

**THE TOWN OF CHENANGO TOWN BOARD MET AT A SPECIAL MEETING FOR A PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, ON JANUARY 25, 2016, AT 6:00 P.M. AT THE TOWN OF CHENANGO TOWN HALL, 1529 N.Y. RT. 12, BINGHAMTON, N.Y.**

PRESENT: Harold Snopek, Supervisor  
Russ Hemedinger, Councilperson  
Jim DiMascio, Councilperson

ABSENT: Terry Kellogg, Councilperson  
Gene Hulbert, Councilperson

ALSO PRESENT: Rhonda D. Milks, Town Clerk  
Donald G. Walls, Town Attorney

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

Mr. Snopek asked everyone to stand and join in the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

The Town Board dispensed with the regular order of business because this meeting was solely for the purpose of the scheduled Public Hearing.

**PUBLIC HEARING- PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF CHENANGO**

Hal Snopek, Town Supervisor, informed the audience that this is a Public Hearing on the Comprehensive Plan. Russ and Jim have been working on this plan for many, many hours sending out questionnaires, speaking with Broome County and other Towns so on this note he turned the Public Hearing over to Mr. Hemedinger.

Russ Hemedinger-

Before the Town Board begins hearing your comments, I hope you don't mind if I take a few minutes to talk about what is in the plan, and where the contents came from.

First of all, I would like to thank the members of the Planning Board that worked so hard, and put so much thought into the entire contents of this plan.

A couple of the main items that drove this plan update were the availability of commercially zone land in the Town, and also energy exploration, which at that time was being driven by the possibility of gas drilling.

When the Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2005, monthly meetings were held for over 2 years. The only people that attended those meetings were the Planning Board, and other people working directly on the plan.

There was a public hearing held with the Town Board in this room and no one from the public even came.

For this update of the plan, we had at least a half dozen interested residents attend the monthly meetings, and many times there were closer to a dozen. There was at least one meeting that had to be held in this room because so many people came. At each monthly meeting, the Planning Board listened to anyone that had anything to say, and took all those comments into account when discussions arose.

All the meeting minutes have been posted on the Town website, as well as all the survey results and comments.

Much of the information in the plan comes from census data gathered in 2010. There is also some employment and housing data that came from other sources.

2005	2013
Rural 102 36% returned	Rural 98 37% return rate
Suburban 115 51% rate of return	Suburban 98 Return 35%
Business 150 27% return rate	196 27% return
Random 600 35% return	Random 1527 34% returned
Total 817	Total 1723

As part of this plan, surveys were sent out to all the businesses, and many of the households in the Town (see numbers above).

The Planning Board brought in a person from the gas industry to explain infrastructure requirements for natural gas drilling and distribution. We felt this was necessary to aid in making educated decisions regarding certain aspects of energy development.

We also consulted with the Broome County Planning Department. We sought their input since they have professional planners on staff.

The Broome County Planning Department recommended we reach out the other towns. That recommendation prompted our Ordinance Department to reach out to the Town of Windsor, since they seemed to be further along in their plan than any other town in the county. Unfortunately, at that time, they were farther behind in their plan than was anticipated, so offered nothing when asked.

The recommendations in this plan were based on the survey results and points that were brought up during discussions at the monthly meetings. Applications for land uses that came through the Ordinance Department were also considered regarding some of the recommendations.

In order for any of the land use change recommendations to be implemented, each one will require an action by the Town Board. They would include a public hearing, referral to the Broome County Planning Department and an environmental review.

This public hearing is your opportunity to comment on the contents and recommendations in this plan. We will not be answering any questions regarding the plan tonight during the formal process of this hearing.

After this hearing, the minutes will be distributed to the Board. Based on your input, and the existing contents of the plan, the Town Board will then decide what action we will take regarding all, or part of the plan.

We request you limit your comments to no more than 5 minutes. It is very important that you provide your name and address prior to giving your comments. Please only speak once. There are quite a few people here that have comments, and we want everyone to have that opportunity.

Before turning the Public Hearing over to the Town Attorney, Mr. Hemedinger asked Mr. DiMascio if he wanted to comment.

James DiMascio –

First and foremost he would like to commend the planning committee. They spent much time and effort working on this plan. Lastly and more importantly, he wanted to commend Russ himself as he has spent multiple years on this. Everyone has worked together, exchanged ideas, and now this document is a road map for the Town of Chenango’s future. We have done our best to create a fair plan for all our residents. Mr. DiMascio turned the meeting back over to Mr. Walls.

Mr. Walls –

The only comment that he is making is that the Town Law prescribes the format for the Comprehensive Plan and the results if it gets adopted. Section 272 of the Town Law requires that they have an environmental assessment, which they have done. They have met with the ERB and they have given us their input. They also proposed an environmental assessment long form study, which is also on file.

From this point, as Russ has stated, the Board has a Public Hearing and if they decide to amend the proposed plan they have to go to another Public Hearing. Finally, if they adopt it, understand that all the Town Code and Regulations, Zoning Classifications have to conform to that Master Comprehensive Plan. That is the legal requirements. The specifics of the Comprehensive Plan are available on the Town's Website for review. At this point we will open the Public Hear for comments or questions. You will address your questions to the front table.

Daryl Hartzell, 20 Pembroke Drive- she would like to congratulate the Planning Board. She truly appreciated all the consideration and hard work that went into the Plan. The Plan is a reflection of the wishes of the Town Residents as evidenced by the survey results. As somebody who came and attended a lot of the meetings, she appreciated how well we were received. She understands how difficult it can be after working in peace and quiet-not being put under a microscope, to suddenly having a lot of people with their questions. She is very pleased with the Town on how their questions were answered and comments listened to. She would urge the Town Board to adopt the Plan. She feels it's a good plan.

Charlotte Schotanus, 369 Port Road – She concurs with Daryl. She sat in on many of the meetings and appreciated them allowing us to give comments here and there. She agrees that the plan as it is including the energy development is fine with her. As it is worded now it is perfectly acceptable.

Eric L. Johnson, 1006 Castle Creek Road – Mr. Johnson read a letter showing his discontent with regards to the whole process. He felt that the Planning Board did not heed anything that he or other rural landowners had to say during the course of formulating the Comprehensive Plan. He feels that the Town of Chenango has established a pattern of not understanding issues that affect rural land owners for some time. He did not feel that they addressed the rural landowner, forester, logger, Ag. & Markets or sawmill operators relating to logging. He commented on issues where he felt his neighbors have more say on what he can do with his land than he does-referred to the Energy Development Zone. He also felt that the Comprehensive Plan does little, if anything, to address rural, agricultural or forest land use issues now or in the future. When he and his wife moved here thirty (30) years ago he did not realize how insignificant the rural portions of the Town were valued and how this has intensified going forward.

A full copy of his letter is on file with the Town Clerk.

Dave Johnson, 131 Brooks Road – Just wanted to express his concern. His is staggered by the amount of population that the southern tier has. That we have lost about 10%. That is not a good trend. The population here is aging. It's getting harder and harder every year to make a go of it as there is less foot traffic. You can't argue with results, it's right in the Comprehensive Plan so we have to make a go of it. He feels bad that the County has let us down and it is very disappointing.

With regards to Zoning – he seems to have a hard time reading that section and feels there should be a key at the top with some sort of explanation or description to help make it easier to read. He has no problem with the plan.

Daryl Hansen, 350 Port Road – He noticed that there was very little in the plan on the high volume fracking and it's probably because the State sat on it for so long. He would have liked to have seen something more positive in there on it.

He questioned the surveys used in the Comprehensive Plan as he never saw one. He is in the rural area and was wondering if they were sent out there.

Mr. Hemedinger answered the question – They had different groups/areas sent out and yes they did have a rural/suburban group that received the survey. Russ fully explained the survey process to Mr. Hansen and the audience. The recipients of the survey were actually picked by Broome County.

Mr. Walls asked if anyone else wished to speak at this time. Hearing from no one the Public Hearing was closed.

Mr. Snopek asked for a motion to adjourn. Moved by Jim DiMascio and seconded by Russ Hemedinger.

**Respectfully submitted by,**

**Rhonda D. Milks, Town Clerk  
Town of Chenango**