

**Town of Newcomb
Comprehensive Plan Committee
Meeting – April 17, 2019
Minutes**

Members present: Paul Hai Chairman, Ricki Dick Clerk, Dave Olbert, Laurinda Minke, Margaret and Bob Hampson, Lorraine and Wes Miga, Skip Hults, Chris and Lou Fisher, George Damasevitz, Mary Lamphear, Jolene Hlavaty, Melissa and Mark Yandon, Caitlyn Yandon, Joanne Bush

Members present via Phone: None

Meeting was called to order at 7:08 PM and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes from the March 28, 2019 were reviewed and discussed. Minutes will not be formal, but corrections and suggestions can be made. They are for reference only

Comprehensive Plan – Discussion of committee analysis:

Chris Fisher shared that the comprehensive plan is new to her due to the fact that she is new to the town, she stated that she reviewed the old plan concentrating on sections 6 & 7. She felt that the goals and objections in the old plan are still relevant today. She could see where goals had been met and some that have not, which left her with some questions to why they had not been met.

Paul Hai asked for other thoughts about the plan

Wes Miga shared that the town has touched on and successfully completed a majority of the goals in the first plan, he continued to state that the town is still working on some of them, that there is always work to be done. He discussed the town core idea, the smart growth element of the plan, the connections to the overlook, medical center, ball field, skating rink and golf course. He discussed how the loss of the store which was a key element to the plan has impacted the plan. He discussed the visitor center at the overlook, the committee that has been working diligently on this, finding grant money to complete this. He mentioned that businesses want to be on 28N and that is a consideration for the plan. He discussed the salt shed built being moved to a new location. He mentioned that the development of the Newcomb Green initiative has not got a lot of traction even with a considerable amount of time, money, resources and effort being put into it.

The purposed boat launch across from Cloud Splitters did fall through, which was due to lack of water at certain times, which resulted in its location being moved to the town beach.

Paul Hai added that we were able to expand on recycling at the dump which was part of the Green Initiative.

Paul Hai shared that he was impressed with how vibrant the current plan is, that is truly an impressive document. He stated that a lot of the current problems are still the same as those in the first plan, like getting businesses here, getting people to visit the area, keeping the school open, getting families to move here are still things that we need to address moving forward.

Paul Hai asked if anyone found anything that was not included in the first plan or any gaps in the first plan

Wes Miga stated that the goals that are still good, the next step is developing the mechanics behind those goals to make them work. He also mentioned the buildout analysis that was done.

Paul Hai discussed that the build out analysis was a document from the first plan, that explained the potential to build new residential structures in town given the current zoning laws and regulations. It was only the potential of what could be build not what would actually be built, as it used all the land within the town.

Wes Miga added that the analysis was not fully accurate in that it did not take into consideration the constraints for some of those lots, the type of lot it was and utility of those lots. He added that Robin Deloria has worked hard to identify the properties in which homes can actually be built on. He discussed the fact that we are a very high 2nd home / retired population community right now. He discussed the need for families to be able buy or build affordable homes here in the town.

George Damasevitz added that for each parcel you have to look at the surroundings like wetlands and suitability to be able to build on them.

Wes Miga added that the first step is to identify those usable parcels.

Dave Olbert added that some of parcels are large enough to build on, he stated that knowing the topography of the properties is helpful in knowing if they are buildable lots, he also added that some of those lots may need some zoning law changes in order to make them suitable building lots or to have the ability to put more housing units on those lots.

Paul Hai stated that as far as the new comprehensive plan goes we would look at the assessment and analysis of town owned properties, then work on a plan for the best use of those properties based on the constraints at hand, we would then make recommendations of the steps to pursue this.

Paul Hai asked for other thoughts

Paul Hai stated that moving forward we can improve on the current plan by filling in the gaps of what might be missing. Some areas that could be addressed are the Finch and Pruyn land purchases, the Essex Chain opening, and other recreational opportunities and the impact that they will have on the town.

George Damasevitz added that the idea of using the Tahawus area as the gate way to the high peaks to help lessen congestion of other areas need to be addressed, along with the use of the Masten House and need for another Adirondack Lodge type facility.

Dave Olbert stated that the conflict with the Homestead Act and its effect on the ability to draw in businesses into town with this in act in place is a concern. Based on the current tax structure it makes it hard for businesses, unless they are a mom and pop's organization in which their business is also their primary residence.

Wes Miga questioned how Finch and Pruyn ran a business here for so long under the tax classifications that were in place

Dave Olbert added that Finch and Pruyn was under the Fisher Act for their forestry land. He also added that they tore down buildings in order to fall under certain tax classifications

Mark Yandon added that they tore down history as well when they did that

Paul Hai stated that we need to address the homestead act and its impact on business development within the town.

Dave Olbert asked how for example would low income housing like that built in North Creek fall under the Homestead Act

Mark Yandon stated that he believed that the original Homestead Act at first did not recognize mom and pop businesses as part of the Homestead Act and it needed to be addressed in the past as well.

Dave Olbert added that Robin DeLoria has been working on that with Betty Little and Dan Stec to find a way to work this issue out.

Caitlyn Yandon asked about the Adirondack Diversity initiative and if that is something we may be eligible for

Paul Hai stated that is still being discussed

Paul Hai added that the new plan does need to address diversity and the impacts it has on the success of our town.

Paul Hai asked other thoughts on changes to the plan or what might need to be added to it.

Dave Olbert added that broadband can be removed from the list

Wes Miga added that cell service progress that has been made since the first goals were created

Wes Miga added that the possibility of expanding the golf course and use the clubhouse for other purposes, such as ski trails in winter and ski rentals

Paul Hai stated that we want this document to be one that does not end up on a shelf, we want it to have real feasible ideas moving forward

Paul Mitchell plans for his business in the area were discussed

Paul Hai added that Paul Mitchell is one of the people we will get here to meet with

Joann Bush inquired about the water project in Winebrook and if that can be one of those items to be removed

Wes Miga added that when the current plan was written that work was not done yet. Although it has been completed since we can included it in the new plan as well because there are upgrades to be done, maintenance to be done. Some of these are things that funding is not available for and would rely on being residentially funded. He also stated that money from AT&T leasing tower space could add to some money used to that help fund some of those future expenses.

Paul Hai asked if there was anything else on the horizon for Winebrook. He also asked about the possibility of extending water and sewer to other areas

Mark Yandon responded that was not feasible without adding a new district and that would not be cost effective for the town. He also added that the areas largest aquifer was down near the Roosevelt monument and would cost millions of dollars to access that water

Survey:

Paul Hai mentioned that the actual survey that was used in the first plan was good and that we should use that exact same survey as a baseline moving forward. We can always add questions to it

Paul Hai asked if everyone was in agreement with that and everyone agreed

Paul Hai suggested that we add a question regarding whether you responded to the survey in 2010 or if were involved in the plan creation in 2010? Then add some questions to that based on their response.

Paul Hai suggested asking the question of what do you feel has changed most drastically in the last 10 years that this could help us see if people know about the things that we have achieved since the last plan.

Wes Miga stated that the one goal that has quickly been forgotten was the road work that needed to be done when the first plan was created, the bad roads stopped people from coming here or even wanting to have to drive through here. He stated that we spent \$3500 to get 27 million which is not a bad return and road improvements have been a great accomplishment.

Paul Hai stated that the way the road is maintained makes a huge difference and thanked Mark Yandon for that.

Wes Miga reminded us that we don't own the road but the quality of the road is an asset for the town to stay on top of

Mark Yandon stated that the contracts for road maintenance are up every 3 years and it is time, so he plans on making calls to make sure that maintenance is done.

Paul Hai stated that we will administer the same survey as before but with added questions, he asked the committee what added questions do they want to see on the new survey

Mark Yandon asked if we could ask if people understand what comprehensive plan is or was in 2010 and do they understand all that was accomplished?

Paul Hai stated that yes we can ask that

Robert Hampson stated that it is not so much what we ask, but how we ask the questions.

Paul Hai reminded everyone that we want ask the right questions without steering the answers to be what we want to hear

George Damasevitz stated that we should keep hammering the idea of getting people here so they know what is going on as well as the amount of work it takes to get things done

Paul Hai added that the public awareness to get people here is out there, it is on social media, the town Facebook page, and that the survey and public meeting will help to promote this

Laurinda Minke added that it is in the newsletter as well

Wes Miga asked about taking a snap shot of the comprehensive plan and placing it in the newsletter as a way of informing people what this written document has meant for the town. That this plan has meant millions of dollars for us or that it has been the platform to get millions for the town.

Caitlyn Yandon asked about a digital copy newsletter being available online.

Paul Hai stated that would be a great suggestion that should be brought to the town board

Paul Hai asked what do we want to get out of the pubic

Wes Miga suggested finding out what percentage don't want change, and want things to remain the same

Melissa Yandon added that we should be asking what did you like or don't like about Newcomb?

George Damasevitz suggested asking if they are you planning to leave Newcomb in the next 5 years and if yes, why?

Stakeholders:

Paul Hai suggested having Chazen do stand-alone surveys with groups as they did with the first plan.

Paul Hai suggested talking to Adirondack Hamlets to Huts, which is an initiative to connect recreational hiking trails with communities. Which would drive trails though communities rather than just through the back country.

Dave Olbert discussed that one trail will start in Corinth and end at the Upper Works. This would be a similar wilderness trail to that of the Northville Placid

trail. This takes work on the part of each town to reach out to private landowners and trail help with maintenance.

Paul Hai asked if they should be invited as a stakeholder group?

Dave Olbert suggested adding to the list of stakeholders and then going through that list to see what ones we need to meet with.

Paul Hai stated that we can add the Hamlet to Huts and the First Wilderness Trial Heritage to our list.

Dave Olbert would like a combined list of stakeholders discussed from both the last meeting and this meeting

Paul Hai stated that a revised list will be added to minutes.

Open discussion:

Dave Olbert asked Caitlyn Yandon is here in Newcomb and if she would be vested to stay in Newcomb?

Caitlyn Yandon stated that it is important to her as she lives here now and she wants to be involved this time around, that when the plan was created the last time is was too young to be involved.

Wes Miga stated that Caitlyn represents a level of diversity, that being the younger community.

Paul Hai stated that he did invited students from the school to attend last time and did not respond

Paul Hai would like the survey to go to school as well for their input.

Melissa Yandon stated that we should get the college students here when they are home so that we can get their input on the future.

Next Meeting:

Next meeting will be on Wednesday May 29th at 7pm

June's meeting to be held on June 19th at 7pm.

Other tentative meetings will be held on the last Wednesday of the month during the summer months include Wednesday July 31st and Wednesday August 28th at 7pm

Meeting was Adjourned at 8:43 PM

Stakeholders List:

Dept. of Transportation

Dept. of Environmental Conservation

Adirondack Park Agency

Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Open Space Institute

Adirondack Hamlets to Huts

First Wilderness Heritage Trail Initiative