

October 26, 2017

Town of North East/Village of Millerton Comprehensive Plan Update Committee

Committee Attendance:

Edie Greenwood

Lance Middlebrook

Ed Downey

John Crodelle

Dianne Engleke

John Midwood

Dale Culver

Absent:

Steve Waite

Guests:

Cathy Fenn, Ralph Fedele, Matt Hartzog

Nan Stolzenburg from Community Planning and Environmental Associates attended the meeting as the newly hired planner for the Comprehensive Plan Committee. Also attending was Ellen Pemrick of E.M. Pemrick & Co.

Nan handed out a tentative schedule of work and time table that she suggested be used as a checklist to keep everyone focused. Nan admitted that with the upcoming holiday season is a hard time to engage the public but thought the Committee should begin with interviews and small focus groups.

Nan has looked at the scope of work and what the Committee has done so far. She's hoping the Comprehensive Plan update can be complete by April 2019.

She said to try to get all the public input done by January and February. Ellen will be doing data collection on the demographics and economic information. They will be collecting information to update the base resource data.

Nan's goal is to hold a public visioning workshop in January. Following the visioning workshop, Nan wants to convene a joint meeting with the Town/Village Boards, Planning Boards, ZBAs, CAC and CEO. Both these meetings will be facilitated by Nan and her team.

Nan said their workflow plan is to collect data; receive input from as many people as possible to learn about the issues, the opportunity and concerns so she will be ready for the public visioning workshop. They will organize the gathered information into a S.W.O.T. (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis.

The next phase will be for the Committee to identify the vision and goals for the Town and the Village.

The middle phase is defining the direction the comprehensive plan wants to take the town and village. It's the guidepost of how to get to where we want to be. The process will involve two public hearings, (preferably joint with the town and village) and each will require the posting of a legal notice. The town and the village will adopt the Comprehensive Plan separately.

Nan said the local data collection is important for the Committee to participate in and recommended it be completed by January.

She handed out a Profile Information document that broke down areas to focus on: history; cultural, recreation and historic resources; volunteer and non-profit organizations; facilities and infrastructure that included highway maintenance, municipal property, emergency services, solid waste, utilities; school districts; and event/community functions.

Ed said in the late 1980s, the county planning department did a historic survey of the entire county; he asked if Nan would like to see it.

Nan said if it gives us a complete picture of the historic resources that it's definitely worth looking at so she could glean from it what she could.

There was discussion of two historic districts: Coleman Station and the Village of Millerton Historic District.

Nan advised us to let the process go through each stage, build each step as we go and focus on the task at hand.

Edie asked if the questions for the focus were as simple as: What do you like about our community; what do you think is wrong with our community; what ideas to you have to correct what you think is wrong.

Nan: In general, yes.

Once she and Ellen have those groups identified, she can give the committee a sample list of broad and specific questions.

Ellen made a list of potential stakeholders in terms of economic development. The list included chamber organizations, business groups, county tourism, economic development agencies, rail trail association, Taconic State Park, commercial realtors and local businesses.

Nan suggested going to different committee meetings to get their input. She said they try to go to schools and if possible, to the local government class.

Lance asked about standing on the street and asking questions. Nan said the use of story boards and comment boxes are things that should be utilized.

Dale suggested going in front the Moviehouse where you would get a cross section of residents, non-residents and potential residents. Lance suggested in front of the post office.

Eddie asked Nan if she would recommend voice recording. Nan said people tend to get shy with being recorded.

Nan suggested handing out postcards that ask what a person likes and what they don't like about the community.

Dale suggested having a table at the farmer's market with a suggestion box.

Eddie mentioned having a meeting with realtors and mortgage bankers.

Dale suggested creating a Facebook page. Nan agreed but said you need to keep up with it. Dianne offered to do it.

Eddie suggested having an accessible tab for the Comprehensive Plan on the Town and Village websites.

Nan said all the meeting notes should be on the web page, along with any maps, documents, etc. for the public to have access to.

Ed said another organization to reach out to is the North East Community Center.

Nan said there is a certain part of the population that doesn't get involved and it's important to reach out to them.

Ellen asked if there are any housing organizations in the county that might be ones to contact. Eddie said there is Hudson River Housing that has done S.W.O.T. analyses at public meetings.

Dale suggested contacting Webutuck School to see if they still doing their alumni day and see what their views are.

John Midwood said he would reach out to the government economics class. He would also like to reach out to the 18- to 40-year-old population. Nan suggested encouraging that age group to come to a workshop.

Eddie asked Dianne if the 14th Colony Artists be a group to contact. Dianne said yes and to get an artists and musicians group to participate.

Ellen said she noticed a healthy percentage of seasonal housing and suggested we reach out to the weekenders.

Eddie said they are very important and Dale said they are a huge part of the economy.

Ed said the weekend community is complex and there is a mixture of reasons why people come here.

Eddie said that as weekenders' age, they spend more and more time here so we need to define the term weekender.

Dale felt the community is stronger with the second-home owners as they provide an enormous economic benefit to the area.

Nan has found when they segment them out, the second-home owners tend to have the same values, hopes, dreams and issues that anyone else has. She suggested targeting a Saturday in January for a public meeting to full-time and part-time residents to participate.

Eddie mentioned people that go south for the winter; Dale said utilizing Facebook to include those.

Lance said to utilize the local radio station and John Crodelle said to use the newspaper.

Nan summarized the various identified stakeholders groups and asked how the Committee is going to get that done; who is going to do what and how are you going to organize it.

Ed said he had a concern with the schedule of this getting done in November and December.

Nan suggested contacting the small businesses and asking for an hour of their time in the afternoon. If we wait until January, too much time has been lost. Ed said wouldn't think of talking to retail people until after December but maybe the real estate people would be more available to talk with.

Eddie said talking with small groups and also having one-on-one conversations could happen.

Dale said target some of the people you want.

Dale asked if we could develop a template so we are all on the same page in our interviews.

Ed asked Nan what has been her experience with surveys and what is the response rate. Nan said they are easy and she does them online. On average, the response is between 15 and 20% and typically comes from a very specific demographic; long-term residents. Nan said the only way to make the survey statistically significant is to tailor it

and know who you are sending it to. The uniform approach is to ask every group what they like and what they don't like.

Lance suggested once responses are given, post them on the website to get more involvement.

Dale said the timing of the newspaper articles is important to give notice for people to attend.

John Midwood said to get in touch with Dutchess County Tourism to come to a meeting.

Nan suggested that whenever there is a meeting (i.e. CAC, etc), have a representative of the Committee attend and do some interviews. She agreed to send the Committee a template of questions to use.

John Midwood said there is a Village Pedestrian Plan Committee meeting Nov. 14 at 6PM and they are doing a presentation on traffic recommendations, design concept to improve pedestrian safety and access and make the village more pedestrian friendly.

Dianne volunteered to talk to farmers. Lance said he would do the artists and musicians. Edie said she would attend the next CAC meeting. John Midwood is going to the civics class and to reach out to Mary Kay Vrba of Dutchess County Department of Tourism.

Ed said he would talk to bankers and real estate people.

Nan summarized that there is a lot of work to be done over the next few months in terms of interviews, collecting data. She will do the map collection and data collection. She will send postcards for distribution. She said the Committee needs to find a day and a place for a public workshop.

Dale suggested having it at the American Legion with a PA system.

Nan said that when she does a public meeting in this phase of the project, it is broken up into small groups. It starts with a presentation (approximately 20 minutes) of what a comprehensive plan is, why it's being done, and how it's being done. It sets the stage for everyone to participate. She will lead them through three activities; she starts with negative features of the town and the village to move to a vision statement. She said to have one committee representative or elected official at each table of 6 to 8 people. The list of negatives is passed around each table and participants are given a sticker to place on what they consider as a priority. The items with stickers are brainstormed for some solutions. Then the same exercise is done but with positive features. The last part of the exercise is to brainstorm what we need to do to maintain those positive features. She said the last exercise in the two-hour workshop is to have each table write a vision statement. She walks them through to see what the Town and Village should be like in 10 or 15 years. Her job is to integrate the visions from each table into one set of information.

Edie asked if people are allowed to pick the table where they sit. Nan prefers to assign people randomly.

John Crodelle asked how to handle issues beyond our control. Nan said not everything mentioned gets addressed but she wants to hear what people have to say. She said the key is to have small groups where people are more comfortable to participate.

John Crodelle asked if the press should come to the workshops. Nan said yes.

Nan said to advertise the workshops with press releases, Facebook, posters around town, firehouse signs. The key is to have the date and place set.

Edie asked committee members who wanted to address the various sections of the Community Profile that Nan handed out.

History parts: Ed

Volunteer and non-profit: Edie

Highway maintenance and infrastructure: Lance

Emergency services: John Crodelle

Schools and Utilities: Dale

Events and community functions: Edie

Town highway: John Midwood

The next meeting will be November 30, 2017.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 PM.