

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

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TOWN OF BETHLEHEM RELEASES REPORT OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

BETHLEHEM, N.Y.-Town of Bethlehem Supervisor Jack Cunningham announced today that the first report from the Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee is now available for viewing on the Town of Bethlehem website.

“This report is an important milestone for the Town of Bethlehem,” said Supervisor Cunningham. “We continue to assess the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure growth is consistent with the interest of the community as a whole.”

In August 2005, Bethlehem adopted its first-ever Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) as well as substantial amendments to its Zoning Law and Subdivision Regulations. Included as a recommendation of the Comp Plan was the establishment of a Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee (CPOC), to “assist the Town Board and help guide the Plan implementation effort.” The Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee (CPOC) was established by the Town Board in April 2007. CPOC was charged with preparing a status report on Comp Plan implementation progress and with developing recommendations for consideration by the Town Board.

As part of its review of the Comp Plan implementation, CPOC analyzed building trends in Town and found that there are clearly positive trends regarding Town growth. There has been a significant downturn in residential building permits issued and a slight increase in commercial development activity. Despite these favorable trends, CPOC identified the need for the continued diligence of the Town in both managing and monitoring growth and development activity to ensure long-term consistency with the Comp Plan.

In assessing the progress made to date, CPOC documents significant progress and its report points to the Citizen’s Advisory Committee on Conservation (CACC), the 9W Linkage Study, the Vista Tech Campus, the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) and the New Scotland Road Hamlet Master Plan as prime examples of significant progress. CPOC also provides more than a dozen recommendations for further implementation of the Comp Plan. The following are some of the highlights of CPOC’s recommendations:

1. Continue to perform annual technical reviews of the Town’s new land use regulations;

2. Take action to implement the recommendations of the LWRP, 9W Linkage Study, and New Scotland Road Hamlet Master Plan;
3. Participate in and support efforts to market the Vista Tech Campus;
4. Continue to identify and encourage new investment and infill development where infrastructure capacity and development, including buildings, already exist;
5. Identify a hamlet district for a master planning effort during 2008;
6. Create a farm and open space protection program;
7. Continue to make pedestrian and bicycle improvements in strategically located areas;
8. Consider development of a town-wide pedestrian/bicycle/bridle path master plan;
9. Continue investigating and implementing productivity measures related to both Town and related municipal services including fire and emergency services; and,
10. Consider development of a town-wide recreation master plan.

It remains very important that residents and stakeholders of the Town remain engaged in planning for the future. To highlight the importance of the Comp Plan as a blueprint for future growth, CPOC has prepared a summary of its report for broad distribution to the public. The Town will be mailing a copy of the summary report to every household in mid-November and encourages continued public participation in the many initiatives that have emanated from the Comp Plan adoption. The full CPOC report is available for review at the Town's website www.townofbethehem.org.

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