

MEETING SUMMARY

SUBJECT: Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan - Public Information Meeting

DATE: August 3, 2008

The Public Information Meeting for the Town of Alden Comprehensive Plan was held at the Alden Village Hall Auditorium on July 29, 2008. The following reflects the comments from the public during the course of the meeting:

General Comments

- Town Board should adopt plan, full adoption of the master plan is critical.
- Town needs to follow plan.
- Alden is defined as “rural” – commercial and industrial uses are related to the “ruralness”.
- Community is rural and has developed (or not developed) in this manner.
- Preserve character of Town and Village to make it an attractive destination (e.g. Lewiston and East Aurora).
- Preserve small town identity where people are the assets.
- Small town USA and its not broke.
- The image of Alden is important, but what is the image?
- Several towns have experienced an increase in population, while Erie County’s population has decreased by 2%.
- The Village should be the hub.
- Village and Town governments need to work together more.
- Reduce government costs (merge services with villages).
- Merger of Town and Village must consider issues related to Village water and sewer infrastructure.
- Connect village and town recreational amenities – multi-use trails and paths and connect to other communities.
- The welcoming, friendly atmosphere of Alden and safe place to live should be capitalized on.
- Is more growth desirable for the Town; Alden should become better, rather than bigger.
- Alden is nice the way it is – keep it that way.

Development/ Growth (residential)

- The Village should be the “hub”.
- Restrict commercial development to Village district boundaries.
- Need more housing options and other services for seniors.
- Walkability – connections to villages.
- Home occupation should be allowed but not disrupt surrounding uses.
- Study cost of services for home development as related to taxes (do a Nutter type study).
- High-density home development should be discouraged.
- Cater to the elderly so they can stay in the community (transportation, housing, etc.).
- Allow the town to grow without raising taxes.
- Consider condominium loopholes with regard to taxes and cluster development.

Development/ Growth (commercial)

- Growth is inevitable (determine where it should go and define what this growth should be).
- Growth does not always mean a better world or community.
- Grow at an appropriate scale.

- Commercial uses should be small in scale.
- Cap the size of retail establishments.
- Don't make Broadway into Transit Road.
- Capitalize on what we have now.
- Allow light commercial to mix with residential uses.
- Vacant properties with vacant buildings should be redeveloped.
- Adaptive reuse of existing development rather than developing green lands.
- Mixed uses "randomness" outside village and plan to take advantage of cultural changes.
- Land on Broadway is only zoned commercial 500' back from the road; this causes some parcels to have split zoning with landlocked backlands zoned differently.
- Limit size of big box retailers.

Agricultural

- 38% of Alden is farms that should be protected and maintained.
- Right to farm – zoning should support agriculture.
- Farming is important and farms are good for the tax base.
- Small farms contribute to the quality of the community.
- Broadway is an agricultural district with commercial zoning; this should be revised.
- Revisit distinction between commercial and agricultural development.
- Consider agricultural cooperative's.
- Hunting – consider as potential business opportunity for large property owners.
- Right to farm is very important and should be enacted.
- All farms are contributing to the rural character (large and small).
- Farms are a positive impact on the tax base – support them.
- Agriculture districts – how can commercial uses be allowed there?
- Agriculture is becoming more economically viable.
- Locally grown and organic produce will become more important – especially with rising fuel prices (makes small farms more important).

Environmental

- Wetlands should not be disturbed.
- Conservation should be practiced in subdivisions.
- Green areas should be connected.
- Develop the Town and Village with walkability, shops, etc (what makes it special?).
- The 100-year floodplain, aquifers and soil types should be taken into account.
- Create a community nature center (e.g. Reinstein House/preserve).
- Land should not be rezoned for a particular uses if other lands in the Town are already correctly zoned and available.
- Residential houses should be required to utilize solar energy to reduce their carbon footprint.
- Need more trees on West Main Street.
- All new buildings should be required to install solar panels on their roofs.

Utilities/ Infrastructure

- Localized energy production (gas wells for electric generation, harness hydroelectric power on Cayuga Creek, wind energy on Chaffee Farm, etc.).
- Adopt energy efficient development regulations (solar, etc.).
- Consider current road infrastructure and traffic conditions. Larger commercial development equals more traffic.
- High density development should not be allowed in areas of poor drainage and failing septic systems.
- Lack of historical creek maintenance has led to increased flooding and erosion.
- Municipal power community = stability.
- Localized energy production is possible.
- Recreational opportunities should be taken into consideration in the master plan.
- Existing road infrastructure should be taken into consideration in the master plan.