

PUBLIC HEARING
Town of Ghent
May 9, 2019

A public hearing before the Ghent Town Board on May 9, 2019 at 7:30 p.m. at the Ghent Town Hall, Route 66, Ghent, New York 12075, for the purpose of considering the adoption of Local Law No. 1 of 2019, which sets forth various changes to the Code of the Town of Ghent, Chapter 190 (Zoning), Sections 190-2 through 190-15; 190-17 through 190-19; 190-21 through 190-27; 190-49; 190-57; 190-61; 190-67 through 190-69; 190-72; Appendices A, B, C, D and E; and Attachment 6. The changes have been recommended to the Ghent Town Board by the Ghent Zoning Review Committee. At the beginning of the public hearing members of the Ghent Zoning Review Committee will make a brief presentation of the proposed changes. A copy of the proposed Local Law has been posted to the Town of Ghent website. Interested parties may also obtain a copy of the proposed Local Law from the Ghent Town Clerk during normal business hours.

Supervisor Benvenuto open the Public Hearing at 7:30 pm and read the notice aloud.

Chairman of the ZBA Lew Streeter also a member of the ZRC spoke on the third phase of the direct review of the code. This review is to fix inconsistencies with the code in general.

Chairman of the GPB Geoff French also a member of the ZRC gave a brief overview of the changes to the Code of the Town of Ghent, Chapter 190 (Zoning), Sections 190-2 through 190-15; 190-17 through 190-19; 190-21 through 190-27; 190-49; 190-57; 190-61; 190-67 through 190-69; 190-72; Appendices A, B, C, D and E; and Attachment 6 . Most of the changes were to clean up language and definitions. Reviewed the zoning of the CC airport.

Chairman Streeter- The comp plan from 2009 was used to review the code so it would be in compliance with the plan. Started in 2017 with review, two years of work.

Nan Stolzenburg- Consultant on ZRC- Changes that were implemented to align with comp plan to keep rural and community character. Code to meet goals for Town were thoroughly thought out.

Koethi Zan- Member of ZBA and ZRC- Committee put a lot of thought and passion into the process and progress has been made. Now is the time for the Town Board and public to review. Highlighted concerns are the use tables, commercial sawmills should not be allowed in RRA-1 or RRA-2. Agricultural processing (slaughterhouses) should be only in commercial zoned areas. Light manufacturing should be only allowed in commercial zones as well. Banquet hall /wedding venue concept in RRA-1 or RRA-2 zone needs to be mindful of neighbors, otherwise many improvements.

Chairman Streeter- All these processes are still going to require special permits from the Planning board, with conditions set forth depending on situation.

Mitchell Khosvora- Zoning and Planning Attorney- special permitted use contains more oversight, a SEQUA review with potential impacts and a full review process.

Mike Benvenuto- Hard to speak of future, but very comfortable with zoning and planning decisions that have adequately address concerns and impacts for the Town.

Jonathan Walters- former member of PB- the Town has worked hard to get a high quality of residents to serve on the Planning and Zoning boards. They understand the law and do due diligence to administer it with respect to the residents and the applicant. Public hearings are required so everyone on both sides can be heard and reasonable standards set.

Patti Matheney- TB – Was the Non nuisance industry allowed in these zones before? Animal Processing and Sawmills?

Lew Streeter- no, but now the all require special permit use permit.

Supervisor Benvenuto- Asked if anyone had any written statements they would like to submit to board. Stephanie Lazar and David Newman submitted written comments.

Sheldon Evans- Wants the banquet hall provision to be commercial zoned only. Buffer zones are not enough protection. Does not want to live next to a slaughter house, sawmill or light non-nuisance business. Comfortable with current board, worried about the future.

Brenda Gevertz- neighbor of Art Omi, there needs to be very specific guidelines for events and more specifications for banquet hall venues.

Dan Barufaldi- PB member- Appreciates all the hard work form the ZRC. Planned Residential Districts should handle the review, the Town Board should not be the first review. Slaughterhouses should be only in zoned commercial. Banquet hall special permits request seems sufficient reason of expectation.

Dan Gibson- there is not an animal harvest facility located in Columbia County. Closer one is and 1 ½ away. It is animal welfare approved and regulated and USDA inspected. We are an agricultural community and should find a reasonable solution.

Lew Streeter- Agricultural processing not only includes meat, it also defines a facility where plant and plants products are processed as well. Example may be “Farm to table” business.

Keith Gibson- These buildings would be no bigger than 10,000 square feet, and would not be large style slaughterhouses.

Stephanie Lazar- How many animals could be in 10,000 square feet, how many employees? Can the volume of processing be limited?

Conrad Coon- the Planning Board would be regulating and hopefully local farmers can benefit.

Craig Simmons- would this effect home occupied business such as private deer processors?

Patti Matheney- what is the estimate of jobs for a slaughterhouse and a banquet venue?

Geoff French- No economic review in zoning code.

Phil Trowbridge- A large slaughterhouse would never happen in Columbia County. Harvest facilities are small and require strict USDA inspections.

Kirk Kneller- What is the definition of a banquet hall in the new code. Is it subject to special use permit and conditions? Does this include wedding s held on private property and limit how many in a year?

Geoff French- current law allows private weddings, the new code would include a wedding venue. This use is not under the concert/festival law.

Resident- Does this include farming events and have minimal acreage requirement?

Resident- Seems like we want to allow these quite popular venues and they would include a lot of investment from the owner, but clear restrictions at the beginning will protect us in the future.

Stephanie Lazar- read aloud her statement on special event venues.

Phil Trowbridge- Art Omi is an art and cultural center, are special permits required or number of events restricted.

Geoff French- Phase 1 and 2 of the code was designed to be very specific to protect neighbors and the language of the law was strengthened. They have to follow the law and code.

Dave Newman- Submitted letter, but stresses the importance of focusing on rural characters especially with PRD's. PDR's should be removed from RRA-1 and RRA-2 districts.

Gary Berstien- Plan overall looks good, we do need affordable housing tied into the economy.

Geoff French- More comments should be received, suggests keeping Public hearing open until May 16th for written comments.

Motion made by Councilman Mort, seconded by Councilwoman Matheney to keep hearing open. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Radley
Town Clerk

