

**The Community Dispute Resolution Center's "Facing the Challenges of Growth Together:  
A Community Conversation on Land Use in Schuyler County"**

Notes from Tuesday March 18th 2008 Event

**Municipal Group Discussions**

***Question to all:***

***What do you see as the benefits and risks of land use regulation in Schuyler County?***

**Answers from Towns of Dix, Reading, Orange & Tyrone**

Resident

\*Doesn't mind mobile homes and farms, but very upset with a tire recycling plant.

\*It's helpful to regulate things what you don't want to risk is the restriction.

Resident-

Problem with restrictions not being enforced.

Lack of concern for their area in service provision (roads being cared for, plowed roads in winter)

Zoning in the town of Dix:

One instance - expansion of Watkins Glen In has come before the planning board

Maintaining quality of life, historical value-all have benefits and risks. It's a balancing act.

Farm owner- phobia- the boards made up of small numbers with members who have a personal agenda. Those members then have a personal vendetta, working in their own interest not the interest of the community.

Benefit of zoning/planning

Prevent a public nuisance.

Prevent conflict

Risk

One person affecting the community based on their own personal idea, not on the best interest of community.

Planning Board Member

A benefit is being pro-active

A risk is being reactive

Educating the public as to what the zoning was going to be doing. It is a tool. A living document that can be changed.

Zoning is worth the risk. It is a chance for local people to try to make the best judgment of land use in regards to private owner vs. public land use.

Planning vs. Zoning- has limitations-can't stop the "Eminent Domain" - as in the pipeline and empire.

## Towns of Catharine, Odessa & Montour

### Concerns -

- Breaking up of land
- Loss of wild life
- Soil and water, use/misuse
- Like to see "old" soil and water regulations enforced
- Every town has own standards
- Laws are changed instead of enforced
- Corporations having rights that are truly meant for "people" not corp.
- Expansion of houses (houses)
- Like having non city water/sewer
- Companies taking over

### Positives-

- Rural community
- Create regulations to protect land

### Concern-risk

Need unified land us regulation that need to be consistent cross town/village lines  
View shed rights

\*"Shepstone boiler plates" – outside agency influencing regulations (village/town of Montour)

Difficulty getting notified of up coming meeting- meetings listed incorrectly (wrong location and date)

\*Discussed need for people to attend meeting to voice concerns

Seems to disfavor what the majority wants.

Issue of government- strong town structures

Impact of other counties on local residents

Jurisdiction issues- county/town/state

Zoning- follow town laws (much more stringent)

Inconsistent enforcement- different code enforcement officers- then concern of what happens in front of different judge.

Nothing done to encourage folks to keep/restore historic homes/values

"City" folks relocating pushing up cost of property driving out locals.

Most important: agriculture vs. development.

Economic development should come slowly- in a cogent fashion.

Need for protecting good farm land

Agriculture prime importance

Environmentally careful farming

Towns of Hector and Burdett

### First impressions

Surprised not more growth

How much growth since 2008? 8 years already

Do something for more updated info

15 years ago

- Draft of LU proposal- with no start minimal plans in the comp. plan for town of.

How do we define LU regulations?

Someone (the community) else tells you what you can do with your land.

Everyone has own idea

15 years- not clear where we were heading, since 2000 have we been surer where we are heading.

How many people think we should have a land use plan? ALL

Wide range of different needs of land use in Hector; very diverse.

Benefits, good plan would address this diversity

Hector is the 2nd largest town in the state.

Plan: where we want to be in 10 years:

Need to hear from everybody (all the diverse needs) to have good plan.

How do we protect what we have and still allow development of Hector?

Do we wait until something is out of control or do we drive the train?

\*Need to get out in front... infrastructure, traffic, put things in place.

Discussion of trailer park/trailer

Need jobs to promote big development

We are seeing farms divided up into several plots: "farmettes"; as this happens, land is less productive. Can we regulate this?

Like to see a set schedule of meetings to address LU.

Rte 414? (Banana belt) grow almost anything

Protect view, important for tourism

Seen 414 degrade, traffic, vineyards, reduced enjoyment of that drive.

Zone- seen loss of freedom, we are up against too much zoning community is afraid of this, but still need some regulation.

Watershed Protection- cannot let Seneca lake get polluted.

Also well water

Example of Keuka Lake watershed program.

Land use is a lot more than where we put houses-

Views

Vistas

Air quality

Property rights

Agriculture

Open space

How can we encourage more small farmers (Amish)?

We need to protect our agriculture.

\*Agriculture pays a lot of taxes, it's not just open space.

Roads- lots of dirt roads. 150 miles of town road

Infrastructure- biggest challenge. Critical for planning, big questions, need to have in place to figure out complete land use plan

How do we improve this to meet our demands? Where are these resources going to come from?

Do we make it happen or let it happen? (biggest fear)

Responding to problems:

How do we address the diversity of Hector when we create a plan? Need a plan for maintaining that diversity. Plan to plan.

\*Table agrees to need for a plan with diversity a huge challenge or can't really go forward without addressing this.

Tourism- big source of tax \$, we can't afford to lose this.

### **Town of Hector**

Land use regulations

Zoning is not the only land use regulation

Zoning always land use

Unregistered vehicles- junk cars an example of regulation

Property maintenance code

Sale of land

Subdivisions

Water use

Risks

Takes away freedom to use own property, 25 years ago Hector problem

Building permits on own property

Risks

Takes away freedom

Can't build whatever you want

Regulations can stop good things too

Farming

Benefits

Can't build whatever you want where ever you want

Protects what we value

Regulations adopted by town not county. Idea of community different for different people (elected people that come out to meetings.

Community-owners on seasonal

Dangerous to decrease farming in this area.

Part timers vs. full timers.

What about a Comprehensive County Plan?

Watershed was an example

## Benefits

Protects people purchasing property  
Control on our environment to protect it

Community involved decisions are a benefit, no community involvement becomes big risks.  
Owners, residents, tax payers, anyone willing to voice opinions.

Getting people involved, hot topics, yes hard to get other.

More farms being used now- farmers market if you belong to a farm program, you are regulated in selling land for what use.

## Towns of Montour and Watkins

Do taxes have any effect on you regarding land use?  
Everyone said they had no idea; discussed home taxes

What are the current land use regulations?  
No one was very sure.

One individual thinks there should be land use regulation; another individual agreed. Both of them live in rural areas.

The one individual that lives out in the country says if it's his land, he should be able to do what he wants; at the same time he doesn't want someone to plop a trailer down next to him.

Discussion about the need for laws/regulations about junk accumulation in peoples' yards.

Regulations about shoveling snow for safety are important. Mention of possible regulations about junk sitting around in yards, etc. Aesthetics are important; junk piles decrease value of houses in neighborhood.

Individual that lives out of town/county [unclear which] states that those type of regulations aren't necessary for him as no one has to look at his yard or walk on his driveway.

Zoning if you live in a green area; you want it protected. However, zoning needs to protect the rights of the people. Eminent domain issue.

Mennonites in Watkins may very well be the families that have lived here longest.

Every time you make a regulation it will be a detriment to someone and benefit others.

The needs for rural properties are different than for properties in town with less space and more visibility.

Concern with eminent domain effect's on property owners, that it is being used for more economic development then it was originally meant.

Regulation and restricting rights of land owners.

Past community conversations were useful 5 years ago when big planning was happening- some of these visions/ideas still hold now.

There are always limits- budget, space, etc. that constrict what we can do.

Once precedent is set to have regulations, they could keep increasing, with more and more being regulated.

“That’s the way we’ve done it forever”- the word in Schuyler.

Those who made the place the way it is should have some say.

Sometimes people just don’t like change, even when it makes sense. (Sympathy for grandfathers, though.)