

Village of Rhinebeck Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee-Thursday, August 18, 2022

The August meeting was called to order by Matt Johnston at 7:02pm at the Methodist Church Parsonage, 83 E. Market Street, Rhinebeck, NY with the following members in attendance:

Matt Johnston, Chair  
Jeffrey Cotter  
Elijah Bender  
Steve Rosenberg  
Eleanor Pupko  
Louis Turpin  
Ernesto Martyneck  
John Clarke

Several members of the public were present.

**Agenda:**

The purpose of this meeting is to continue discussion of an update to the Village of Rhinebeck Comprehensive Plan. Today's meeting will include discussion and passage of a communications policy; continued discussion of draft outline for the comprehensive plan update; discussion of the draft community values survey and updated timeline for the work of the committee; and reports by comprehensive plan subcommittees.

1. Hellos! (7:00-7:03)
2. Approval of July 14, 2022 Minutes (7:03-7:05)
3. Discussion and Adoption of Communications Policy (7:05-7:15)
4. Continue Discussion of Draft Framework for Existing Conditions/Preliminary Plan Outline (7:15-7:30)
5. Discussion of Draft Community Values Survey (7:30-8:00)
  - a. Appointment of subcommittee with particular expertise to tackle initial draft: John Clarke, Matt Johnston, Gary Bassett, Michael Slaby, Sharon Rooney (goal is to prepare the survey for presentation and final approval by the main committee)
  - b. Call to main committee for additional possible members
6. Discussion of Overall Committee Timeline (8:00-8:20)
  - a. Survey Release (September)
  - b. Community Vision and Values Meeting (Sept/Oct)

- i. Discuss selection of this date — October 1 or 2?
- c. Kitchen Conversations (Ongoing)
- d. Deadline to Complete Information Gather (end of December)
- e. Drafting Recommendations/Plan (November-March)
- f. Public Hearings on Draft Plan (March-April)
- g. Redraft (May)
- h. Presentation to the Village Board (June)
7. Subcommittee Reports (8:20-8:55)
  - a. Discussion of new subcommittee: Intergovernmental
  - b. Discussion of reframing “Historic Preservation” subcommittee to “Heritage Preservation and Community Character”
8. Other Business (8:55-9:00)
9. Adjourn (9pm)

**Approval of Previous Minutes.** Minutes of the meeting held on July 14, 2022 were approved with corrections by motion of Ernesto Martynek and seconded by Jeff Cotter. All in favor.

**Unfinished Business:**

**a. Continued Discussion of Communications Policy**

The group decided on the removal of the section in the policy related to ex parte communications by members. Chairs of the subcommittees will now be referred to as “delegates” and the steering committee terminology has been removed and will now be described only as “main committee.”

Lydia explained that subcommittees cannot speak on behalf of the main committee and this was of primary concern in drafting the communications policy.

Steve suggested that the language in the document pertaining to communication by the Comprehensive Plan Committee or subcommittees read as follows: “Recommendations to the Village Board shall be communicated from the Main Committee only.”

Eleanor commented that there should be more flexibility beyond 10 days on edits to the agenda in advance of a meeting.

John C. asked if a quorum of Main Committee members at a subcommittee meeting requires posting of an agenda 10 days in advance. Matt will review this point with Tighe and Bond.

The above edits and clarifications were approved for the Communications Policy by motion of Eleanor Pupko and seconded by Elijah Bender.

**b. Continued Discussion of Tighe and Bond's Draft Table of Contents:**

Matt prefaced the discussion that the document be viewed as a sample. It was noted that Michele and Sharon will attend the September meeting. Several members voiced concerns that representatives from Tighe and Bond have not been present at the last several meetings. Steve agreed that the TOC should be viewed for information purposes but added that it would be difficult to discuss the details just yet. Eleanor noted that there is no tourism chapter present. John commented that this is part of the charge of the Business Ecosystem. There was discussion of renaming the Business Ecosystem Subcommittee. Matt advocated against changing the name to "Village Center and Gateway" as it focuses too much on physical location and to keep the present name.

It was resolved that the discussion of the TOC would be tabled until the next meeting.

Matt would like to appoint a special subcommittee to solicit civic engagement consisting of: Michael Slaby, Gary Bassett, Sharon Rooney and Matt Johnson.

**c. Discussion of Survey:**

There was a lengthy discussion on reviewing a final draft of the survey questions by the next meeting and attempting to edit them. There will be 65 questions in the survey according to Tighe and Bond. Lydia explained that many of the questions were too specific and needed to be rephrased. Many asked for an affirmation of a policy stand. The goal of the survey is to get a feeling of values and to eliminate bias and improper answers.

Matt asked that a redline of edits be sent as to the survey questions by next Friday.

Steve commented that the survey questions should be sent back to the subcommittees for comment. John Clarke feels as though the process is being bogged down by continuously sending the questions back to the subcommittees. Some members asked why the survey questions were drafted without consulting the main committee?

A lengthy discussion ensued about the importance of a representative demographic. Steve feels there is not enough time under the current constraints for subcommittee review. John commented on how important it is to not prolong the process any further.

**Proposal: schedule two office hours specific to survey questions and send an email out to reconcile whether any material was not included. Deadline of September 2nd voted on by the committee with 5 in favor and 2 not in favor.**

John shared that demographics should not be the first section on the survey as it chills participation.

Steve asked about the process of sharing results and interpretation of survey results. Matt advised that Sharon should walk through timing, activities and general intentions and come up with a process for integrating results and recommendations into the plan. There is concern that subcommittees do not understand where the substance of discussions is going as far as the main committee is concerned.

John discussed that the timeline has to be updated to reflect deadlines for the subcommittees.

There was discussion of changing the name of the Historic Preservation Subcommittee to Heritage and Visions of the Future in light of the Arts and Culture discussion previously. The group was against this but agreed to expanding the scope of the subcommittee.

## **Committee Reports:**

### **Housing**

The group met on August 11th at the Starr Library. Rough draft was circulated of vision objectives and strategy by Dierdre and reviewed by the subcommittee. The following items were considered by the group and outlined as important:

1. What are good housing strategies?
2. Incentivizing workforce housing.
3. Workforce housing laws.
4. Working with nonprofits.
5. Looking at properties owned by the Village and potential opportunities.
6. Equity in housing.

An intermunicipal task force is essential to these goals as the committee is very focused on Village and County affordability levels.

Eleanor asked that the Onedrive be populated for this subcommittee as there is currently no material. Ernesto will work on this.

Lydia pointed out that it is important to distinguish market rate from affordability and anything that is in the middle. Matt suggested that Tighe and Bond should update the affordability language and support the efforts of the Housing Subcommittee.

### **Business Ecosystem**

The group met with merchants from the Business Center at the July meeting held at the Starr Library History Room. A representative from Taconic Resources was present. There was

discussion of concerns and obstacles to the business merchants including parking, signage, loading and unloading zones, and the Rhinebeck Farmers Market.

Inventory work including sidewalk and parking inventories and infill projects are continuing. The goal is to shift from the gathering process to making policy recommendations.

There was discussion of modifications to the Village Municipal Lot including one plan to improve the lot with a parking structure. This plan includes lots of positives including lower rents and affordable housing.

A presentation was made at the last meeting involving options for West Market Street including a plan for relocating the Farmer's Market. Representatives of the Farmer's Market Board will be present at the next Business Ecosystem meeting.

### **Transportation**

There was discussion of cycling and pedestrian recommendations along with Town-Village-Empire Trail connections.

The group discussed public and alternate modes of transit for senior citizens.

### **Land Use**

The group established three task forces at the last meeting including: 1. Natural and Public Spaces, 2. Development/Zoning and 3. Green Infrastructure. Progress has been made on these task forces, however, the group is waiting for additional information and data from Michele Grieg.

There was discussion of the significant overlap between the Business Ecosystem group and the Land Use group. Steve advises that he has attended a Business Ecosystem meeting and John has done likewise with Land Use.

### **Civic Engagement**

There are three events on the horizon:

1. Kitchen Table Conversations, the first to take place Wednesday, August 24th at Starr Library. The Civic Engagement team has identified various groups, demographics and created a volunteers spreadsheet.
2. Vision and Values Event to be held on Saturday, September 10th at Village Hall.
3. Subcommittee Conversations to be held on two dates: Sunday, October 2 from 1-3pm and October 12 from 6-8pm.

Delegates from each subcommittee will be needed on October 2 and October 12.

Discussion of postcards to target audiences. The cost is 19 cents a card. Lydia will work with Eleanor to budget this item.

A request was made to put yard signs up to get the community engaged. The group declined to pursue this idea.

A request was made to have important dates related to the Comprehensive Plan be included in the Mayor's Message.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, the Chairman made a motion for adjournment at 8:37pm. The next meeting will be on Thursday, September 15th.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The meeting was subsequently rescheduled to Thursday, September 22nd.