

**Community Meetings at Starr Library with CPC Subcommittees
October 12, 2022, 6:00-8:00 pm**

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY VALUES SUBCOMMITTEE
(n=47 participants, plus 10 presenters and volunteers)**

Presenters: Eleanor Pupko and Michael Slaby
Facilitator: Michael Slaby
Recorder: Michael Slaby

Presentation

Today we are going to focus on three aspects of our work.

1) Outreach (report on what has been accomplished)

We have reached out to the community to explain what a Comprehensive Plan is, why we are looking to revise/rewrite it and most importantly, how we are gathering input from the community and what we are doing with it.

2) Communication

- How do you /the public find out about Village operations and decisions ?
- How do you find out about events going on in the Village?
- How did you find out about this meeting?
- Other local news/communications concerns

3) How connected do you feel to your neighbors, community and public officials? Let's discuss. Is there something we need to do to build/enhance connectedness? What specific steps can we take to create a strong community feeling?

Here is a brief history of what The CECV has accomplished to date:

1) We tabled twice at the Farmers' Market (20+50 participants) and at the Memorial Day Parade (25 participants). Also 40 visitors to the Farmers' Market filled out a brief survey the information was collated and shared with the Comprehensive Plan Committee.

2) We held two Open Mics at the High School - June 11 and June 15 – (33+25 participants) to begin the process of cataloging what the community values and what it wishes to change. All the comments were typed up and shared with the six subcommittees working on the plan.

3) Tighe & Bond (T&B), the consultants hired by the Village, organized a Visions and Values meeting on September 10 in the Village Hall and we assisted and provided the PR. Approximately 40 people participated, and we hope to get the summary of comments soon.

4) Volunteers throughout the community have been setting up Kitchen Table Conversations, groups of 6 to 10 people who meet to discuss what we value, what we wish to change and to propose solutions. (To date 92 people have participated in 14 KTCs, with ten more KTCs slated to take place.) All the responses are being collated into one document, which will be shared with the CPC and the public. This includes many pages of comments.

5) Oct. 2 three subcommittees (Housing; Population and Business Ecosystem; Transportation and Mobility) held the first leg of a forum here at the library to discuss their work to date and 40 attended. Questions and answers were documented and will be shared with the appropriate subcommittees as well as with the public. Note: 47 individuals participated in October 12 subcommittee meetings.

6) Promotional efforts include: flyers, messages sent from the Village, yard signs, and 1600 mailers sent - one to each mailing address in the Village - including hand delivery to households not on a designated route.

7) The next major opportunity for participation will be a survey, scheduled to come out soon. We hope to send another mailer to remind you to take the survey. Going forward, the Comprehensive Plan Committee will review preliminary recommendations from the six subcommittees, and T&B will be drafting the Comprehensive Plan Feb-May of next year. There is a CPC meeting tomorrow night, where I hope information will be forthcoming on how you can further engage in the process.

THEMES: Communication and Connection

- People with school-age children tend to feel connected through the school community (mentioned in each session).
- Using social media for information was mentioned at each session. People who are comfortable using social media feel informed in addition to feeling connected.
- Although long-term residents reported that the Village of Rhinebeck used to be much more closely knit, speakers expressed feeling a strong tie to the Village even as they wished for a better flow of information.
- Village residents feel more “in the loop” than Town residents when it comes to the Comprehensive Plan.

Comments from participants:

Q: Why are there no zoom/video recording of Committee meetings?

A: Village says not required by law; it’s not easy to set up

Q: To show progress, could there be an interactive mural in the Village for CPC process? Use the side of a building with chalk and provide chalk?

A: We did at one point consider putting up a progress thermometer, but it never came to fruition.

Q: Could the Village print copies of the proposed digital paper, The Hudson Valley Pilot, as a service to the community?

People agreed that it's important to consider the needs of community members who are not tech savvy or don't have access to technology.

Q: How is the Comprehensive Plan approved and by whom?

A: The Comprehensive Plan Committee will come up with recommendations based on subcommittee reports, but ultimately the Village Board must approve the plan.

Q: There was some confusion between the purpose of the plan and its implementation.

A: The Comprehensive Plan is an outline for the Village to follow. After a plan is passed, zoning laws will have to be reviewed to make sure they are in compliance with the new plan.

Q: Why aren't more details available; for example, who are the subcommittee members?

A: The subcommittee members are strictly volunteers and not appointed by the Village; it's an informal arrangement and in flux, with volunteers stepping into and out of the process.

Q. Why was the mailer only sent to Village residents?

A. The cost of sending it to the entire Town is prohibitive.

Comments:

- Several people learned about this event from a Library email
- What is the process for participation?
- More people would participate more if the 'asks' were more clear and more specific. For example, the Village could have sent out an email to ask for volunteers to help with the event today.
- The local business base used to define Rhinebeck. Businesses used to be part of the fabric and maybe even glue of the community. Owners lived here, worshiped here, were members of social and service clubs; you borrowed money from your neighbor
- IGA used to be a social center.
- It is more difficult to be an inclusive community now than in old days despite good intentions

- There was a stronger sense of community when kids were still in school; very specific needs and structured participation
- Block parties were a fun way to build a sense of community. Used to have block parties – stopped by the Village.
- Would love a Welcome Wagon-type experience for new people
- Businesses should reach out to residents. How about a "Resident Wednesday" or some kind of local discount day? (restaurants mentioned specifically)
- Only knew about these events through library; didn't know Village sends emails
- What about sharing more through other existing communities such as the school district, the Chamber, Morton Library?
- What is the difference between the Town and Village? Rhinecliff residents want the Village to be more inclusive of the Town. They should not be separate.
- Expanding the volunteerism culture would help build a feeling of connectedness. Can meet people by v
- Worried about leaving Manhattan but have found everything they need here in Village of Rhinebeck and more than they had in the city.