

Village of Rhinebeck Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee-Thursday, November 10th, 2022

The November meeting was called to order by Matt Johnston at 7:00pm at Village Hall, 76 East Market Street, Rhinebeck, NY with the following members in attendance:

Matt Johnston, Chair

Jeffrey Cotter

Elijah Bender

Steve Rosenberg

Eleanor Pupko

Deirdre Burns

John Clarke

John Traver

Shea Dean

Louis Turpin

Guest: Michele Grieg, 4 Corners Planning and Sharon Rooney

Several members of the public were present.

Agenda:

1. Hellos! (7:00-7:03 pm)
2. Approval of October 13, 2022 Minutes (7:03-7:05 pm)
3. Reports by Subcommittees (7:05-8:20 pm)
 - a. Population and Business Ecosystem
 - b. Transportation and Mobility
4. Update and Final Steps for Launching Community Values Survey (8:20-8:40 pm)
5. Updated Comprehensive Plan Process/Schedule/Roles (8:40-8:55 pm)
6. Other Business (8:55-9:00 pm)
7. Adjourn

Approval of Previous Minutes. Minutes of the meeting held on October 13th, 2022 were approved with corrections by motion of Jeff Cotter and seconded by Dierdre Burns.

Announcements. Matt acknowledged that Ernesto Martynnek was unable to attend the meeting due to a family emergency.

John Traver was welcomed by the group and spoke briefly and thanked everyone.

Transportation and Mobility Subcommittee Presentation:

Shea Dean presented goals and ideas put forth by the Transportation and Mobility Subcommittee consisting of actions to encourage pedestrians and biking and an eco-friendly streetscape.

1. The presentation went into detail on becoming a “Complete Streets” community. Complete Streets is a transportation and design approach requiring streets to be designed and maintained to enable safe travel by those walking and bicycling. Shea discussed how our roads have been designed chiefly with the automobile in mind and the trend has been toward experiencing the street in a pleasant way. Some statistics were discussed: 70% of trips made in the Village were done alone in a car. The single greatest concern the subcommittee has heard is the need for traffic calming measures and better walkability. One goal of this subcommittee is to encourage good sidewalks, bike lanes and to be a model community for Complete Streets. A map was shown to the group of municipalities around the country that have adopted these policies.
2. Safe passages to schools: South Parsonage Street from East Market Street to Knollwood has been flagged as an unsafe street. Pictures were shown of children walking in this area to school. There was discussion of Cornell Complete Streets Handbook and the principles of engineering, educating, encouragement and enforcement. There was a brief discussion of Nyack, N.Y and their 2018 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and the grant they received from the state government.
3. Pedestrians and Crosswalks: Limited crosswalks exist in the Village and they are in faded and derelict condition. This would be easy to remedy.
4. Sidewalks: A new sidewalk should be constructed along the Mulberry Street Extension (Private Property owned by the Dutchess County Fairgrounds) to provide access to Spring Brook Plaza and Tops. Another idea is to narrow streets by bringing in the pavement.
5. Cycling focus: widening of the shoulders, painted bikes in the pavement, increasing visibility.
6. Bike racks: many different styles to encourage cycling.
7. Bike meet-up: to encourage cycling and bikers to come here. Possible erection of a bike repair stand and map with visitor and road guide.
8. Public Transportation: collaboration with the Town, County and others. Discussion of the need for shelter for those waiting for public transportation and a potential shuttle from the Rhinecliff Train Station.

9. Multi-use path along Route 9 to provide access to Tops. Discussion of working with the Fairgrounds to create this corridor along Route 9. There was discussion of the town pursuing a path/pedestrian trail to Rhinecliff along Rhinecliff Road.
10. EV Chargers: encourage the addition of Level Three Chargers.

Comprehensive Plan Initiatives:

1. Have the Village adopt a Complete Streets protocol policy and framework.
2. Dierdre commented that the current zoning code regulates the number of spaces needed for businesses in the site plan approval process. This encourages use of vehicles. The Committee should investigate this.
3. Eleanor brought up the difficulty of the streets around the Village Green and on South Street.
4. Resident of 42 South Street would like to see additional stop signs at several cross streets along South Street. He has young children and the cars travel at excessive speeds to bypass the light.
5. There was discussion of the Route 308 Mobil Station and the dangerous intersection associated with it.

Business Ecosystem Subcommittee:

John Clarke presented on behalf of the subcommittee. Approximately 12 people attend each meeting, consisting of inventory work by the volunteers and distilling the results into policy recommendations. For example, the group has measured sidewalks and assessed conditions, taken inventory of street trees, trip hazards, ADA issues with businesses, outdoor dining, a parking survey, streetscape and lighting and outlying businesses.

John continued by detailing how the group looked at aerial and other photographs spanning the period of 1890-1970 to get a better idea of the growth patterns of the Village. Many historic buildings were torn down to create parking lots and the current trend of planning favors eliminating holes in the streetscape by encouraging infill sites with parking in the rear.

Some statistics: a parking survey conducted on 5/14 revealed over 1,000 spaces in the Village for parking. 66% of the private parking areas were full while 90% of public areas were full on a peak day. This is a reasonable capacity.

Recommendations.

1. Sidewalks should be constructed of concrete or bluestone only. Level pavers should be utilized between the sidewalk and trees.
2. Eliminate driveways that are non-essential. If they cannot be phased out, continuous sidewalks are preferable. Keep tree wells level with the sidewalks. It is important that a Village policy be adopted in this area of sidewalk regulation.

3. Establish minimum pedestrian clearways along sidewalks by limiting planter and bench sizes and encouraging benches between trees. Benches should be perpendicular to the tree wells. An ADA member from Taconic Resources is a member of this subcommittee.
4. Phase out parking lots fronting on public streets.
5. Long term policy needs to be established for dying street trees. Combining the need for wider sidewalks, the solution is to move trees into the streets. This would be work terrific on East Market Street being that there are no storm drains from the Municipal Lot to Mirbeau Spa on West Market Street.
6. Install better forms of street lighting like acorn style drop pendant brackets. These should be installed 14' instead of 35' to provide better street lighting.
7. Create permanent public lavatories. Examples were looked at in Cold Spring, N.Y. and in Kent, Conn.
8. Install a sizable Village Green at the Municipal Lot and utilize the same number of parking spaces. A two story building can be constructed by the Village on the site to consist of workforce housing.
9. Stripe parking spaces to increase the total number of available spaces in the Village. Paid parking can be looked at in addition to increasing the number of EV spaces.
10. Possible construction of a three-story parking structure. This would be at a high cost but there is the possibility of a municipal bond.
11. Redesign the Route 308/South Street intersection by landscaping and curbing.
12. Plant trees along the shoulder of the Route 9 farm field by Closs Drive to calm traffic.
13. Create truck unloading zones (potential location TBD).
14. Encourage the addition of more retail stores to help lower retail rents.
15. Create more space for residential opportunities in the Business Center over retail shops.

Michele Grieg briefly discussed utilizing form based zoning by increasing design standards in the Business Center.

Several members of the committee commented on the difficulties of benches between trees with car doors and parallel parking. There was brief discussion on the confusion surrounding the Municipal Lot plans and a potential relocation of the Doughboy Statue. That was not in the presentation and there are no plans to move the Doughboy.

There was discussion by the group as a whole on how to restrict chain stores from appearing in Rhinebeck. This is presently achieved by restricting drive-throughs and parking in front of businesses. The group should potentially look to the Red Hook code for guidance in this area.

Matt thanked the presenters. Discussion continued to discuss the survey and release of the survey. Matt would like to avoid going back to the subcommittees on the survey. Proposal: to task Tighe and Bond and Four Corners to make final edits to the survey to complete it by

reducing the amount of time to complete it and segment it and to make necessary updates to Spanish language translation.

It was agreed that at the next meeting the group would debrief on the process of developing and disseminating the survey.

The final proposal was to edit and reduce the size of the survey and to highlight essential questions. The motion was made by Matt Johnston and seconded by Elijah Bender. 9 in favor, 1 opposed. So carried.

Important Dates.

January 12th: Housing Subcommittee and Land Use Subcommittee presenting.

January 15th: Survey workshops.

January 30th: Analysis of Survey workshop.

A sheet was distributed to each committee member by Tighe and Bond.

Civic Engagement Subcommittee will share an analysis of findings from the Kitchen Table Conversations with the group.

Adjournment: A motion for adjournment was made at 9:15pm.