

Committee Attendance:

Edie Greenwood	Dianne Engleke	Mimi Ramos	Absent: Dale Culver
John Crodelle	Bill Kish	John Midwood	Patti VandeBogart
Ed Downey	Debbie Middlebrook		

Guests: George Kaye, Chris Kennan, Kaitlyn Lyle

Chair Edie Greenwood opened the meeting to review previously discussed goals. After our last meeting both Sam Busselle and Jennifer Dowley have reached out with comments regarding affordable housing. Most of the points they raised are covered in the current draft strategies for the affordable housing goal. In addition, Sam felt collaboration with adjoining municipalities should be encouraged.

Nan: Asked if there were other details that needed to be added in.

Edie: Jennifer Dowley’s email said the housing committee needs to work on educating residents and raising awareness about our affordable housing problem. She also said the Berkshire Taconic Foundation has grants available for the study of affordable housing needs.

Bill: On the Village character goal, we have to figure out what to call that area that has the elementary school and the big parcel beside it that was the failed affordable housing attempt. Ed had referred to that second parcel as the playhouse.

Debbie: Most people remember it as the Overlook Property.

Bill: On infrastructure: Should we address and try to come up with a solution to the truck traffic on Main Street?

John Crodelle: It’s a Department of Transportation situation. A solution would be to eliminate parking on one side of the street.

Nan: We could work with D.O.T. to study alternatives and have a transportation planner see if there are any options.

Dianne: We can take away tight parking spots. Parking in front of Terni’s Store was mentioned as a bad spot.

Dianne: We don’t frame the eligibility for affordable housing very well. We need to frame it in terms of fairness, opportunity, things that make people feel good.

Debbie: The county is not supporting large scale affordable housing development anymore; they realized that’s not the best fit for rural communities. The planners see the rehabilitation of vacant homes as a better approach rather than building a 30-unit building in the village.

Encourage accessible recreational, cultural and educational opportunities that meet the social and community needs of all segments of the population.

Edie: There was a legal notice in the Millerton News for bids to construct the extension of the Rail Trail north of Millerton.

Debbie: Offered to reach to Lisa DeLeeuw of the Harlem Rail Trail Association to see what the plans include.

Edie: There is a mock-up of the Eddie Collins Field plans being made. The next step is to form a 501(c)3 and raise money to build out the amenities in phases.

Nan: Asked if the committee wants to be involved in the planning of the extension of the Rail Trail.

Bill: Asked what improvements are being proposed for Eddie Collins Field.

Debbie: Removing the skate park and put in soccer fields, making room for a pool.

Bill: Maybe change #2 from “continue to make improvements to Eddie Collins Park” to support the continued maintenance, etc. for Eddie Collins.

Edie: The man from Connecticut who spoke at our last meeting was very interested in biking. It makes sense to have bike racks in the village. The long-term goal would be to connect the biking network from Salisbury to here.

Bill: Maybe we should conduct a survey of public roads that need to be connected to a biking network.

Edie: Asked if biking is referenced in zoning.

Nan: In major subdivisions, yes. Especially in subdivisions. Could have a broad statement to review zoning and subdivision in both the town and the village and look for opportunities to promote trails and pathways.

Bill: We're spending a lot of time talking about this under the heading of recreational, cultural, educational opportunities but it's also a transportation issue.

Nan: We have bike friendliness and pathways in the transportation section. She doesn't see a problem with a general reference to have it in there twice.

Edie: Are we looking to recommend another sort of recreation committee or are we hoping the existing entities such as the Millerton Business Alliance will take on creating new events?

Nan: Good point. Maybe both, or you could identify the existing groups that have a role in this.

Debbie: We've tried in the past but haven't had success.

Bill: One thing that is missing in the bulleted points is anything to do with education. His idea is to encourage ways for people to learn things culturally or artistically. It would be useful to have a community space where classes could be given.

Edie: The civic involvement covers a lot of this. There is an ongoing need for communication to keep people informed.

Nan: Some communities have Makers Spaces; a cross between recreation, education and community involvement. That could be a program to add in.

Bill: Explained Makers Spaces. It's a facility where tools and materials are available, and people learn to build things, repair things, etc.

Nan: It's a combination of education, recreation, economic development and expanded individual opportunities. It could be added in for the town and village to look into.

Bill: We could put in the zoning, so they wouldn't have to seek some kind of variance.

Edie: Asked who manages these spaces.

Nan: Sometimes there are community groups or individuals who manage them; it depends on how big they get.

Kaitlyn Lyle: Webutuck School District has a Maker Space and has information on how to create one.

Edie: ESL is happening on a regional basis but not here. There are classes in Amenia and Millbrook.

Nan: Will add it in to the plan.

Bill: Asked what kind of fun and games there will be in the arcade (#8 consider promoting use of existing buildings as an arcade).

Edie: This came from the workshop and when she was collecting "what I like, what I hate" cards at the farmers market. Mark Stonehill, who is involved with the North East Community Center, pointed out the need for activities for younger children and teens. The arcade idea was one of his suggestions.

Mimi: Asked if it had to be aimed at just one age group.

Nan: If you are looking for recreational activities for all, we could add children and teens to it.

Encourage active civic involvement, promote volunteerism and provide for local government that is responsive to the needs of its citizens.

Bill: We will utilize the entire volunteer pool of the town plus some as soon as this plan is adopted if all these committees become a reality.

Edie: There are two new formal committees that we are suggesting: an economic development committee and an affordable housing committee.

Bill: Asked about a zoning review committee.

Edie: That's the next part of this process. The zoning review committee is not a forever committee. We are fortunate on the affordable housing committee; there are models in Connecticut that are up and running. Edie is hoping that weekenders who are spending more time here will want to be involved. The first step is having an annual village/town meeting.

Debbie: Asked Edie if she is talking about a meeting outside of the regular business meetings that the village trustees and town board have. She pointed out that all of the village and town board meetings are open to the public.

Edie: People don't come to them.

Bill: People don't come because of the way these meetings are structured.

Nan: Later on, when we get to the action plan, one of the things I highly recommend is an annual meeting to encourage two-way sharing. It is a way to keep the plan from just sitting on a shelf. It's an opportunity for the public to say "gee, this has come up in the past year that is something I'm concerned about that we'd like to see movement on". It is also an opportunity for the town and village to state the priorities that they have been working on for the last year and to outline the actions of the plan that have been implemented. For example, we have the zoning committee, we've formed the affordable housing committee, etc. This way, you're showing everybody what you're doing, and they can see what you're doing. It's been effective in communities that do it. People get excited when they see progress and want to be part of it. Another thing that goes along with it is #4 (So potential volunteers know what role they are being asked to play, including time commitment, develop job descriptions for volunteer positions so that everyone knows what is expected). To lay out a job description for volunteers is an effective way of keeping volunteers because they know what is expected. If you make the effort and articulate what you want volunteers to do, how they will report to the board, how they will be supported, what the time frame is so they know it's not 20 years of work, could make your volunteer recruitment more effective.

John Crodelle: It's important that volunteers know what is expected of them.

Edie: It goes hand in hand with the annual town hall meeting idea; being prepared with an understanding of where we need volunteers and having materials that could be handed out. #5 (Have a centralized website that creates a unified community calendar and ensure someone is assigned to keep it up to date) is important; it's a function of keeping it current.

Nan: Asked if the village has e-mail list.

Debbie: No.

Edie: The town has one, approximately 200 names.

Bill: The key thing is that someone generates the content and sends it out regularly.

Nan: The key is to getting people's e-mail addresses and some method to collect them.

Edie: That's doable but the issue is keeping it current and having relevant content.

Bill: Asked about what other sorts of volunteers we need - volunteers for mentoring kids, for cleaning up the roads, painting things?

Nan: All of the above. There are different types of volunteers; some are municipal, others are short-term ones.

Bill: #2 (Recruit volunteers and build community spirit...) and #3 (Consider developing a local version of volunteermatch.org...) - we need to get people to think about volunteering.

Nan: There is such a wide range of talents and experience that go untapped. You need an effective way of asking people to volunteer.

Edie: #8 (Promote additional community events as they strengthen town-wide and neighborhood sense of community) - It's finding the people who want to organize the events.

Nan: Asked if the village has a welcome committee.

Debbie: No.

Nan: Maybe add one; might be effective with a brochure.

Edie: It's easy to find new residents who purchase but harder to find renters.

Edie: #9 (Work with the Town of Salisbury and Sharon, the Villages of Lakeville and Salisbury...) - it's fine to work with Lakeville and Salisbury but I'd like to also mention Amenia and Pine Plains.

Nan: Suggested adding working with Ancram.

Recognize, promote and maintain the historic character of the community.

Nan: When it came time to put together the ideas for that section, Edie suggested that Ed would be a good person to offer ideas. In addition, Nan pulled out from the survey, the workshop and the focus groups anything that was a historical-related idea.

Nan: Section C (Develop a specific addendum to be attached to any EAF filed by a project applicant...) You may know of historic structures that aren't on any state or national historic register, but they still have historic character and are meaningful to the place that may or may not come into a regular SEQRA review.

She thinks Ed was talking about a broader historic register. That goes back to Section B (Create an inventory and map of Historic Resources important to the community). Having the local inventory and map could be a huge resource to the planning boards, real estate agents, etc.

Eddie: The idea of overlay zones is not new (referring to Section H that talks about designating protected overlay zones).

Nan: There are two different kinds of historic districts: one is state and federal register historic district; the other is a historic zoning district that has boundaries. They are set up different ways, but they usually end up with a planning board or a historic district commission reviewing a project to ensure it's compatible with the historic district.

Eddie: Asked if it's a tool of the planning board.

Nan: Yes, it could be assigned to the planning board. State funding for technical support of historic structures is tied to having a historic review commission. It's called a certified local government program when a government has a local zoning historic district with a set of criteria and a zoning commission. We could add that in here if you want to go in that direction.

Eddie: Asked if we are big enough for that.

Nan: Yes. Sometimes they coincide with the register districts and sometimes they are much bigger. It goes back to the volunteer program; you have to have a set of people who are dedicated and interested in historic structures. Cobleskill has a program; they received a grant and they hired a historic architect to document all the historic features in their historic district.

John Crodelle: It deals mainly with communities that want to attract tourists. Cape May in N.J. has big regulations on what can be done with houses.

Nan: Her experience with small communities is that sometimes a review commission works, and they can work well. Alternatively, there are less intrusive ways to get the job done without going to that length. You can elevate the role of historic character in your zoning, make sure there are questions to evaluate the impact, give the planning board the tools to look at building design without going through the whole review commission. It's deemphasized here but she thinks that was Ed's perspective of what he felt was appropriate.

Bill: With respect to Section G (The Town and Village should encourage restoration and sensitive adaptive reuse of historic properties...), he feels, given his experience from being on the planning board, there should be some sort of statement that says the arteries feeding into the village need to have some historical context with the village. Ed's point that standards for signage and architectural review should be considered for the village historic district is good and could be accomplished without having a review committee. He felt these standards should be included to cover the adjacent business corridors.

Eddie: Some of the materials that Ed provided included having more informational plaques. It adds character to the community.

Debbie: That was talked about after the survey was done. Townscape talked about plaques for each one of the buildings in the historical designation. The information for those buildings is available.

Nan: Several communities have a historic walking tour with plaques in front of the buildings with a description and a photo of what the building used to look like.

Eddie: The committee agreed to use the outline Ed has put together.

Eddie: Interested in Section F (The Town and Village should strive to retain stone walls, tree-lined roadsides, barns...). We have talked about this in other goals. She asked Ed who should be tasked with putting together the list of historic buildings.

Ed: I looked at other communities to see how they've done it. It is important to have the baseline data.

Eddie: We have that mystery viewshed map with no date or attribution.

Bill: It's old enough that some of the areas may not be part of the viewshed but it's a good start.

Nan: What do you mean by historic public viewshed?

Ed: One that came to mind is the place that F.D. R. would come to picnic. Thinking more broadly, it very critical to the Rail Trail that the viewsheds be preserved. Landscape is one of the important parts of our history. The landscape has provided us with the iron ore industry, agriculture and the attraction of the community to second homeowners.

Nan: There's another place in the draft plan where we talk about redoing that viewshed inventory, mapping it and having it as a resource.

Bill: One thing to combine with the Rail Trail is signage when there is a historic view.

Ed: There's a lot along the Trail that you could focus on – i.e. historic properties.

Dianne: Mentioned the largest sycamore tree in Dutchess County is by Merrill Sindler's house which can be seen from the Rail Trail. The second largest is on Route 83 in Shekomeko.

Edie: Asked what input the town or this plan can have when the trees have grown up and the view is gone.

Ed: It seems to be something that would be relevant in a planning process; particularly in a subdivision process where you identify resources and you talk about how they are dealt with. It's analogous to how conservation easements work; they create baseline data and then the organization that manages that easement monitors compliance. If it became a part of a subdivision approval, the viewshed would need to be retained.

Nan: That could be for any subdivision but is certainly an integral part of the whole conservation subdivision method. It's one of the things that you identify on the parcel. Viewsheds become part of the character of that parcel that you're trying to preserve. Sometimes trees grow up in the right-of-way of a county, town or state road. She's worked with the D.O.T. before and this is where the map is very important. Some communities have worked with private landowners to let the highway crew come in and take some trees out.

Edie: There are two separate initiatives: getting plaques and doing the inventory. Asked Nan if her firm can do the map using GIS information.

Nan: Sure. Dutchess County parcel access data often has the year built so the structure is identified. You can very easily take the GIS data and look at the year-built information and find historic parcels.

Ed: He referred to the historic survey done in the 1980s that should be on file with both the village and the town.

Edie: This finishes our review of the ten identified goals. The next decision is the format of our plan update. Most like the organization of the last plan which has two volumes. The first volume has an executive summary, an introduction and a summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis. Then you outline the vision statement and the goals with the recommended strategies and actions.

Nan: The actions are to update zoning, create new committees and apply for grants.

Edie: In the second volume (in the previous plan, it was called the Backup Materials), you have appendices. We want to have the Hudsonia Habitat study, the Village Pedestrian Plan, the Greenway guidelines, the North East Farmland Protection Plan, the town and village inventories and maps in the appendix. It will all be up on the web, and she wants a hard copy of the plan at the town hall, the village hall and the library. She asked Nan how to move forward.

Nan: The various strategies that we've gone through are a laundry list. She asked if we want them organized as subcategories. We need to take all the information and make it usable for the town board, the village trustees and the planning boards. The goal is to organize the plan to produce a document people will understand and are able to find sections easily. She asked if we wanted the parts from the 1990s plan that we are retaining copied and pasted into the new plan with the prior recommendations mixed in with updated strategies.

Committee: Agreed the best way to organize the document was to mix the old and new strategies.

Bill: So, it becomes an updated comprehensive plan.

Nan: Asked if they wanted to have lots of pictures and illustrations which will make the document longer. What are the aesthetic goals?

Bill: If the purpose is to pretty it up, it's a waste. To provide examples where the "picture is worth a thousand words" is what we're looking for.

Edie: There will description boxes and break up the pages.

Nan: She doesn't want to have it designed where people are so enamored with the way it looks that they never read and understand what's in the plan.

Dianne: You don't want people to say you spent taxpayer money on that. You don't want it to look expensive. It needs to look representative of the community.

Nan: We have all the pieces; the actions and implementation strategies are usually done in a chart form of the steps we are recommending that the town and village implement. Our original timeline was to have the first draft at the January 2019 meeting. She's not sure if she'll have the executive summary done by then. Her priority will be to have the committee review the implementation and action strategies.

Edie: Nan made a recommendation to have an informational meeting with a PowerPoint presentation. That would be followed at a later date with a formal public hearing to receive public comments but not have a dialogue. There would be a turn of the document with pertinent public input and then our committee will turn the plan over to the town and the village. At a joint town village meeting Nan will help with the required SEQRA. Then the joint boards would schedule a second public hearing on the updated plan.

Nan: Once the committee formally submits the updated plan to the boards, the town and village are required to hold a second public hearing with 90 days.

Ed: If we want to understand the public comments, why wouldn't we want to ask the public questions at the public hearing to better understand them?

Nan: It all depends, every community does it differently. Some discussions would take up a lot of time and not give others a chance to speak.

Ed: That's an issue of managing how long a person can make for comments. That's different than being able to get some clarification.

Nan: There's a difference between clarification and making you feel like to you have to defend and explain something.

Bill: It's been a year since we've had our focus meeting; what if we held a public hearing as part of a second focus meeting. We would invite the public to hear our presentation about what we've done. Then we would hold a public hearing where we could have a discussion, or we could change the order and have our presentation/public hearing.

Nan: The first meeting will be to introduce the plan to people; let them see what's in it, what the highlights are and have them ask questions. Let them get familiar with what we've done. Let them download the plan or make copies. Give them time to absorb it based on our presentation. Then they come back two weeks or a month later for a public hearing. If you don't want to have a formal public hearing, you can set it up any way you want.

Debbie: The district plan was that we had a public meeting where county came and presented their idea for the Pedestrian Plan. There were options for people who attended. People were allowed to make comments on each map for the plan. The county took all the comments and came back with an updated plan. I think that's what you're saying here: do a presentation, gather all the input from everyone, work that into the plan and then come back.

Nan: You could do both; you could say we're going to give everybody a chance to make a comment or ask a question. Then you can go back and decide what you want to answer. Whatever way you want to format the public hearing, you have time to think about it. It is a legally mandated public hearing you would have to have with a legal notice.

Nan: Asked how informal public hearings were held here by the boards.

Bill: The ones on the Planning Board are pretty informal. Generally, only one or two people have anything to say. In cases where there were significant comments to be made (i.e. the supermarket application), time limits were set.

Public Comment

Chris Kennan: When you talked about the recreation piece earlier, you talked about the Rail Trail and the Eddie Collins Field restoration. Rudd Pond was not mentioned. I don't know all the background but there is certainly a need to support the renovation and rehabilitation of Rudd Pond. That is a real issue with Rudd Pond; it's not just critical that people use it.

Edie: There is a strategy under the recreation goal that included Rudd Pond, but it can be given more emphasis.

George Kaye: You might want to include another committee in there for saving Rudd Pond.

Meeting was adjourned at 6PM.

The next meeting will be January 21, 2019 at 4PM at The Annex.