiesen, Commissioner of DPS

STAFF PRESENT: Joe Ogden, Deputy Mayor  
Lynn Bachner, Deputy Commissioner, Finance  
Maire Masterson, Deputy Commissioner, Accounts  
Eileen Finneran, Deputy Commissioner, DPS  
  
Brad Birge, Planning Department  
Kate Maynard, Planning Department  
Sue Barden, Planning Department  
Steve Shaw, Building Department

EXCUSED: Tim Cogan, Deputy Commissioner, DPW

**RECORDING OF PROCEEDING**

The proceedings of this meeting were taped for the benefit of the secretary. Because the minutes are not a verbatim record of the proceedings, the minutes are not a word-for-word transcript.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Yepsen called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

**MAYOR'S DEPARTMENT**

Set Public Hearing: New Code Chapter #205 – Street Performances

Mayor Yepsen set a public hearing for the next City Council meeting, Tuesday, April 7, 2015 at 6:55 p.m.

Discussion: Comprehensive Plan Workshop #2

Mayor Yepsen provided the public with some history of how the Comprehensive Plan reached this point.

Presentation – D'Andrea Parcel

Mayor Yepsen advised this presentation relates to item # 48 of the proposed Comprehensive Plan changes.

Matt Jones, attorney for the D'Andrea property presented. He explained this parcel has been singled out and treated unfairly in connection with its re-designation from MDR-1 to CDD in the 2001 Comprehensive Plan. It is the only parcel on the plateau that received this treatment. The burden is high on them because they are an undeveloped parcel. Treatment is different within the language of the 2001 Comprehensive Plan. The criteria of the plan that was used was erroneously applied to this parcel. There was a conscious decision to create a greenbelt around the City. The question is does this parcel fall in the greenbelt? If they are then they would be part of the CDD and that would be a fair application. If they are not in the greenbelt, they should not be in the CDD as that would be an unfair treatment of this parcel. In their judgment, the greenbelt area does not include the plateau. The country overlay area depicts a continuous greenbelt area around the urban core and illustrates the open spaces that remain. The greenbelt is identified in the country overlay area – a semi circle area. The country overlay area map shows where the greenbelt is and it does not include the D'Andrea parcel. He doesn't see where the property was ever in the greenbelt area and erroneously put in the CDD (Conservation Development District). The request being made is one of 'school yard' fairness and not legal.

Commissioner Madigan stated there are 3 parcels outside of the D'Andrea property that are undeveloped. She asked for clarification of what the 3 other parcels were zoned as pre - 1999.

Mr. Jones stated they are LDR-1 and MDR-1 allowing 12,500 square foot lots as a minimum and 1 acre lots as a maximum.

Commissioner Mathiesen stated it would be helpful to see types of uses if there was a change in designation.

Commissioner Franck stated he would like to look for a compromise. It seems unfair to him why this happened.

Mayor Yepsen asked Mr. Jones for hard copies of the presentation and the Planning Department will get us answers regarding the 3 parcels.

#### Presentation – Saratoga National Golf Course Expansion

Mayor Yepsen advised this presentation relates to item #49 of the proposed Comprehensive Plan changes.

Mike Phinney of the Phinney Design Group advised there were approximately 200 people in attendance at the workshop last week that was sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce. They received positive feedback. This group would like a path to present their plan. The question is does Saratoga Springs want a destination resort as part of their community. People want to go where there are multiple attractions. Tonight's showing is what they are thinking about doing but it is not the final plan. They would like to build a hotel, spa and fitness center, expand the nature trail, and build residential units. (presentation attached)

Mike Toohey, attorney for Saratoga National Golf Course, asked of the protections that are being requested, whom are they for? They want to give the public access to the protection area. They are offering a long-term permanent solution of what to do with this land. They will help maintain a strong local economy. They are looking to put a double conservation easement on the land and the land will remain on the tax roll. He suggested adding a world class amenity that already exists while protecting the green space everyone wants to have protected. Saratoga National pays \$1.4 million in property tax and employs 516 people. With the project they are proposing, there will be an additional tax base of approximately \$2.5 million. The comment that if this is built, it will be a detriment to the downtown just isn't true. They are only asking for the opportunity to prove they can do this.

Tom Newkirk, owner of Saratoga National Gold Course thanked the Council for the opportunity to present tonight. He submitted approximately 30 letters of support from neighbors, downtown businesses, the president of the PGA, and customers. The proposal is consistent with Sustainable Saratoga's mission.

Millions of dollars have been raised through the functions that have been held at their establishment that don't appear on their income statement.

Mayor Yepsen confirmed they currently have a conservation plan/easement.

Mr. Toohey stated they do and want to make sure it can't be taken off without 2 diverse groups agreeing for that to happen.

Mr. Newkirk advised the conservation easement is the wetlands. If the golf course were to fail, a developer would not be able to build single families homes with the conservation easement.

Mayor Yepsen asked what would be the impact on Lake Lonely.

Mr. Toohey they want to be able to give the public non-motorized boat access.

Commissioner Mathiesen asked if they thought about purchasing a shuttle bus to bus patrons back and forth to downtown hotels and restaurants.

Mr. Newkirk stated that is not their vision. The onsite spa and hotel would make this a year round facility.

Commissioner Mathiesen stated a lot of people in the City had a vision that the parcels on the outer district of the City would have limited commercial uses. We focused our economic activities downtown. He believes this concept has been an important part of the success of the City.

Mr. Newkirk stated he respects the point of difference. He does disagree with the notation of taking the economics out of the inner city. Their use is nothing more than their neighbors already have; Longfellows has an inn and Interlaken has housing.

Commissioner Franck stated he is a downtown business owner. Since the golf course has been built, it hasn't hurt downtown but has helped it. His only concern as an assessor would be condos. He would like to work on that part with them.

Commissioner Mathiesen stated he feels they should be cautious here and try to preserve as much as possible.

Commissioner Scirocco stated his concern is there is not a lot of difference between overlay and PUDs.

The Council took a break at 8:09 p.m.  
The Council resumed the meeting at 8:14 p.m.

#### Presentation – Sustainable Saratoga

Harry Moran of Sustainable Saratoga stated both projects run completely counter to the vision of the city in the country in their view. They suggest that the Council reject draft modifications #48 & #49; the D'Andrea and Saratoga National amendments. Would all of the great development have happened if we opened up the greenbelt in 2011? What good things will happen next downtown if we stick to our plan? This Comprehensive Plan nor Sustainable Saratoga is anti development. Lets trust the vision that got us where we are today.

Tom Denny of Sustainable Saratoga stated he is going to shift the conversation to be more general. In the new resort overlay zone, 93% of the Saratoga National land will be in open space, and 95% would be in open space under status quo. The goal is to have a vibrant downtown and greenbelt. Some of the goals, mechanisms, and standards are to grow the tax base in the City and conservation balanced with development and density in the country. Their concerns are not really about acreage; it is about use and

density. There are plenty of large properties that could accommodate hotels. We are getting plenty of tax revenue from construction from within the inner city and still believe that is where our tax base should be grown.

Commissioner Madigan asked if the restaurant and banquet facility be expanded upon as things stand today.

Brad Birge of the Planning Department advised the special use permit granted to the golf course in 1998 states the clubhouse shall not exceed 36,000 square feet in size and was modified in 2007 to allow an expansion up to 38,000 square feet. The number of seating was also expanded.

Commissioner Madigan asked the owner of the golf course if they are at their full capacity of the special use permit.

Mr. Toohey stated they could come back and apply for more.

Steve Shaw of the Building Department advised they could come back and ask for expansions.

Commissioner Madigan asked how many parcels are on the Saratoga National property and are they allowed an inn per parcel.

Brad Birge advised Saratoga National fronts the corridor lodging zone. Saratoga National and the D'Andrea property could each have an inn from 11 – 25 rooms with associated activities on their property.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Mayor Yepsen said the public comment period is limited to a total of 15 minutes and individuals are limited to two minutes each according to the rules approved in February of 2004 by the City Council.**

Mayor Yepsen opened the public comment period at 9:33 p.m.

Louise Golub of Hathorne Street stated she is here as a member of the League of Women Voters. They have been at the forefront of the environmental protection movement for decades. They support legislation that seeks to protect our country from the physical, economic, and public health effects of climate change while providing economic prosperity. In order to conserve natural resources and improve the quality of life, Saratoga Springs should take a proactive role in land use planning with the purpose of enhancing urban neighborhoods, containing urban sprawl, and protecting agricultural land, open space, watersheds, and other sensitive areas. They support the protection of the greenbelt and oppose any weakening of the current Comprehensive Plan designations or current zoning regulations for that area such as PUDs or special overlay districts. (copy of letter attached)

Dave LeFlesh, a capital district resident, stated the growth and prosperity of Saratoga took place because of a vision. Change is for sure and happens all the time. The proposal from Saratoga National is the type of vision we need to be competitive in today's world. Their vision will bring more value to the Saratoga experience and create jobs.

David Normoyle of Webster Street shared an article from May, 1896 that talks about a golf course on the shores of Lake Lonely. Edgar Brackett, founder of the Adirondack Trust Company, had a wish that Saratoga would have one of the greatest golf courses in the world and attract a class of patronage that would make Saratoga Springs the greatest amusement center in America. If not for the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century visions to make this place a unique destination for recreation and athletic pursuits we wouldn't have the institutions in place that distinguish us as not just another faded community in upstate New York. (copy of letter and article attached)

Nancy Goldberg of Interlaken stated she is speaking for the 6 developments out there. As full disclosure, she has been a member of Saratoga National from the beginning. Mr. Newkirk does everything top notch. She is not saying yeah or nay; but without traffic mitigation, the time for emergency response is going to get worse. She hopes the Council will consider the infrastructure out there.

Wilma Koss of 160 Kaydeross Park Road (Water's Edge) stated she supports giving Saratoga National a pathway. The Comprehensive Plan reads like a Saturday Night Live script. The vision statement needs to acknowledge the Comprehensive Plan should respect private property rights and not jeopardize the healthy, growing taxpayer base with excessive restriction.

Lynn Geiger of Waterview Drive stated Saratoga National has presented the gold standard of development. It is up to the City to make sure each and every new development meets this standard. The Sustainable Saratoga's vision will stagnate our growth.

Patrick Pipino of 28 Lexington Road is also a local business owner. He has spoken with many of his colleagues and not one has a negative comment. People are not going to stay at that facility all day long. This is a guaranteed revenue stream for the City. We are in a great place not because of our green space but also because of our attractions. This is a chance to bring a world class spa. If not this; then what?

Barbara Thomas of 82 Circular Street stated she recently went to Lenox, Massachusetts. It was a dead downtown area. The need of a world class golf resort to bring people downtown is not the big issue. It is not what we need to keep our businesses in the downtown area thriving. She would support anything that preserves the greenbelt.

Therese Capazolla of Gilbert Road stated Saratoga National is a great asset to the community. It does bring business downtown. What also makes our City great is downtown is our resort. Had we developed out there in the '80's and '90's, we would not have developed our downtown. We have preserved tracks of open space and an easement was already given. (copies of the trail easement, grievance, and conservation easement were provided and attached)

Bob Boden of 2 Eaton Court stated he hasn't heard any good reason as to why not. We have a good start. The businesses downtown say they don't mind it but you still don't want it. This is a great opportunity. They are not looking to do it their way; they want to work with you.

Bonnie Sellers of 73 Fifth Avenue stated from her childhood and beyond, there were more businesses around the Saratoga Lake area than there are today. She supports this project as it provides better balance.

Steve Paletta of Wilton stated this has been a passionate and emotional debate and we need to take that out of it. It is about what is good for Saratoga. He asked the Council to keep an open mind and look outside of Saratoga as Schenectady is opening a casino. We need to keep people in Saratoga.

John Kaufman of 44 White Street stated he recalls the Council making excellent statements about how they are going to protect the greenbelt in the City. After the vote on the PUDs, he thought it was done. The issue is a public policy issue.

Frank Barrone of Saratoga Springs stated he has watched this city grow through the hotels. We have world class racing, world class horse auction, world class entertainment, and it would enhance the City to let Saratoga National go through with the project.

Kevin Vetty, partner of Saratoga National stated a couple things need to be decided. One thing is sustainability for the City and how do you take the greenbelt and define it. Local people are trying to do this not a big corporation. We are trying to give our customers what they want. It will take some of the seasonality out of their business and out of the City's business.

Richard Galarneau of Arrowhead Road stated the subdivisions built over there are well done and great neighborhoods. He doesn't believe it should be in the greenbelt from the descriptions heard tonight.

Todd Garafano, president of Saratoga Convention and Tourism Bureau stated they submitted a letter of support. The 13,000 room nights they traced are related to a golf/spa five star experience. These room nights lost were not solicited.

Colin Klepetar of Waterbury Street stated numbers are being reported but would like to see proof. Why not use what we have in our downtown core? Once property owners see this happen they are going to get greedy and they will want to develop.

Pat Kane of Marion Place stated there is not a PUD deemed unsuccessful. The ramped growth everyone is fearful of isn't happening. There are facts that we are the slowest growing municipality in Saratoga County with 400 people moving here in 10 years. The same Comprehensive Plan has been in place for 15 years and it hasn't created this overwhelming sprawl; it puts the handcuffs on these guys. Think about the economic impact and increase in jobs. This is a wonderful project that he encourages them to support.

Mayor Yepsen closed the public comment period at 10:11 p.m.

Mayor Yepsen advised the Council was handed, by the Comprehensive Plan Committee, an unfinished document. It is not ok to function with a 15 year old document. It is their responsibility to finish this document.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Mayor Yepsen adjourned the meeting at 10:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Ribis  
Clerk

Approved:  
Vote: