

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Minutes of a Public Hearing regarding the results of the recent Community Survey regarding proposed revisions to the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Shawangunk, held by the Town Board of Shawangunk, Ulster County, State of New York at the Town Office Building, 14 Central Avenue, Wallkill, New York on the 25th day of April 2019.

PRESENT were Supervisor John Valk, Councilman Brian Amthor, Councilman Adrian DeWitt, Councilman Matthew Watkins, Town Clerk Jane Rascoe. Also present were Planning Board members Richard Barnhart and Mark Watkins, Zoning Board member Roger Rascoe, Town Attorney Richard Hoyt, Planning Consultant Bonnie Franson, and several members of the community. Councilman Robert Miller was excused from the meeting. Emergency exits were announced by Supervisor Valk, followed by the pledge to the flag.

Supervisor Valk opened the Public Hearing at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Valk explained that this was the first of two public hearings that will be held in accordance with Town Law 272 A during the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan. The workshops were held in Wallkill and Walker Valley on January 26, 2019. He further explained that this Public Hearing is to provide further public participation in the preparation of the revisions to the Comprehensive Plan. The survey results are posted on the Town Website. Supervisor Valk turned the meeting over to Planning Consultant Bonnie Franson who collected the data for the survey.

Ms. Franson explained the purpose of this meeting was to provide an overview of the survey results following the workshops that were held in January this year. Ms. Franson stated that additional feedback is still welcome. She explained that the existing Comprehensive Plan is the basis of the current zoning which is ten years old. This process will gage what will happen in the next ten years. Specifically, the Town Board is looking at the revitalization of the two hamlet areas, Wallkill and Walker Valley. Ms. Franson advised more than 65% of the residents who responded to the survey reported that they have lived in the town for more than 15 years. She stated that 70% of the input from the survey was from residents on the east side of the Town, and the hamlet. She stated that additional information may be needed to determine recommendations for Walker Valley. Ms. Franson explained that the next step in the process would be for the Re-Zoning Committee to develop a draft plan with another Public Hearing to follow. She advised that the Existing Conditions Report and the Survey Results are both listed on the Town Website.

Ms. Franson stated some important things to point out from the survey results are:

The overall goals in the old plan are still supported and are important.

There is 50% support for change with the uses broadened.

Planning approval should be simpler.

Large interest in the Riverwalk along with water enhanced businesses.

Most agree that they like the hamlet to appear traditional with no large scale buildings.

There is 50% support for mixed uses.

Most feel the need for some balanced Design Guidelines without deterring development.

Eating establishments, food related businesses, tourism related wineries, event venues, and Borden Farm related events are the preferred uses.

The 146 acres of the Borden property in the B-C & HWG Zones is not developed.

Land use options within the 76 acres in the HWG Zone up Route 208 need to be explored.

There were fewer replies (32%) to new residential development, most have a preference to single family dwellings.

Character of the Town rated positive for the River, Library, Rail Trail, Borden Farm Views, Mountain Views, School System, Sidewalks and Riverwalk.

Need to clean up the appearance in the Gateway Zone with reasonable design guidelines for owners.

The meeting was opened up for questions and feedback. Ms. Franson stated that the survey results are on the Town Website along with this PowerPoint presentation.

Lori Schmidt inquired if funding was available for home improvements?

Supervisor Valk explained that a plan is needed first, then the zoning changes, following that, research for money could occur. Ms. Franson stated that there is federal and state grant money available.

Sal Patella inquired if there was grant money available for historical buildings for preservation.

Ms. Franson stated there are federal and state grants, tax credits and matching economic development grants. Mr. Patella stated that he looks forward to the new restaurant coming to the hamlet as it could be a draw for people to come into the hamlet. Ms. Franson agreed and noted that people like to go to places that are walkable.

Jessica Kilpatrick stated that she thinks the hamlet needs family, friendly recreation to the river. She thinks that a river park should be connected by sidewalks and trails. Ms. Kilpatrick inquired if there were any survey results about the existing park? Ms. Franson advised that this is a process still in progress, residents are encouraged and welcomed to contact the Town Board with ideas for activities. Ms. Kilpatrick inquired about the condition of broken swings and equipment in Garrison Park. She inquired about security cameras. Supervisor Valk advised that Garrison Park is on the radar of the Town Board. They are working on installing cameras and possibly replacing the basketball hoops with pickle ball or tennis courts. They are open to ideas. Councilman DeWitt advised that new mulch is being purchased as well.