

DUTCHESS NEWS

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THIS WEEK'S
HANNAFORD
FLYER

Stanford Master Plan Committee on track to present draft in November

by Andrew Austin

STANFORDVILLE—The committee tasked with updating the town's master plan should have a draft ready for the public to look at sometime in November, the committee's chairperson said last Wednesday.

The master plan is a document spelling out how the people of Stanford want their community to develop over the coming years. It provides the Town Board and other boards with guidelines when making decisions about zoning, economic development, agriculture and more.

The original master plan dates back to 1980. In March 2010, a committee appointed by the Town Board began work updating it.

Now that work might be nearing its end. Committee Chairperson Carol Hanlon said, "We sincerely hope we can present this to the public in November ... I'm sure we can do that."

She said first the committee would present the plan to the Town Board for their review, and after Town Board suggestions are possibly incorporated into the draft, it would be presented to the public for further review and maybe further revisions.

The committee hopes to have the updated plan approved and in effect by the end of this year, said Hanlon.

The updated master plan currently includes sections covering issues like land use, community character, natural resources and the environment, utilities, groundwater and infrastructure. Hanlon said the committee's only remaining work is writing up sections about the existing condition of the town and about the history of the committee's work on the update over the last two years.

The final draft will also include the committee's suggestions to the Town Board for implementing the plan's goals, said Hanlon. It could include short-term, medium- and long-range goals.

Over the last two years the committee has worked with a consulting firm, Saccardi & Schiff/VHB, and spoke with various stakeholders in town, like the Grange, Conservation Advisory Council, Farm & Agriculture Committee and others.

In February, the committee hosted a public forum to gather residents' suggestions for what the final draft should look like, and to learn from residents how they want the town to develop in the future.

At that forum, attended by about 111 people, residents brought up ideas like preserving the town's rural charac-

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ter; providing housing for young families and senior citizens; and helping farming and small businesses. Some felt the hamlets of Stanfordville and Bangall need to be treated with different regulations, while some wanted the town to consider cluster development.

Other issues the groups came up with included protecting water resources, creating a noise ordinance, protecting rural roads by not widening or paving them and protecting trees.

Hanlon last week praised how the committee has worked together to complete the master plan updates.

"I think this has far and away been the best committee I've ever worked with," said Hanlon. She also praised Saccardi & Schiff/VHB for their work.

Committee Vice-Chairperson Gary Lovett said, "I think the most important feature of the plan is a renewed emphasis on preserving natural resources and agriculture in the town. This is what the overwhelming

majority of residents said they wanted during our public discussion meeting last winter."

Lovett said that to preserve natural resources and agriculture while still accommodating growth, the committee recommends increasing the density of housing and commercial activity in the hamlet of Stanfordville and preserving open space and agriculture in the outlying areas of the town.

Committee member John Royall said, "I think most of us are pretty happy with what's going on so far," and the committee has represented diverse points of view within the community. He said that once there is a public hearing, "hopefully people will familiarize themselves with what we're doing and give us their comments."

Royall encouraged people to come to the ongoing meetings: these are each second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 7:30 p.m. at Town Hall. The committee's Web site is www.stanfordmasterplan.org.