



**Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
Zoom Hybrid Meeting
Meeting Minutes
February 25, 2026
Approved: March 11, 2026**

Committee Members Present: Acting Chair Elizabeth Weatherby, Roxanne Marino, Karl Klankowski, Tai Basilius, Alison Weaver, Katelin Olson

Committee Members Present on Zoom:

Committee Members Absent: Ann DiPetta, Karen Meador, Mo Klein, Kim Moore

Quorum Present

Comp Plan Consultant Present: Matt Horn, Jessica Geary

Town Staff Present: Lori Asperschlager, Niels Tygesen

Members of the Public Present: Rich Goldman, Shirley Brown, Margaret Przygocki, Linda Liddle, Helen McLallen, Nancy Zahler, Cameron Neuhuff

Members of the Public Present on Zoom: iPhone (238), Mack Rovenolt

Proceedings

Acting Chair Elizabeth Weatherby called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm at the Town Hall.

Approval of Agenda

Marino would like to include a discussion about where to go during next steps.

Motion: Klankowski motioned to approve the agenda; Weaver seconded. **Passed unanimously.**

APPROVAL OF PAST MINUTES (January 28, 2026 and February 11, 2026)

January 28, 2026 minutes

Motion: Klankowski approved the past minutes; Olson seconded. **Passed unanimously.**

February 11, 2026 minutes

Motion: Klankowski approved the amended past minutes; Weaver seconded. **Passed unanimously.**

PUBLIC HEARING (Continued Hearing of the Draft 2025-2045 Comp Plan)

Motion: Weatherby re-opened the public hearing; Klankowski seconded. **Passed unanimously.**

Margaret Przygocki spoke about her concern that the change to medium density residential on Cold Springs Road would negatively impact her life and would like to see Cold Springs Road as agricultural character area.

Shirley Brown spoke about the need for transparency regarding the reason for the change from the 2009 comprehensive plan that had large agricultural areas to the current draft of the future land use map that includes medium density residential in those same areas.

Nancy Zahler spoke regarding the area where she lives on Agard/Route 96. Written comments are included.

Rich Goldman spoke about his concerns regarding Waterburg Hamlet that has been designated as historic being changed on the future land use map.

Liddle asked if the written comments coming in from the recent meetings can be available for the public to read.

Motion: Olson tabled the public hearing until next meeting; Klanowski seconded. **Passed unanimously.**

FUTURE LAND USE MAP Medium Density Residential Amendments, Continued Discussion

Horn gave a brief update on the changes made to the FLUM at the last meeting, including the addition of the development districts character area. If a business exists currently inside of one of the legacy development districts character areas and as long as the character and nature of the business doesn't change or the impact on the surrounding properties doesn't intensify, then that property can continue to be characterized as a business. The intent is to identically mirror the development districts that have already been approved through zoning and MRB is still refining the FLUM to show that.

Olson spoke in response to S. Brown's request for transparency. The survey mailed to residents and the public responses noted a desire for more housing, recreational spaces, increased youth services, and protected farm land. The thought is that the best place to put more housing (in-fill housing) is where there is already public water.

Marino spoke about natural landscape features and handed out maps to the committee members. Recommendation on table by Marino: Change the majority area of Agriculture District 2 to agricultural character area from medium density residential. Weatherby seconded.

The committee discussed current parcels with rural residential, low density residential, and medium density residential to change to agriculture and natural resources character area and there were concerns about changing most of Ag District 2 to the agriculture and natural resources character area and the FLUM not being representative of what are on the parcels now.

Marino spoke about the decisions there were made when the 2009 comprehensive plan was written and there was a desire to protect agriculture and the industrial farmers wanted to be able to divide their land if they wanted. The committees that handled the 2009 plan and the 2019 zoning wanted to balance both residential and farming needs.

Basillius spoke about thinking of the FLUM as an opportunity map, to allow for opportunity and growth in the town.

Weatherby called a vote to change the majority of Ag District 2 areas back to agriculture character area and change the word of the character area to allow for housing.

Mariano, aye; Olson, nay; Weatherby, nay; Weaver, nay; Basilius, nay; Klankowski, no vote.

MRB would offer to do a 4-hour work session, the public could come, but no public comment. Tygesen will do a poll to the committee to find a good time to meet.

Motion: Olson motioned to adjourn; Klankowski seconded. **Passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Lori Asperschlager, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Secretary
March 11, 2026

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 1:17 PM
To: Comp Plan Steering Committee
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Comp Plan Comments - Future Land Use - Provision for future growth

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment again on the latest Comprehensive Plan Update.

Please consider the following comments:

Chapter 2 B: Future Land Use:

There seems to be a lack of strategy and goals that specifically address 2025-2045 development trends for rural areas including: renewable energy; AgTech (Drones/AI); and Advanced Manufacturing.

- Are there lessons learned from the Town of Lansing's lack of specifically defined zoning, and the Town of Dryden's recent zoning updates with respect to AI Data Centers and Cryptocurrency, that could be included in the Comprehensive Plan to provide the strategy and framework for future zoning updates? It would make sense that the Comprehensive Plan puts forth a strategy that protects the rural / agricultural, historic and natural features in addition to protecting the residents from other energy intensive/**power** requirements that are not part of the current or planned infrastructure. Power is not mentioned as one of the key infrastructure requirements but should be.
- While the Cayuga Nature Center is mentioned, there doesn't appear to be a strategy to protect it or the Lake Shore from the impacts of industrial mining or brine storage. Should there be a goal and objectives associated with protecting these areas?
- Development districts: There seems to be a conflict between the FLUM definitions and the zoning development districts which seem to have little to no restrictions. Should the Comprehensive Plan bridge the FLU with a strategy to improve at least some of those districts (i.e., Gorge Road) which doesn't seem, by observation, to meet the goals.

Figure LR-5, Town of Ulysses Zoning Map, is not legible.

Thank you for your hard work and consideration.

Best regards,
Chris Collins
Town of Ulysses Resident

From: jeff brown [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 2:02 PM
To: Comp Plan Steering Committee
Subject: Comprehensive plan rezoning

It appears that the new comprehensive plan map is changing several properties on Trumansburg rd from Commercial to "mixed use", including a parcel I own at [REDACTED]. I take issue with this because I paid a premium price for this commercial property, and rezoning it to mixed use could drastically change its value. I'm sure any real estate professional could tell you that most commercial property is of higher value than properties that are not zoned commercial. Many business owners have made great efforts to improve the hamlet of Jacksonville. Please consider the implications the proposed rezoning could have on these commercial properties.

Jeff Brown
Brownie's Produce Market
[REDACTED]

From: Mary Sweeney [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 11:45 PM
To: Comp Plan Steering Committee
Subject: Comments on proposed Comprehensive Plan for Ulysses
Attachments: Screen Shot 2026-02-13 at 2.42.22 AM.png

Comments submitted by Mary Sweeney, [REDACTED], Trumansburg, NY
[REDACTED]

My husband and I own and live in a house in the hamlet of Waterburg. One of the things that jumped out at me when I first looked at the map of proposed future land use was that there was a little blue island in a sea of other colors. Looking more closely I realized that Waterburg made up a substantial portion of this little island. So then I went looking for a color code and found that the little blue island was to be designated a "mixed use neighborhood" with dense residential and business development, described in an earlier draft as 30 housing units per acre, and illustrated with a photo of a row of brownstones! In the most recent draft the brownstone photo has been removed and I could not find a number for how many housing units are expected per acre, even though this is information citizens should have.

Waterburg is not on a main road. It is not immediately adjacent to the Village of Trumansburg and is certainly not immediately adjacent to Ithaca. It does not have public sewer and water facilities. It is not near public transportation. And significantly enlarging the population of Waterburg is quite likely to increase the number of people commuting from this area to Ithaca, adding to greenhouse gases and traffic snarls. There seems no logical reason to single out Waterburg and the land immediately adjacent to it for dense development other than the fact that, owing largely to the presence of Taughannock Creek, there is already a small cluster of existing homes here. It really seems that just because Waterburg has been designated as a "hamlet" an assumption was made that it's a great place for further growth even though in the modern world it is not an especially good place for such growth. I have outlined some additional concerns below.

HISTORIC HAMLET

Most of the homes in Waterburg are old--even historic. Our own home is a modestly sized Greek-Revival-style structure built around 1863. It's on a lot of about 3/4 of an acre. According to our deed the original owners of the home were Abner Treman Jr. and his wife Jemima. The historic Greek Revival style is common in Waterburg. Apart from some small, tasteful additions, the exteriors of these homes appear to be largely unchanged since the 19th century. Waterburg is also home to a 19th-century Greek Revival building that originally functioned as a church and is now an Airbnb. The former church's lot is also the site of a carefully restored buggy barn and a small pond that provides habitat for aquatic creatures. All in all, a stroll through our little hamlet would give one a pretty good idea of what it was like here a century and a half ago, except, of course, for the missing mills and blacksmith shops, which, understandably, are long gone and not likely to ever return. It would seem that preserving this area would be very much in line with a goal shared by both the Tompkins County and Ulysses planning documents--i.e. preserving the region's history.

Most of the lots in the designated "mixed use neighborhood" in Waterburg are already occupied by modest homes. Much of the unoccupied area in and near the hamlet is either too steep to build on or is on a

floodplain, as indicated by the FEMA map of our area. [See attached screen capture of map, below. Map was obtained by entering "Waterburg, NY" at <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search>]

Realistically, the only way to create high-density housing and accompanying businesses in the hamlet would be to raze a number of the existing historic homes. I doubt that this is really the intention of the planning board, but if it is, then current residents deserve to be aware of that fact. If it is not, then I think it would be helpful to all if this portion of the proposed plan were revised to reflect the actual intention of the planning board.

ADDING BUSINESSES TO WATERBURG

My husband and I used to live in the Village of Windsor, NY. On Windsor's main street there is a long row of storefronts. Some have been awkwardly converted into substandard housing. Others rotate between standing empty for months or years at a time and being occupied by new businesses that quickly fail. Even the very conveniently located, surprisingly well-stocked, generations-old pharmacy could not compete with the CVS in Binghamton--and this was in a village with an aging population in need of a convenient place to fill prescriptions.

I understand the appeal of walkable neighborhoods because I grew up in one in Scranton, PA. But my old neighborhood lost almost all of its businesses a long, long time ago as local residents chose to shop instead at large chain stores out on the highway. It's nice to dream of re-creating walkable neighborhoods, but I doubt that this is a realistic approach unless/until major changes occur at the national level to end the monopolistic practices that have given a huge edge to giant corporations that can easily out-compete small establishments. The only new business that successfully occupied a vacant storefront in Windsor is a Subway that put the locally owned restaurant down the street out of business.

In today's world, small businesses face stiff competition not just from brick-and-mortar chain stores, but from online stores. Encouraging the establishment of retail or restaurant businesses in an area like Waterburg is quite likely to end with a row of hopefully constructed but ultimately empty storefronts, just as we now see in so many small towns. Note also that any retail/restaurant businesses that did manage to survive in Waterburg would tend to draw customers away from existing businesses in the Village of Trumansburg.

The type of businesses that would make sense in the hamlet of Waterburg are those that don't compete directly with chain or online stores and that can be seamlessly integrated into a residential neighborhood--i.e. the businesses that are already permitted in the current zoning code (e.g. in-home professional offices, family child care, bed-and-breakfasts).

NATURAL RESOURCES

Another of the stated goals in the proposed plan is the protection of natural resources. The hamlet of Waterburg is in the midst of many acres of farmland. I understand the need for farmland, but I also know that cleared acreage where monoculture is practiced, pesticides and herbicides are used, and the soil is frequently tilled does not provide good habitat for wildlife.

I am not a biologist or wildlife specialist but I am an avid gardener and I spend a lot of time outside. I can tell you that Waterburg is home to an astonishing variety of wildlife including various species of songbirds, hummingbirds, great blue herons, owls, various species of amphibians, many pollinating insects including several types of native bees and many species of butterflies. Fireflies, which face extinction in much of their

range, are common here, as are threatened monarch butterflies. We are even visited now and then by prehistoric-looking pileated woodpeckers.

Taughanock Creek runs through the hamlet, most lots have large trees, the lawns are not manicured "carpets" soaked with herbicides and pesticides, some of us have encouraged native plants to grow in our yards and/or to allow some areas to go unmown, we have reasonably clean air, and we also have fairly dark skies at night--a crucial element that is often overlooked. Waterburg is not just a hamlet, it's habitat--a little green island of biodiversity. Areas such as this should be preserved and, ideally, connected to similar areas with green corridors that can be easily traveled by wildlife. Reducing greenspace, adding lights, adding traffic and noise--all of the things that would accompany denser development--will make this little green island far less liveable for the many nonhuman creatures that currently enjoy its benefits and in turn pass benefits on to humans.

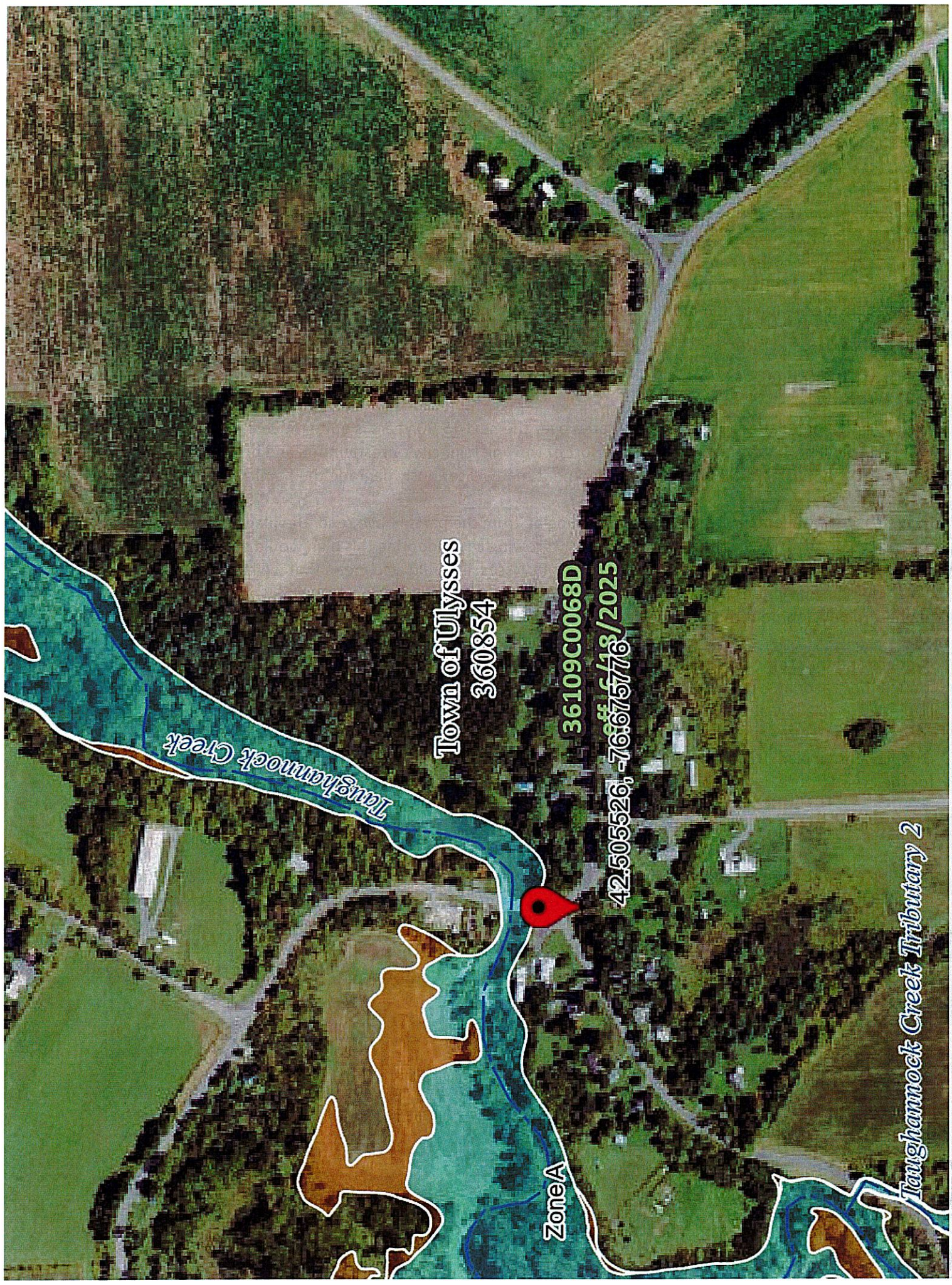
POPULATION INCREASE

The projected population increase for our area over the next 15-20 years is quite modest. In reality, Waterburg will probably not become some sort of thriving mini-city of restaurants and brownstones. But the proposed plan MIGHT allow a level of development that will seriously degrade the hamlet, as described above.

I have not read the entire proposed plan, but judging from the parts I have read, the plan seems more suitable for an area on the outskirts of a large and rapidly growing city. Adopting this plan would not only threaten many of the positive characteristics of the Town of Ulysses, it would also mean that we have failed to develop a plan that IS appropriate to likely future needs. Without an appropriate plan we could end up with the sort of haphazard development that would occur with no plan.

I understand that some amount of growth is expected and I am not opposed to preparing for it. For example, it might be reasonable in an area of pre-existing homes to allow single-family dwellings to be converted to duplexes, or to allow auxiliary dwelling units (as is the case in current zoning for Waterburg). I understand that such details are ultimately worked out with zoning, but I also understand that zoning is guided by the comprehensive plan. It is therefore crucial that the plan is a good match to the area and to a realistic scenario for the area's future. In my opinion this proposed plan fails to meet those criteria.

Creating a comprehensive plan is a difficult task and I thank you for the work you have done to date. But I also hope you will reconsider those parts of the plan that might forever change this area in very negative ways. Please preserve our habitats and our history, not only in the little hamlet of Waterburg but throughout Ulysses. We ought to be able to provide appropriately sized, affordable housing for the expected increase in population without ruining the wonderful characteristics we all enjoy and which could and should be enjoyed by future generations. Thank you for your time and attention.



Town of Ulysses
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Zone A

Taughannock Creek

Taughannock Creek Tributary 2

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, February 15, 2026 8:17 PM
To: Comp Plan Steering Committee
Subject: small agriculture support in Comp Plan

Hello,

It has been really difficult for me to make the meetings for public comment that are scheduled on Wednesdays. I will try to provide comments to the entire draft. At the same time I ask that any draft include STRONG MEASURES TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESULTING LOSS OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, specifically

1. PLEASE take steps to assure that Ulysses SMALL FARMERS have markets for, labor for and needed economic inputs and profits from their farms, ESPECIALLY those using organic, biodynamic, and other methods that maintain fertile soil without pesticide and fertilizer run off that adversely affects Town of Ulysses waterways and environmental health.

This is especially critical for multi-generation farmers.

One of many reports of recent warning from leaders of agriculture nationwide of imminent collapse of agriculture, especially small farm agriculture, from the effects of the current administration's anti-farm anti-immigrant policies: https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2ffarmpolicynews.illinois.edu%2f2026%2f02%2fag-leaders-warn-of-risk-of-widespread-collapse-of-american-agriculture%2f&c=E,1,ppWhglf8TkR730x3ncyA7yeLLXlue5ZTN6dTgoMtA4_JtAr0ag_Sptxcnt3YgGcD7Ao141uuaNJRWeFkst0yvkhAQZsyvvc6xOH8aF3ASC97u5dFGnASA_fD&typo=1

2. PLEASE set a target and provide action steps to achieve a SIGNIFICANT INCREASE in total acreage of non-hybridized non-treated native plant seed and plants in the Town of Ulysses.

There is no argument that native pollinators and birds are in steep decline from loss of habitat and resulting loss of insects that feed bird young. Co-evolved species dependent insects REQUIRE native plants to reproduce. Standard lawn maintenance procedures and blue light from street lights, display lights, and businesses with parking lot or internal lights left on overnight interfere with overwintering, growth of and mating of native insects. Assembly member Kelles has introduced legislation requiring NYS DEC to provide lists of native plants by regions.

I already provided model and existing zoning legislation from multiple townships for requiring or prioritizing the use of non-hybridized non-pesticide treated native plants in all Town land management, in any new business or housing development AND encouraging replacement of lawn and non-native cultivars in residential areas.

Every residential increase in lawn and cultivated plants is loss of habitat. Every increase in development of wetlands is loss of habitat.

NO homeowner should face complaints or actions against their replacement of lawn with native plants.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Vivien Rose
[REDACTED]

As I have outlined before, in previous meetings and in written comments, the property I own on the southeast side of Rte 227 is different in character from the other properties classified as Low Density Residential along that side of 227. The other properties are strictly residential; the bulk of my property's 24.66 acres is agricultural. My parcel does not fit the definition of Low Density Residential as defined in the draft comprehensive plan. Nor does it fit the Rural Residential classification, which does not include active agricultural use and is defined by a smaller parcel size (< 7 acres). That leaves the Agricultural and Natural Resources land use designation as the only character area as currently defined in the draft comprehensive plan that accurately describes my property.

I would refer you to my written comments submitted two weeks ago, and to Map 4, Ulysses Land Use and Land Cover Map in the draft comprehensive plan. While dated 2015, the agricultural use of my property has not changed since then, with my fields still rented and worked by the same farmer.

In addition, I would like to say that at the last meeting, on January 28, there was considerable discussion of multiple properties that are classified as Agricultural on the current land use map which are no longer in agricultural use and are now purely residential. The argument was made that those properties should be recharacterized as residential, not as agricultural.

My property is the exact opposite case. In your proposed land use type map you are erroneously trying to recharacterize a property which is in active agricultural production as purely residential. It is not.

I am asking that you reconsider this misclassification and place my property back in the agricultural use type, as it has long been, still is, and we intend to keep it.

Thank you.

From: [Elizabeth Weatherby](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Comp Plan Comments on Moderate Density 2/25/26
Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026 3:54:59 PM

Forwarding the comments Nancy Zahler read during the Public Hearing last night.

Regards,
Liz

On Wed, Feb 25, 2026 at 5:22 PM Nancy Zahler <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Nancy Zahler [REDACTED] commenting as a private citizen where I reside with partner Judy Barringer on 2 acres on the corner of Agard rd and Rt 96 across from the newly proposed commercial mixed use zone on Rt 96
This property highlighted in red is currently one of the Town's development districts.

Given the owner's ideas about possible development, it seems that a Planned Unit Development would be more appropriate than commercial mixed use. A PUD could include a health center or a home and garden center or small footprint retail or a restaurants. These or similar planned uses would be more appropriate than an unregulated commercial zone that allows high traffic, brightly lit big box stores that would be in the backyards of the new homes planned for Halseyville road.

The proposed Future Land Use Map has also designated most of Agard Rd between 96 and Jacksonville rd for future moderate density development and I disagree.

First, the section of Agard Rd between Rt 96 and Jacksonville Rd has several areas that are farmland, some of which are actively farmed and they should remain agricultural since maintaining agriculture and open space is a priority in the plan.

Second, as I understand it, other areas designated for moderate density are in areas where public water is or may be available to support denser development. This section of Agard Rd seems unlikely to have public water in the next twenty years since a recent survey of landowners along RT 96 showed some desire for water but inability or unwillingness to pay the high cost of a water district. Similarly, I'm pretty sure my neighbors with well water on Agard Rd may not be able to afford the cost of running a water line down the road.

Therefore, the parcels along Agard between 96 and Jacksonville Rd should remain rural residential or low density rural, like the next section of Agard that runs east to Willow Creek.

Third, the 55 acre parcel that runs from Agard Rd to Taughannock Creek along Rt 96 is currently an undeveloped natural area that used to be farmed before it has been allowed to grow back. It has been logged in the past and could be again in the future. The land is very wet and potential buyers have been reluctant to develop it. The land is a natural area more

appropriate for conservancy.

Since the Draft Plan continues to value open space and natural areas, I'd recommend the moderate density designation be changed to Ag/natural areas.

Thank you.

Nancy Zahler

