

Meeting Notes

Comprehensive Plan Assessment Committee (CPAC)

6PM, Thursday, January 10, 2013, Town Hall Auditorium

Attendees: James Booker, Joseph Castiglione, Linda Jasinski, Edward Kleinke, Jill Knapp, Valerie Newell, John Privitera, Lee Rosen, Loretta Simon, Bruce Smith, Paul Tick, David VanLuven

Elected Officials & Town Staff Present: John Clarkson, John Smolinsky, Bill Reinhardt, Mike Morelli, George Leveille, Robert Leslie, Leah Farrell, Kathleen Reid, Nan Lanahan

Meeting Summary

Supervisor Clarkson opened the meeting introducing three guests from the Department of State: Bill Sharp, Principal Attorney; Bonnie Devine and John Wimbush, Coastal Resources Specialists. Due to Scheduling conflicts Councilman Kotary has stepped down and Councilman Bill Rheinhardt has taken his place, which preserves the Town Board's (two person) representation that is consistent with meetings such as this. Nan Lanahan, Director of Parks & Recreation for the Town of Bethlehem was also in attendance.

Mike Morelli, Director of Economic Development & Planning, provided a presentation on the Draft Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP). The development of the LWRP was assisted by a nine member Waterfront Advisory Committee, whose goal was to discuss the vision for Bethlehem's 10-miles of waterfront (from Albany to Coeymans). Bethlehem's waterfront extends 10-miles from Albany to Coeymans. An approved LWRP exposes the Town to various funding opportunities to advance the vision and guide for future land use developments along the waterfront. The LWRP study area (boundary) consists of Corning Hill road to the north, NYS Thruway (I-87) to the west, the Hudson River to the east and the Town boundary to the south. The study area is divided into three districts basic on unique characteristics of each: the North Riverfront District, the Central Riverfront District and the South Riverfront District. Mr. Morelli gave a brief description of each district and discussed the proposed goals and proposed recommended improvements for each. The LWRP presentation can be found on the CPAC website.

Bonnie Devine provided guidance tips that could help to advance the LWRP. Ms. Devine, John Wimbush, and others from the NYSDOS have intermittently worked with the Town since 2008 on the development of the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP). While there have been changes in Town administrations and NYSDOS staff assigned to the project, Ms. Devine explained that now is the time to take another look at the Draft LWRP prior to officially submitting the document for review by State and Federal Agencies. She questioned if the document was current. For example, the recent Master Plan for the Moh He Con Nuk Preserve should be included in the plan. As the Town moves forward with its vision for the waterfront, it should ensure that the proposed recommendations will achieve that expected vision. Specifically, the Town should review its existing zoning regulations and identify any necessary

changes. She stated a well prepared LWRP would expose the Town to various funding possibilities available for the Riverfront District.

George Leveille discussed different projects and concepts that have been previously discussed prior to and during the development of the LWRP. These projects included the Glenmont Job Corps site, Hudson River Hamlet, and the Selkirk Bypass extension to connect to the NYS Thruway at a new Exit. The Bypass could connect to NYS Route 144 River Road, thereby provided new access to the riverfront. He feels there is a need to modernize the industrial areas in the North Riverfront District with a goal of making it more appealing and marketable by trying to move away from the old heavy industrial look that is currently there.

Bill Sharp added when a LWRP is approved by the Secretary of State, Federal and State agencies then must abide by the Town's local policy giving the Town greater say at the time Federal and/or State projects are proposed, such as putting in a new road or interchange.

The Group discussed different opportunities & ideas to be included in the LWRP:

- Need more commercial activity (e.g. restaurants, marina)
- Rural Light Industrial and Rural Riverfront zoning districts need to encourage development for riverfront uses
- Plan for storm effects at Henry Hudson Park
- Rising water levels, climate change, storm surge, and awareness of climate change
- Green infrastructure approach to stormwater management
- Keeping larger industrial projects in the North Riverfront District
- Need safer access (motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists) to the waterfront – a gateway to the river
- Need to draw people to the Henry Hudson Park – Exit 22 underutilized
- “Park like” setting/trails integrated with commercial development
- Prepare Scenic Overlay District to preserve the special views of the Hudson River and beyond. Identify view shed areas.
- Preserve lands for farmland, and agriculture – younger generation needs farmland
- Route 144 development (revitalizing commercially)
- Identify areas that are not developable due to natural constraints (wetlands, slopes)
- Identify areas within the waterfront area that the Town desires for development
- Identify developable areas the Town may want to protect from development
- Improve bicycle facilities on State & Town roads leading to the waterfront
- Identify lands that Scenic Hudson has protected (land purchase or conservation easements) and identify which lands have public access
- Educate the community on climate change at Henry Hudson Park
- Possible development around Thruway exit 22.

Mr. Leslie added the current Rural Riverfront zoning district allows land uses for restaurants, marinas, bed & breakfast facilities, inns, and conference centers. Mr. Morelli noted the

Department of Transportation has adopted a “preservation first” policy towards road pavement projects which may make betterments to existing roads more difficult to achieve.

A ‘Potential CPAC Recommendations for Discussion’ document prepared by Town Staff was distributed to the Committee. The Committee provided the following comments and additions:

- Economic Development Strategy needed
 - Town wide – proactive approach to attract the type of development the Town desires
 - Specific locations: Selkirk Yards area and NYS Thruway Exit 22 area
 - Agricultural component
- Review the land use regulations to simplify or organize so more conducive to business we want to see
- Goals stated in the Slingerlands Pedestrian Network Plan are applicable to the Glenmont area
- Enhance vegetative planting within new developments (incl. street trees)
- Identify scenic views important to the Town (such as Hudson waterfront and west of Route 32)
- Shade tree program for Bethlehem (program proposal distributed at meeting)
- Review economic impacts of all development proposals to identify and get the full picture of costs and benefits.
- Improve mass transit in Town
- Review land preservation requirements in the conservation subdivision regulations to assure appropriate protection and maintenance measures
- Sustainability is a broader issue that overrides all of the discussions/recommendations
- Recommend the development of a Town Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which would include review committee, identification of current public and private resources (Schools, soccer club, YMCA, etc.) and identification of needs. Expense should be a consideration along with timing, fiscal responsibilities and implementation of the plan.

Public Comments:

Mike Waldenmaier, Glenmont suggested sidewalks along Feura Bush Road leading to Town Park. Exit 22, great area for economic development for a truck stop/gas station – as there is currently nothing available off the exit.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 12, 2013 at 6:00PM
Continue draft recommendations, open space