

Minutes of the Village of Rhinebeck
Comprehensive Plan
Thursday, August 10th, 2023

The August 10th, 2023 meeting was called to order by Matt Johnston at 6:00pm at Village Hall, 76 East Market Street, Rhinebeck, NY with the following members in attendance:

Matt Johnston, Chair
Michele Grieg (Consultant)
Elijah Bender
Eleanor Pupko
John Clarke
Steve Rosenberg
John Traver
Louis Turpin
Ernesto Martynek
Guest: Jaclyn Savolainen, Starr Library Director

Approval of Previous Minutes. Minutes of the July 13th meeting were approved with corrections by motion of Eleanor Pupko and seconded by John Clarke.

Jaclyn Savolainen gave a presentation of the activities and structure of the Starr Library:

- Jaclyn has been manager of Starr Library for the last year. She first became involved 10-14 years ago through Dutchess Community College.
- The library is very vibrant with 5 new people signing on recently and a few retiring in recent months. 130 years of experience combined among recent retirees.
- Many partnerships with community organizations. Nothing has been decided yet about future growth, Jaclyn noted 5 new board members.
- There are space needs and wishes for library expansion and many fruitful discussions about working within the existing space.
- Lengthy discussion of moving the library to the former Brogan Center. This is still ongoing with a great deal of analysis being done. Many would like the Library closer to the Village Center. It was pointed out that it is the same distance from the light heading west as it is to the Brogan Center heading east. The current library is a beautiful amenity with a lot of work going into the most recent 2005 addition. It was brought up that $\frac{2}{3}$ of schoolchildren in Rhinebeck do not reside in the Village. The Library services people living in many neighboring municipalities and not just those in the Village Center. Members pointed out that parking, an elevator and a modern building makes this setting particularly attractive. The talks of a move will continue.

- Jaelyn mentioned that Starr is no longer a “silent library” although there are quiet areas. There is a large meeting space and more outdoor seating has been contemplated.
- Large events do not allow enough spaces with only 39 parking spots.
- Town and Village line bisects the property adding further questions.

Topics for Further Discussion as of 8/10:

- Matt would like the group to come up with prompts for Spinzia as she will be present at the next meeting to discuss Town issues.
- Frame the prompts as a list of inter-municipal issues. The Courts-limited space, senior transportation and so on.
- Affordable housing in the region as written is misleading. Discussion of community housing fund in Red Hook. This is more applicable to the Town as allowed uses for the fund not conducive to Village projects. One member stated that money from the fund can be apportioned to historic preservation.
- Transfer of development rights-big picture of large undeveloped tracts. Survey results emphasize the need for housing.
- Existing parkland to be better developed and more accessible.
- Trail system and loop trail.
- Saving of greenspaces is better achieved by development of Village Center so as to avoid sprawl and development on the outskirts. Lack of development in the village will continue to make the Village exclusive for many years instead of fostering diversity and opportunity.
- These above strategies should be achieved in collaboration with Town activities.

Zoning Map Discussion:

1. Review of Map: Fairgrounds area west of Mulberry Street will show multi-family as an allowed use.
2. Historic Overlay District should be renamed “Traditional Village Residential.”
3. Some parcels not owned by the hospital should not be included in map under the new recommended Hospital District.
4. Add to the map house lots used for administrative offices.
5. Medical Professional Use should allow both offices with multi-family above as mixed use, in particular the 187 East Market Street property and properties west of the Fairgrounds on Route 9.
6. Parcels like the Dry Cleaner (formerly a service station) should be added to the Village Center and removed from the Special Sensitivity Overlay so as to encourage improvement of the streetscape.
7. It was suggested by a member to add properties that are solely commercial like the Courtyard to the Commercial District as they are currently in the Residential District on the Zoning Map.
8. Groundfloor Office: Lengthy discussion continued on whether

to prohibit ground floor offices. Some members brought up ADA issues in doing this. Some members discussed the number of first floor offices historically. The inventory of

commercial storefronts has increased in the last 50 years with the creation of Montgomery Row, the Courtyard and so on with a greater concentration of commercial businesses. Some members feel that first floor offices, particularly realty offices, diminishes vibrancy in the Village Center. Previously, members mentioned Malcarne and Uhlman Financial; however, it was noted that these businesses serve local needs. At least three members were against banning first floor offices in the Village Center. No consensus was reached.

9. House Size: it was discussed on how best to cap square footage for new construction. Some members would like to see figures of the square footage of historic large homes in the Village (i.e. Wager House, Frost, O'Brien and Wells-Teller House) for an idea on what should be allowed. One member pointed out that lots in the Village traditionally don't allow for septic systems to support houses of the size contemplated. One member suggested that imposing a maximum house size would be unnecessarily restrictive; others noted that the trend toward larger houses and the potential for combining lots has the effect of restricting options for those who need more affordable housing options. Some members discussed merged lots. Discussion to be revisited in detail.

● **Adjournment:** There being no further business, a motion for adjournment was made at 8:58 pm. The next meeting will be on September 14h.