

# LANSGING COMMUNITY NEWS

Serving the Town and Village of Lansing, Cayuga Heights, King Ferry & Genoa

"Not quite paradise, but a nice place to live."

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## Lansing Forum Hosts Discussion of Zoning Issues

By Matthew Shulman

Though many of the 46 folks who braved gusty snow squalls last Thursday evening to attend the Lansing Forum's meeting about zoning at the Lansingville Fire Hall already had definite opinions (both pro and con) about town zoning, the overriding sentiment was that the Town Board needs to make a greater effort to open up the public input process before bringing the pending zoning ordinance to the Public Hearing stage.

The meeting was called by the nonpartisan Lansing Forum - a citizens' group comprised of people with a wide range of views that holds periodic meetings for residents to get information and discuss local issues. Previous meetings have dealt with the school building project and the issue of teen drug and alcohol use. The Forum arranged the Jan. 16 meeting as the Town Board reviews the draft zoning ordinance it received several months ago from the Town Planning Board. The Forum sees itself as an informational facilitator and takes no position on the issues.

The Forum brought two guests to Lansingville to provide general background information about the process followed in New York State in designing, enacting and implementing zoning ordinances.

David Kay, of the Cornell Local Government Program and a member of the City of Ithaca's Planning Board, reported that, according to the Legislative Commission on



**A FULL HOUSE** - Extra chairs were needed to accommodate the crowd at the Lansing Forum's meeting on zoning at the Lansingville Fire Hall.

Rural Resources, Lansing is one of the fastest growing towns in the state. Currently, half the state's towns have comprehensive plans and 70 percent have zoning regulations. The Town of Lansing is the only New York town to be partially zoned.

"Zoning ultimately succeeds or fails to the extent that it accurately reflects broadly held community goals," said Kay. Arguments about zoning frequently confuse two different issues, he went on. There are certainly some philosophical differences about the role of government, but the real debate often comes down to community agreement on the distribution of different land uses within a town. "You've got to work on consensus on what you want to achieve as a town," he concluded.

"What makes zoning good or bad is how the community's input shapes not only the zoning map, but also the written regulations that accompany the map," said Joan Jurkovich, Tompkins County's Chief of Comprehensive Land Use Planning. "Look at what you want to accomplish and limit your zoning to that," she said.

### Public Reaction

While finding the general information useful, a fair number of attendees had expected to be able to discuss the specifics of Lansing's proposed ordinance - and some of these had already made their minds up about accepting or rejecting any zoning at all.

♦"Where is the clamor for zoning coming from?" asked former Town Supervisor Herbert "Bud" Howell. ♦"If the town is considering a sewer system we need zoning or we'll lose control of the situation," commented real estate broker George Gesslein. ♦"Why do so many people want to move into this lousy town that has no zoning?" asked dairyman Gordon Cook.

In the absence of Town Board members at the Forum meeting, Planning Board member Brad Griffin explained that zoning already exists in Lansing. The proposed ordinance was prepared over a two year period by a quite di-

verse Planning Board who drew heavily from input generated by several of the **Lansing 2010** committees.

"Zoning is discriminatory," said Duane Ray. "I started with nothing and bought a little trailer. Now the money people don't like trailers and ordinary people won't have the same chance I had." Ray said he was told he wouldn't be able to retire to a mobile home once the zoning went into effect unless a trailer was already legally in place beforehand. "I had to subdivide my land and put a trailer on my lot to stay one step ahead. It's cut and dry," he concluded. "We'll have two public meetings and the five (Town) Board members will pass it."

South Lansing resident Tom Ellis had another point of view. He thinks that zoning could have preserved a better quality of life than he has now. "It's too late in central South Lansing," he said describing uses that have grown around his home, "but we need to do something to protect land use without being invasive."

As the meeting drew to a close, three themes emerged. First, everyone agreed that it's pretty tough to get people to come out and participate in the planning process before proposals are drawn. In spite of this, Forum attendees don't like the idea of a 5-person board having complete authority to enact legislation without a referendum. Third, the absence of a concrete zoning proposal to look at is troubling to many.

"It's representative democracy," said Kay, "but there are lots of ways to make your voices heard."



**MEMBER** Brad Griffin explains how the diverse Town Planning Board developed a draft zoning ordinance based on 2010 Committees' research.

## North/South Lansing Network Forming For Small Businesses

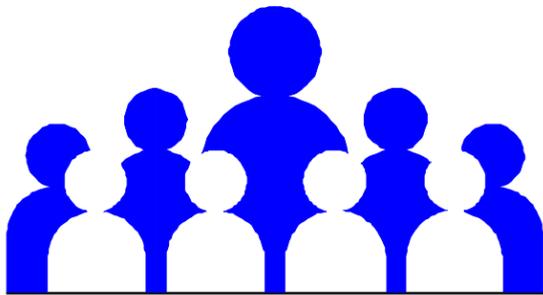
By Marie C. Almon

Originally the word "networking" was used to describe an intricate type of needle art. Aristocratic women would thread a needle with a slender silk ribbon and work designs into netting. Today, business people extend their contacts, and the community's prosperity, by casting another type of "net" to coordinate their activities and bring one another more client contacts.

Over the last few months, several local business people have been quietly working to create an informal network to promote business activity in North and South Lansing. On February 12, this effort will bear fruit when the **North/South Lansing Network** holds its organizational breakfast at 7:00 am at Celie's Diner at 121 Ridge Road.

Marie C. Almon (owner of Equine Episodes), her husband Grey T. Larison (Exec. Director of Nature Episodes), Kirk Shreve (manager of the Lansing Funeral Home) and Matthew Shulman (publisher of the Lansing Community News) have all sought feedback on the usefulness of small businesses meeting for a monthly breakfast to get acquainted and to talk about common business needs and concerns.

The unanimous opinion of everybody any of us has talked to, said Almon, is that a monthly breakfast is not only doable but very desirable. "One of the people we spoke to made a point of saying that she doesn't know the businesses on either side of hers because there's never time during the workday to go see any of them," Almon said.



MEETING TOGETHER MAKES US ALL STRONGER

"There are no officers, no dues and no projects," said coordinator Almon. "Though we're charging two dollars admission to the first breakfast, that's just to be able to buy some stamps."

Larison sees no need to turn the **North/South Lansing Network** into a structured organization. "None of us has that kind of time," he said. He just feels there's a need for contact among small businesses. "I'd just like to know about the great copy machine somebody just bought that's working fine; to know if anybody else got a call from a certain telemarketer and was the offer legitimate? That kind of thing would be invaluable to me."

Shreve, who leads the Lansing Lions as well as manag-

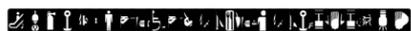
ing the Lansing Funeral Home, has long felt the lack of such an organization for small businesses. "I'm out here in the country with a new, relatively small operation. I don't have the same concerns or needs as a manufacturer with a large payroll." He also said that the cost of belonging to some organizations poses a hardship to small businesses like his, "But just getting together to talk is a great idea."

"Larry Sharpsteen (Town Planning Board chair) told me that a survey taken 18 months ago showed nearly 200 small businesses scattered throughout Lansing," said Shulman. "If we get together, share our knowledge and pull together we can be a potent force to maintain a diversified economy and build a community base to create jobs close to home."

And get together they will, with all small business people (from self-employed one-person operations to companies with many employees) who would like to join them. The first breakfast of the **North/South Lansing Network** will be at 7:00 am at Celie's Diner. All this quartet asks is that you show up with two business cards [your admission tickets]; contribute two bucks to the postage fund; buy your own breakfast; and visit with as many other small business people as you can in the time you have.

One of the business cards will be laminated for use as an ID tag for future meetings and the other will go into the **North/South Lansing Network** scrapbook.

(Cont'd on page 6)



Thomas Lickona

## RAISING CHILDREN OF GOOD CHARACTER: WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

Thursday, January 30 from 7:30-9:00 pm at the Lansing High School Auditorium

How can we teach our children right from wrong in a world that often doesn't recognize the difference?

Are there successful techniques that we can use to foster moral development in everyday family life?

Come hear Dr. Lickona. They're only our children. It's only their future.