

Village of Rhinebeck Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee-Thursday, January 26th, 2023

The January 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

Shea Dean

Louis Turpin

Rachel Cavell

John Traver

Ernesto Martynek

Guests: Michele Grieg, 4 Corners Planning, Sharon Rooney (remote)

Several members of the public were present.

Agenda:

1. Welcome (7:00-7:03 pm)
2. Approval of December 8, 2022 Minutes (7:03-7:05 pm)
3. Reflections on Survey Process (7:05-7:25 pm)
4. Reports by Subcommittees (7:25-8:45 pm)
 - a. Land Use
 - b. Housing
5. February 25th Workshop (8:45-8:55 pm)
 - a. Draft Recommendations/Discussion of Outstanding Issues

6. Other Business (8:55-9:00 pm)

7. Adjourn

Approval of Previous Minutes. Minutes of the December meeting were approved with corrections by motion of Jeff Cotter and seconded by Eleanor Pupko.

Debrief of Survey Process: Sharon reports that 700 people responded to the survey questions, a remarkable result. Many thanks to the Civic Engagement Committee for their efforts. Initially, the committee suggested questions and what new data was needed since the creation of the original plan. In August, a first draft was circulated of possible survey questions consisting of 63 questions. Eventually, the draft survey grew to 90 questions with many edits taking place in the month of September. In October, the final survey was just about ready with translation for the Spanish language. Tighe and Bond was tasked with doing the final edits pursuant to approval by the Main Comprehensive Plan Committee.

Steve commented that he asked for the debrief initially and wants to know how the group can learn from this process going forward. Steve does not want to see the miscommunication that took place during the survey process to continue. Shea and Dierdre agree, they do not want to be blindsided and would have liked to review a model survey in advance.

Steve also would like to see 10 minutes set aside at the end of each meeting for each member to share questions and concerns.

Michele Grieg continued with a discussion of the final plan and timeline and will include lots of graphics in the final plan to make it more visually appealing. The goal is to not create a plan that will be shelved.

Housing Subcommittee Presentation (See Slides attached hereto):

Deirdre Burns presented and remarked that the group worked very collaboratively. Although they did not always agree, there was broad consensus and many ideas were hashed out.

1. The first slide consisted of an explanation of the obstacles confronting housing stock in Rhinebeck. There is limited buildable land, waves of affluent buyers, remote work, restrictive zoning code, overbuilding and limited construction of affordable homes.
2. Rental prices are high as well as home prices: median price is up in Rhinebeck by 55%.
3. HUD definition of affordability is not spending over 30% of income on housing.
4. Recommendations:
 - Permit and preserve duplexes, triplexes and other multi-family units with permits granted upon condition of 20% affordable units or at least one.
 - Reduce minimum lot size and maximum lot coverage.
 - Encourage more accessory dwelling units.

- Encourage neighbor notification.
- Retain and encourage upper story apartments.
- Include affordable units in all new developments for purchase or rent.
- Identify lots that can be developed for scattered development.
- Create a housing trust.
- Provide relief for lower income residents by reducing permitting fees.
- Adopt rent stabilization rules.
- Adopt a standing committee on housing.
- Preserve the small town feel through a pattern book for zoning.
- More resources for planning.
- Rental property registry.
- An annual report on the number of permits and variances given.
- Encourage Climate Smart in construction and rehabilitation.
- Encourage native plantings.

Land Use Subcommittee (see slides attached hereto):

Steve Rosenberg presented on behalf of this subcommittee. Steve would like the presentation to center around the theme of Rhinebeck as a model 21st century historic village.

Steve would like to note that the list of recommendations contained in these minutes are only a partial summary.

Recommendations:

1. Develop infill parcels with mixed housing and green space.
2. Encourage zoning for mixed use to encourage housing and commerce to serve local needs.
3. Encourage mixed-use infill development.
4. Adapt to changing needs, example: 45' building heights in the Business Center. [Eleanor would like it noted that 45' would be the maximum proposed/allowed].
5. Update zoning to add "missing middle."
6. Make zoning inclusionary.
7. Ease permitting of accessory dwelling units, multi-family and duplexes and triplexes.
8. Enhance and connect existing parks.
9. Expand Doughboy park to create a Village Green.
10. Collaborate with the Fairgrounds to seek public access and encourage easements and donations of land.
11. Develop and implement long term trail system.
12. Master landscape plan for climate resiliency and diversity.
13. Strive for Climate Smart Community (highest rating).
14. Reduce waste.

15. Create pattern books.
16. Create tiered historic district review.
17. Encourage intermunicipal cooperation.

New Business:

-Michele passed around a sheet on checklist for adoption of the final recommendations for the plan. The recommendations will be combined into a Word document. It was asked that members submit issues they would like to discuss pertaining to the draft recommendations by February 16th for discussion at the workshop.

-The work of the subcommittees is complete for now but Main Committee members are free to speak to them should the need arise.

-Next meeting: February 9th.

Adjournment: There being no further business, a motion for adjournment was made at 9:03 pm.