

MEETING NOTES

North Castle Comprehensive Plan

Steering Committee Meeting

May 11, 2017

7 p.m., North Castle Town Hall

Date: May 12, 2017

Project Name: North Castle Comprehensive Plan
Project Number: 01023
Subject: Steering Committee Meeting

Meeting Location: North Castle Town Hall
Meeting Date: May 11, 2017

Prepared By: Ariana Branchini
Contact Information: T. 212.353.7475 F. 212.353.7494 E. a.branchini@bfjplanning.com

Participants: Susan Favate, BFJ Planning
Ariana Branchini, BFJ Planning
Adam Kaufman, Director of Planning, Town of North Castle
Christopher Carthy
Barbara DiGiacinto (Town Board member)
Christine Eggleton
Jill Greto
Charlene Jacobi
Jim Jensen
Richard Koh

1. Project Status

- Discussed publicizing upcoming Armonk workshop and public survey.
 - Reviewed early results of the survey. With 53 responses, results are anecdotal but some general themes have emerged including: need for sidewalks, parking and traffic calming, interest in safety and preserving the quality of schools. The majority of respondents to date come from Armonk.

2. Review of North White Plains Public Workshop

- Takeaways from the meeting included:
 - Addition of Quarry Heights to mapping, and consideration of Cranberry Lake Preserve and other open spaces along Old Orchard Street. Possibility of looking at a dog park in this area.
 - Interest in improving sidewalks and traffic mitigation.
 - Parking in the residential neighborhoods is an issue, but suggestion for Town to have a right of first refusal to acquire land for small residential parking lots did not receive general support.

Perception is that the Town would not implement such a strategy, and that if it did, the lots could be seen as a deterrent to the neighborhood.

- Zoning enforcement is important to limit the number of illegal apartments built into two-family homes. Currently it is difficult to enforce because landlords/owners are not seeking permits for construction or remodeling when installing additional kitchens/bathrooms, so without gaining access to the building's it's difficult to know how many units there are.
- Need for curbing and other infrastructure improvements; aesthetic improvements along Route 22 are needed.
- Maintenance of open spaces needs improvement; the parking concept for the Community Center was popular among attendees.

3. Natural Resources Chapter

- Discussion of existing conditions outlined in the chapter included:
 - Significant features include water and steep slopes - question of the boundaries of Banksville hamlet in discussion of steep slopes. Cat Rocks Park for example is very hilly.
 - Homes pre-dating stormwater regulation mean drainage/runoff issues occur in parts of the Town. The plan could outline incentives the Town could use to upgrade infrastructure on private property to improve conditions.
 - Explore reduction of impervious surfaces - is there over-parking in places?
 - Potential for a "green action plan" to outline sustainability initiatives and goals.
 - Where is the Town now with hazard mitigation? Priority action items haven't been pursued due to lack of funding. Town can continue to seek grants (e.g. NYSERDA).
- The Committee discussed additions to the chapter, including recommendations for future trails, the future of large open space lands, and access to NYCDEP lands.
- The Plan should identify significant privately owned open spaces that could be subject to development in the future, with a goal of preserving them.
 - Whippoorwill Country Club signed an agreement with NYCDEP, selling the development rights of their property to New York City to ensure the property would remain open space in the future, and not be developed.

4. Armonk Public Workshop

- The Committee discussed topics that will be covered in the presentation and at the round tables.
- Office Parks:
 - Business Park Drive- potential improvements for pedestrian circulation/passive recreation, new uses, changes in zoning to allow entertainment, certain types of retail (e.g. furniture store "Country Willow" that requires large showroom space) that would not compete with the downtown.
 - Interest in connecting Business Park Drive and the downtown across Route 22.
 - iPic Theaters- a restaurant/movie theater or other non-multiplex style cinema could be a good addition.
 - MBIA campus (King Street) is currently vacant and could be revitalized for mixed-use purposes, including potential airport-related use, such as hotel.
 - Water resources are a challenge- the Committee expressed interest in a brewery use at the Business Park, but was concerned about limited access to well water.

- Potential interest in an education/health use in business parks - satellite campus such as Memorial Sloan Kettering.
- Sidewalks/accessibility - creating an overall sidewalk and streetscaping plan the Town can implement over the next few years. Neighboring communities have done something similar and continue the process of completing public works projects incrementally
- Parks/open space:
 - North Castle Community Park- additional trails/improvements to parking area? Plans for a new building next to the indoor sports facility?
 - Wampus Brook Park South- plans to upgrade this open space were not pursued due to cost. There are a number of natural resources that could be better utilized for passive recreation, including this area of the Wampus River and tributaries that extend south toward North Castle Community Park. The Town could consider improving access for walkers/joggers.
 - Betsy Sluder Reserve needs better maintenance.
- Parking:
 - Current plans for parking behind Hergenhan are in place, awaiting grant funding that was awarded in December 2016 in order to start construction.
 - Plans exist for the parking behind businesses on the west side of Main Street and in front of the library and Verizon property, which would improve circulation. The current situation is an agreement between the Town and private businesses that gives the Town a cross- access easement. These businesses, and Verizon, would need to agree on the proposed parking. The Town would like to explore a parking district in this area.
- Retail - challenges in the retail market could cause more vacancies in the future. Is there a way to identify strategies to help local businesses?
- Drones- is there a need to regulate the use of drones at the local level and should the Plan address this?

5. Next Steps

- Armonk Public Workshop: Thursday May 18 at 7pm at Hergenhan Recreation Center.
- Banksville Public Workshop: June 12 at 7pm at Banksville Fire Station
- Date set for next Committee Meeting: June 6 at 7pm
- Wrap-up included a review of discussion with the State DOT on Route 22 and possible improvements to properties with limited sidewalk and pedestrian access. BFJ and Adam to meet with DOT after the Armonk workshop.