

Task Force Members:

- Michael Forlenza (Resident-at-large)
- Jean Michel (Megabrain Comics)
- David Miller (VOR Planning Board)
- Lila Pague (WSSM)
- Victoria Polidoro (Fosters)
- Lydia Slaby (VOR)
- Fletcher Tingle (The Amsterdam)
- John Traver (Samuels)
- Luciano Valdivia (Market St)

Process:

- Today's meeting: outdoor dining during the current state of emergency for COVID-19. Draft plan to be submitted to the VOR BoT to be discussed on February 23, 2021.
- Future meetings: long-term plans to make the Rhinebeck CBD friendlier to outdoor dining and more walking traffic
 - This planning process will involve public comment opportunities and is expected to take at least a year.

Current State of Emergency Plan:

- Due to COVID-19, the state of New York and Dutchess County are under declared states of emergency, which in turn grant municipalities like the Village of Rhinebeck opportunities to be flexible with certain zoning laws. The VoR BoT has used this flexibility to grant our businesses the opportunity to maximize sales during this unprecedented time.
- Using the 2020 "Jersey barrier" plan as a template, the TF discussed changes to make the overall plan work better for restaurants, retail, residents, and visitors alike.

Comments:

- Discussion of Jersey barriers.
 - Location of them was deemed generally fine. However there was a large "empty" space along the south side of E. Market between Winter Sun Summer Moon and Pete's that could be used better. More parking? A more permanent "event" space?
 - Discussion of whether their physical appearance could be improved.
- Discussion of space and occupancy restrictions.
 - Desire to give businesses opportunity to "recoup" ongoing losses was expressed by all, therefore if there is a space/occupancy restriction, let's make sure it's for SLA or public health requirements.
 - How much of private parking lots can be used for tents? Half of spaces? Fewer? More?
- Discussion of permit process.
 - Desire to have the approval be expeditious. A request for either the Mayor or the Building Inspector, not the entire BoT, be the signatory.

- Concerns expressed that everything businesses do is legal and safe (electrical, propane, seating plans), therefore detailed maps and plans must accompany the special permit.
- General concern that if a restaurant is using frontage that belongs to a different building/business for tables, it must have sign-off on the plan from the business manager or building owner who has that frontage. (Already exists in the regulation, but this is imperative.)
- Concerns that pedestrians need more than the VoR minimum of 36" to walk. "At least 4 feet" was generally met with approval.
- General concern with making sure that paper napkins, disposable cups, and other debris as a result of outdoor dining is collected. Addition of "trash plan" on the permit would be helpful.
- Additional public spaces?
 - Discussion of the CVS "park" and how it could be better used for the community.
- Discussion of parking.
 - Generalized opinion that parking was not a concern in summer of 2020, but as vaccinations roll out and people feel more comfortable being in public, parking may become more of a problem.
 - Employees park "somewhere else" and "shuttle in"?
 - Enforcement of 2-hour parking, especially on weekends (both Saturday and Sunday)? Is two hours enough for a visitor to dine and shop?
 - Metered parking? Seems out of character for VoR, but worth a conversation.
 - Would any private businesses be willing to allow for public use of their parking spaces after business hours? Similar question for churches?
 - Will the Farmers' Market "get smaller" again once safety allows for it?
 - Parking plans for VoR is a larger issue that deserves discussion.

Next Steps:

- The VoR BoT will discuss the proposed revised state of emergency outdoor dining regulations, map, and permit at its meeting on Feb 23, 2021.
- Task force will meet again in March.