

**TOWN OF WOODBURY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE MEETING**

September 26, 2005

Held at IBEW Building
Harriman, New York
(Town of Woodbury)

PRESENT: Mike Queenan	Robert Bristol
Michael Schack	Nicolette Wagoner, Tanya Saltzman
Sheila Conroy	George Sewitt
Robin Crouse	Colleen Campbell
John Baranowski	Doug Ottavio

Nicolette Wagoner opened the meeting by explaining that the purpose of the hearing tonight is to receive feedback from the public on the Comprehensive Plan which has been out since September 15th so the public's comments can be incorporated into the final version of the Plan. This is not a question and answer session, but is an opportunity for the Committee to hear from the public. The presentation included the attached Power Point document. During this presentation she explained that the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to update the Master Plan that was done in 1988. A lot of the zoning in the Master Plan is staying the same. However, themes have been considered for recommendations to highlight and enhance areas of Woodbury as well as strength language. The Committee has been meeting since early January, sometimes twice a month. The Plan is subject to SEQRA. She then reviewed the major themes of the Plan. There are sections in the Plan that recommend short term, mid term and long term actions. The next meeting of the Committee will be October 11th. All written and oral comments will be compiled and given to the Committee. Comments may also be e-mailed to the Town Clerk's office at Town Hall. There was a time limit for each speaker, but if time permits people could come up again.

At this point the floor was opened to the public for comments.

Mary Gross Ferraro stated that there was no legal notice in the Times Herald Record about this hearing. She said the Comprehensive Plan was in the library and six days later there was a public hearing. She asked how this was legal or ethical. She also asked why this meeting was being held in a place out of town which is difficult for people to get to instead of having it at the Town Hall or the Senior Center. She felt that if the Comprehensive Plan was to have any credibility the last paragraph on Page 4.2 has to be stricken from the Plan. Otherwise, it is just a "self-serving" document that will be used to justify passing the high density super clustering

local laws that will make it possible for anyone to buy up and build out over 3,000 acres in Woodbury on as little as 15,000 square feet per unit.

Iris Sandow of 32 Blueberry Lane, Highland Mills said that she had a chance to review the Plan and believes that it focuses on the significant issues now and into the future, which are preserving open space and maintaining the integrity of the area. She felt that economic development needs to be promoted properly. She was pleased that Cromwell Lake was mentioned. She feels this is a good Plan and feels that it addresses a lot of issues and creates a lot of challenges which are difficult due to the way this Town is laid out. She supports the Plan and encourages the elected and appointed officials of Woodbury to do all they can to make Woodbury stay great.

John Burke of Central Valley thanked all the members of the Committee for all the time and effort they put forth working on this Plan. For the record, he noted that this is probably the eighth or ninth public meeting. He was there for most of the meetings when you did the behind the scenes work. However, it is only the second meeting where the public has had a chance to have input. This was short of his hopes when this began in August 2004 at the school across from the Commons. At the first meeting, members of Saratoga Associates were present as well as Board members and a substantial number of members of the public. At that meeting people broke up into groups and made lists of things that were assets to the Town and things that were considered challenges for the Town. At that time, they were assured that there would be more public sessions.

He related that the Committee met again at the beginning of January and developed its own list of assets and challenges for the Town. Many of the people at the Committee table were not at the August 2004 meeting. Between August and January, a Committee was formed. The Committee list was similar to the list from August. (Timer rang and Mr. Burke sat down)

Mindy Prospero noted that we can't stop development. She felt that this Plan was a good one because people could build on one acre and the Town still could get some open space back. She has a large piece of property, which is hard to maintain. Most of Highland Mills does not consist of two and three acre parcels. She said that one acre of land is more than most people can manage and that this Plan was the best solution for everybody in Town.

John Burke returned to speak a second time. He expressed his disappointment about not having reached out more to the public. At one point there were discussions of charettes. He was disappointed that members of the Committee can't hear everyone's feelings. He cited the Town of Newburgh, from last week's local paper, where the process went on for more than 3 years. They had many ways to reach out to the people. They advertised about meetings on topics like traffic. The night on the topic of senior housing, the room was so jammed that they had to move to another location. That is what he had expected. He felt that there is an important piece missing in this document. The Plan lays out a vision of what we have and what we would like to

see. The Plan had many good descriptions with words, maps and tables. It was clear that the Committee had used issues listed from the August meeting. (The timer range and Mr. Burke sat down

(Since nobody wanted to speak at that time, Mr Burke returned) . Mr. Burke continued that the list of positives/assets was clearly demonstrated verbally at a meeting where the public participated. He noted that we have many great positives in Woodbury such as our people, the parks, open space, school system, town services, and a few other things. However, he felt that this list pales in comparison to the challenges that the people face. One of the things we talked about was open space. Table 3.1 shows land use. The Town of Woodbury, without the Village of Harriman, has 22,700 acres of land. Most people don't realize what those 22,000 acres are, which is not what we see or mingle with everyday. 11,000+ acres is what we see. A good chunk of this is West Point. There is also Harriman State Park, the lakes, the Schunnemunk Mountains, the park, the reservoir and the pond. He felt it was safe to say that this 11,000 acres will never be built upon and will always be safe. (Timer rang and Mr. Burke sat down).

Mr Swiller of Highland Mills noted that in Section 7, page 7.6, it says that 81% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Town should buy land or purchase conservation easements to preserve open space. It also noted that the vast majority of people would prefer not to waste taxes to do so. He said that if there were ways to obtain open land without paying for it people would like that. He cited Section 12-3, which considers new alternatives for subdivisions. The density of development could remain one dwelling unit per one, two, three acres depending on the zoning classification. Or, the Town could provide density bonus as an incentive to use conservation subdivision design in the R2 and R3 districts. He felt that if the Town can come up with creative ways to get land for free in exchange for intelligent trade-offs with developers it would be in our interest.

Aimee Fitzgerald of Central Valley hoped that there would be more time and another hearing. She stated that she was not totally prepared to discuss the Plan due to pressing family matters. She had a few comments and hoped there would be more time and another public hearing. She said she had skimmed the Plan. When she read one area she got stuck on it and it seemed to fulfill her anticipation. Referring to Section 4.2, she was concerned about the conservation subdivision design in the 2/3 acre zone. She said that Section 7 went on to explain more. She felt that all of this focused on one thing that seemed to be almost a fait accompli. She does not want the Town Board to have that kind of power over our lives. She referred to the meeting where Cornwall came and delivered an appeal about what this zoning would mean to their community. They worked hard on their Plan to reduce traffic and congestion and increase their acreage. She felt they seemed more concerned about these things. This section stopped her dead in her tracks. She respected and appreciated the time spent on this Plan but this Plan is not best for her. She felt that other places have taken more time because of the participation of the citizens. She said that in the space of about 1-year, the Town has arrived at this point. She

believes it is a tremendous threat, if this section remains in here. She feels it open up the justification for higher density by others.

At this point, Nicolette Wagoner read aloud the verification of the public notice in the Times Herald Record in response to an earlier statement that this hearing was not properly noticed. It was published on September 15th.

Jonathan Swiller returned to speak. He asked a procedural question about the document. He suggested that it might be helpful to have a glossary of terms. For example, he had not heard it said elsewhere, except in Woodbury, that 1 or 2-acre zoning is "high density."

John Burke returned to speak. He continued that about 50% of the acreage in the Town are public lands. He said that contribution or donation of open space to the Town is important such as when the Town got some from the County through tax sales. Where we have developers that come forward with density bonuses for contributions of open space, the condition of the Town today should weight carefully on what we have and the impact of that development. The challenges that are created by developments that come above and beyond the current zoning must be seriously considered through discussion at meetings. He did not remember an in-depth discussion of this. He felt that if we pass the 5 laws now before the Town ----. Nicolette Wagoner spoke up and reminded everyone that this hearing is about the Comprehensive Plan, not about any other issues.

Mr. Burke continued that the Committee should have had the benefit of the worst case scenario of the two proposals before the Town now plus other properties if there were to be full build out of all that could qualify for the higher density development. They should consider the impacts on the roads, such as longer wait time for commuters using Rt. 17 and 32. He also cited longer waiting times for people using the side streets off Rt. 32 and the strain on our infrastructure and our employees. He also mentioned significant impacts on our school taxes and our main street, which is Rt. 32. Also impacts on water and sewer should be considered. He felt that if the Committee had had that information, they would have taken this into consideration and viewed this document differently. In order to pick up some extra acreage, how does it weigh against congestion on Rt. 32/17. The traffic signals are not timed properly. He said that for years residents have been paying sewer taxes and they are still on septic systems due to the moratorium. Developers come along and hook straight into these sewers and the water system.

At this point, Committee member Mike Queenan spoke up to again to remind Mr. Burke that the hearing tonight is on the Comprehensive Plan and that Mr. Burke is going off into other areas. This meeting is not about specific projects. Mr. Burke was asked to remain on the topic of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Burke restated that he believed that if the Committee had access to the full build out, they might reconsider. He felt that the whole foundation is not there. Mr.

Queenan granted that Mr. Burke was entitled to his opinion, but it may not reflect the opinion of others. Mr. Queenan felt that he had the information needed. Mr. Burke said that he felt that not all the facts were presented and that he was going to state his comments. Mr. Burke sat down.

Maria Hunter of Highland Mills stated that she lives in the Town and is very involved here. She thanked the Committee for the work they have done since August 2004. She was present to hear comments about this. What everyone was now hearing does not have anything to do with the Plan. She suggested that the Committee put the Plan together and give it to the Town Board. If there were no more comments on the Plan, the hearing should be closed.

George Sewitt reminded the public that was still a public comment period that would last until Monday, October 3rd. Sheila Conroy reminded the public that they could still obtain copies of the Plan, free of charge, from the Town Clerk's office. There was a courtesy copy available at both libraries.

Michael Schack also reminded the public that, under SEQRA, there would be another 30-day comment period. So the public will have time to have input.

Mr. Burke returned to speak again. He asked that the Committee continue to study the document and give the public more time to participate. He had the impression that the Committee was looking for substantial ways to improve the appearance of the Town. Also the Committee seems to be seeking ways to help seniors have better access to the hamlet centers and to keep our youngsters doing positive things. He said that they were also looking to create an atmosphere to keep young families here. What he did not see in the Plan was a "green light" for increasing density in Town. He said the Committee might be disappointed in the long run if they allow certain things to go forward beyond what we currently have. He thanked the Committee for its dedication and asked them to consider continuing the process.

There were no further comments so Michael Schack made the motion to close this portion of the public hearing. George Sewitt seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken:

Mike Queenan- in favor
Michael Schack- in favor
Sheila Conroy- in favor
Robin Crouse- in favor
Colleen Campbell- in favor
John Baranowski- in favor
George Sewitt- in favor
Doug Ottavio- in favor

Supervisor Conroy reminded the public that there are copies of the plan available at the Town Clerk's office and thanked everyone for attending.

Respectfully submitted,


Gale A. Naugle
Planning Board Secretary

SECRETARY'S NOTE: These minutes were prepared from audio tapes. The secretary was not in attendance.

