

WASHINGTON TOWN BOARD
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 1, 2022

The Town Board of the Town of Washington held a special meeting on Thursday, September 1, 2022, at the Washington Town Hall, 10 Reservoir Dr., Millbrook, NY. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Supervisor Gary Ciferri with the following present: Councilmen Robert Audia, Michael Murphy, Joseph Rochfort, Councilwoman Leslie Heaney and Town Clerk Mary Alex.

Presenters in attendance were Tim Mayhew, Chairman of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee and Nan Stolzenburg, Owner/Principal of Community Planning and Environmental Associates.

Community members present were: Alec Pandaleon, Ingrid von Werz, Andrew Capitman, Margaret Doyle, Tracy Kimmel, Eliza Dyson, Ashley Lempka, Nan Greenwood, David Greenwood, R.W. "Skip" Ciferri, James Bauer, Denise Bauer, Hilary Edmunds, June Markle, Harry Baldwin, Howard Schuman, Eric Alexander, John Striker, Margaret Schneible, Claudia Heunis, Fernando Nottebohm, Elizabeth Logan-Baravalle, Richard Philipps.

Supervisor Ciferri opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Supervisor Ciferri expressed his thanks for a good turnout for such an important discussion. Supervisor Ciferri introduced Tim Mayhew, Comprehensive Plane Review Chairman and Nan Stolzenburg, consultant to the committee.

Chairman Mayhew said It's been the better part of a year since this journey began, and this town board created a charter for us, and asked us to consider the comprehensive plan and the notion of hospitality. We began quite a journey. At the beginning of that journey, we started with asking to get an amazing set of advisors. As you may recall, we did a request for quote. We went out to a lot of different advisors, and went in and interviewed three sets and ended up choosing Nan, who said she was busy. We had to beg her to come on board. We chose Nan because she put together a multidisciplinary group that included specialists in mapping and economic analysis. We also hired a lawyer to help us think about all things legal. The lawyer was essentially solely focused on this document as opposed to defending us or anything like. There were times we were a bit worried about that and he ended up being quite helpful. On the committee we were very clear that our journey was meant to listen to this community and to seek as much input as we could possibly get. To not come forth with our own opinions, but actually to solicit the mood and sentiment of the community itself and then accurately reflect that. As opposed to what our own ego, or thoughts might tell us. This was very much supported by Nan and her team. They are not from this community. They are from New York State, and they are all in rural communities such as ours. That's where they live, but not in this community. I think that helped them essentially stay quite independent and above the fray. Nan has been awesome. I just have to say this community owes her a debt because she has worked tirelessly on this and is our North Star. They were helping us think through things that this committee really wasn't pre-trained to consider or think about.

Chairman Mayhew said the committee itself has worked incredibly well. I am very grateful to all of the committee members. The committee members are essentially representative of the community

itself. It was a good committee that this Town Board put together. Everybody played a part, and one of the things that we found is that as the community had a chance to think about this and talk through this through the structure of the paces that Nan put us through. The community started to be much more constructive in how it discussed this matter, and we were grateful for that. I think you can see in the report itself there was actually a fair amount of common ground. There was a lot of things that the community agreed upon, and that I think bodes well for our town.

I think the number one thing that this town agrees upon is that this is a very special place and people love it here. The second thing that they agree upon is that this town board has worked tirelessly to make it that special place. I will say that we heard enormous personal support for you. The third thing that they agreed upon is, they would like this community to both progress and stay the same at the exact same time. There was a lot of discussion about that. But in toto. What we found is that this community really appreciated its existing comprehensive plan. It thought that that was a very important part of the DNA, and as a consequence was quite grateful to you for having this discussion come into play to look at the comprehensive plan, and if we were going to make changes, we had to make them very carefully.

The community has definitely evolved since the comprehensive plan was put in place, and yet the community overwhelmingly seemed to affirm the existing comprehensive plan. With that, I'd like to turn it over to Nan. She has a bit of an agenda, and what we thought we would do is go through a quick summary of what's in here and then we would open up to questions from you. Anybody on the committee is encouraged if they feel moved to speak on any topic please do.

Ms. Stolzenburg thanked the Town Board and the committee for the opportunity to work with the Town. Ms. Stolzenburg said she considers herself as a facilitator. The hard work in the analysis and thinking about an enormous amount of information was done by the committee. I was keeping everybody together. I appreciate the accolade but it was really the community. I mean, that's what a community planner is really all aboutis trying to get the community to try and understand itself better and decide where it wants to go. Thank you for having the meeting and the opportunity to do a little summary. My firm is Community Planning and Environmental Associates. We have been doing community and environmental planning for about thirty years and we only specialize in small and rural communities like Washington. I don't do any big urban kind of things. Our specialty is trying to help communities like yours understand your assets, understand your capacity, understand what it is you want for yourself, and try and give you the tools to get you there. That's what a comprehensive plan is really about. It's a policy statement. It's a direction for you to all hang your hats on.

I know that you put a lot of hard work into getting the 2015 plan done and that was great. Comprehensive plans are not meant to be sit on the shelf. It's a really healthy good thing for a community to take a step back and look at itself and say are their changes or new issues in town that we have to address? You're re-looking and evaluating to see whether it still meets the needs of the community. This is really what planning is all about, and, in fact, the State Town Law 272A which governs the development of a comprehensive plan have very few requirements of the community, and how to do it, but one of them is that it should be reevaluated over time. What you went through here as a community, I think, is really healthy and really important, and a normal and a good part of planning. I just wanted to refresh everybody on how we got to this point, and what we did, and why we did some of the things within the planning process that we did.

Ms. Stolzenburg said what the Committee did was a comprehensive plan for a specific topic, which is not unusual. Communities have issues that come up and we say we really didn't address this, or don't have the answers and the guidance in the comprehensive plan. My approach to helping you through this was to start with the three basic planning questions that we always ask whether it's an update to a plan an evaluation of a topic or anything else.

1. What are the current conditions in the community?
2. Where does the community want to go?
3. How do you get there?

Those three questions are the essence of any planning effort, whether it's an open space plan or an economic development plan. That's what we attempted to do. In order to answer those three questions, we started off with a process where we tried to answer the question of where the community is at now. Part of that is community input and trying to find out what the community is thinking. What they think are our issues and strengths and opportunities to be taken. We reviewed the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. We reviewed the zoning law, both for the town and the village, to see how they interrelate with each other.

A charge for the committee was to do a survey of the community, but you can't rely on just a survey for community input. We had a much more robust community engagement process. The Committee engaged two focused groups. One with a cross section of general residents and one focused on business owners in the community. Those were designed to give us a first look. They represented different locations and different stakeholders in the town, and the committee identified the people who would be invited to that, and it was a really good discussion to start hearing the issues and the opportunities of what was on people's mind.

The Committee followed up with an in-person open house at the firehouse and that was an opportunity to get deep down more into the topic. We learned more about specifics. Do people like the vision in the existing comprehensive plan, to really talk about different kinds of hospitality uses, and how people felt about it. We looked at maps. We tried to hear what people had to say. We had about one hundred and eighteen people come through that afternoon of the open house, which was in February, during the Covid pandemic. Due to Covid and wanting to ensure people had an opportunity to participate, we extended the In-person open house to an online version of that where we basically asked the same questions and allowed people to have the same kind of input on an online format. We had 113 people respond to that online effort.

All of that led to what are the questions we want to ask in a survey? What are the topics we need to explore? We then conducted a town-wide survey where a postcard was nailed out to every household, and everybody had an opportunity to go online or on paper to do the survey. The results are all in the CPRC Report. You can read it online. There were 690 responses that came in to the survey, and that was both the online and the paper responses. Before we were hired, the committee had two listening sessions that also provided input as to how people felt about things.

The CPRC meetings that were held on zoom were open meetings. People were able to see that we wanted to have a transparent process. Everybody could see what we were doing, and when we were doing it, and how they could participate.

It was the overall public engagement that helps us answer where does the community want to go. My approach to these things is I listen to the community first. I did not read your zoning or your comprehensive plan until after our public engagement was done, because I just wanted an empty slate. Hear what you had to say. All of that was of trying to do an unbiased, transparent look at what the community was about, and where you wanted to go.

To answer the question of what are the current conditions in the town? We did a lot of evaluation and data collection. We identified um lodging facilities in Dutchess County to try and get an understanding of the regional capacity for lodging facilities and hospitality venues. We studied the hospitality trends that were going on. Alan Pemrick did an evaluation on all sorts of trends and changes in what Covid brought to the tourism industry. That information is detailed in the Appendix.

One of our other team members, Michael Stump, conducted an economic impact analysis of different hospitality scenarios. This provides you with an idea of what does it really mean from an economic point of view for a certain kind of hospitality development. We looked at three different scenarios from very small scale to larger scale to look at what the potential economic impacts of that would be. We looked at the current fiscal conditions in the town. You know from your own budget. Everyone has access to the State Comptroller program that evaluates every community and school district in New York State. The State rates every community in terms of its fiscal health. It will identify communities who are in fiscal trouble, so we look through all that information. You may feel differently locally, but from their perspective and their criteria you were not on any of those lists.

We looked at an in-depth environmental analysis to try and understand the capacity of the town for development. We looked at things like mapping surface waters, wetlands, streams and flood plains, aquifers. We looked at stream, riparian buffers, agricultural soils which correlates to agricultural capacity, and where there's the best place to farm, forested areas, important habitats, rare species locations. There's an incredible amount of data now in the Hudson River Valley. You have a lot of really great information and that whole exercise gave us information about where there were environmental sensitivities. Where are there buildable opportunities? What is a landscape telling us, because rural planning is based on our whole tradition of how communities develop. From when we first started is based on our natural resources, and we can trace our communities back to where is there a stream. Not only information about where could development as a whole be? Where are the smart places to be? Where are the things that if a community is very environmentally oriented where are these places that we should stay away from? The other thing that that exercise gives you is a whole GIS database of all of these things. All of these maps, while they might be small, we can certainly print up big ones for you. We can give you the digital data you could use and the Planning Board can use.

We also evaluated traffic volumes to see where the cars are going. We did what's called a view shed analysis. In your comp plan and zoning code you identify specific scenic roads that have been identified specifically by the town as scenic roads. We did an analysis that said where on those scenic roads. What are the views that you're looking at from those scenic roads. That was all mapped to try and get an idea of where there are important views.

We also did what was called a buildable land analysis. Your code identifies certain criteria, such as wetlands, water bodies, flood plains, slopes greater than twenty percent or twenty five percent. We can map that all out and say, according to your own criteria. where are the buildable locations in town? We can put all of those map layers together to give us an idea of the capacity in the town for all sorts

situations. Where's the best places for agriculture? Where are the best places for development? Where are the sensitive areas? The kind of planning that I do in rural areas, understanding the landscape is a part of answering the question, what's going on in the town.

All of that information gets us to we know what we've got. We have a really good idea of where the community says they want to go. The committee was charged with do we need to update our comprehensive plan? What do we need to say about this topic related to hospitality? What do we do about this? We relied on all of that information to draw some observations and some recommendations that the committee discussed extensively, and that's what you have in the evaluation report.

I think the bottom line is the committee was asked whether the 2015 Comprehensive Plan should be updated. My recommendation, and I think the committee included it in the report, so they concur, is that the comprehensive plan should be updated, but not changed in its philosophy and approach. Your 2015 Plan, says it reaffirmed the previous plan. There was a statement in there that basically says, everyone kind of feels the same way we did then in two thousand and fifteen, and all of the public input that we had through the focus groups, the survey, the open house, and everything else, was that the values of the community, the kind of community you're hoping for, the direction you're hoping, for really hasn't changed in 2021 and 2022. Ms. Stolzenburg said the premises of the 2015 in her opinion, were strongly reaffirmed.

What the Comprehensive Plan doesn't do is really answer the question about these hospitality uses. It was kind of silent on it. It really it talked about development. It talked about where development should be. It was talked about environmental protection and historic protection and community character, but it didn't really give a lot of guidance as how do you handle the question in front of it?

Ms. Stolzenburg said I think that what the comprehensive plan needs to help you move to the next stage is to recognize you've had this issue. These questions have come up. What do you do about it? Basically, this is an update to the comprehensive plan. The work that was done is a comprehensive planning effort oriented to one topic, and in and of itself could be like an appendix as an update to the comprehensive plan. Many times, that's what we do for a community that has either a topic, or some issue that has come up, that they had really and ban on the head with the comprehensive plan. And then the important reason to do that is that if you ultimately decide, you want to change the zoning, there's a strong tie between Zoning and your comprehensive plan.

The comprehensive plan is the policy statement for the community. Zoning is the tool that implements that policy. To make zoning changes, you really need to go back and say, oh, well, what does our community want to say about this? What is our policy towards this? I think it's important to address this. Be honest the question has arisen, and that you've had an opportunity to do a study. You have all sorts of information to analyze it. We've had a great deal of public input to help you in the direction and that it would serve the community well to answer those questions and have some guidance.

The question is should the comprehensive plan be changed? I think a better way of approaching it is, should it be updated, to address this issue? Nothing that you will find in this report really changes the essential direction.

At the end of the first part of the report, there is a summary table, which is the third page of this. It encompasses the major highlights of the recommendations that that we've made. I think that there's some a lot of clarification that can be done with updating definitions. Your zoning overall has a lot of really good stuff in it, and in a lot of places your light years ahead of many other rural communities. I think it could be strengthened even with the hospitality matter. You have the great environmental protection overlay, which I applaud and support. It's all in there in the zoning, but it's not a map, so it's not effective. There's a whole bunch of recommendations in here to try and tighten up and move your zoning to the place where it really could be. There are definitions that could be updated. One of our observations is that the 2015 comprehensive plan kind of integrates the Village of Millbrook. I think your long-term planning should continue to integrate for the village of Millbrook, even though it's its own entity, it has its own zoning, its own board, and it's separate, but not separate. You're integrated together, so there's a recommendation in the report about really partnering with the village to continue finding solutions to these growth issues.

Ms. Stolzenburg said the question is If we're going to update the comprehensive plan, what do we want to say about hospitality and all the committee's recommendations? What we've concluded from our work is that you have a history of using overlay districts in the town through your aquifer protection, overlay your environmental protection overlay. We recommend that you create a hospitality overlay district which would allow an inn and to create a new category for that specific kind of hospitality. An inn is a smaller lower intensity hospitality use. It's not a resort. It's not a retreat. It's not a motel or hotel. It would have its own definition. The overlay district would allow for inns in two primary locations, and that would be in the Washington Hollow area and in an environmentally suitable location immediately adjacent to the village. The plan was very specific about not wanting to have infrastructure or a lot of growth that spread out from the village. You have a concise, dense area that is kind of your character. We don't want to go too far afield because of that. If you look at the maps and the environmental features, you have a lot of environmental challenges in the town. You have a lot of great resources from an environmental perspective that everyone concurs that environmental protection has been very important. The overlay district would allow a small-scale limited amount of hospitality use. We asked the community in all of our input and engagement what size hospitality was something that they felt was consistent with who Washington was, and it was very clearly on the smaller scale. There was a range from none too large, but it was mostly the twenty-room limit was about the cut off. Support for that dropped way off after twenty rooms. We're recommending that within those two overlay areas where we would allow for inns that they'd be limited to twenty rooms, and that the zoning would look at any kind of accessory uses that might go along with a hospitality. Could it have a restaurant or a bar, or could it have weddings and things like that which are laid out in more detail in in there?

We recommended that where we currently in Mabbettsville allow for hotels, but again, looking at the scale was that the definition in the zoning for a hotel doesn't really give you any clue of what a hotel really is. It could be two rooms, or it could be five hundred rooms, so that's a really good example, where the definitions matter. One of our recommendations is to replace the hotel definition with an inn. We consistently use the word inn as the kind of hospitality that would be allowed and promoted in the zoning. There's lots of other things that support that and it would be up to you. The zoning lays the groundwork for design standards to make sure the things that go in are consistent with the character and the historical character of the town. You have a lot of that in the zoning, but haven't

quite pushed the trigger on making it usable for the planning board to say this is how we want something to look. For example, because it uses language like the town could hire an outside architect to come in, and, give us advice on how something should look. Ms. Stolzenburg recommended the Town should be the ones to decide that, not some outside person. Have those design standards in place, so that they are a tool. Developers like to know what the rules are when they introduce a plan. When you're vague in a zoning law, it leads to a lot of critiques on both sides, on the developer side on the community side, because you're trying to figure it out as you go. If you have something to say about the design, the sighting, the architecture, your zoning ought to say it, so you can be clear about what the rule is. You let everyone know what the rule is right off the bat. There are quite a few recommendations to follow through on those things.

We did look at the question of short-term rentals, and there were questions in all of our public engagement about whether the town should address short-term rentals, and the answer was yes. Ms. Stolzenburg said the survey gave us a lot of really good information about what level of regulation in local programs would you want for short-term rentals? So, I think that's outlined. Short-term rentals are at the top of everyone's hot button list. It's an important issue to be addressed in every community, especially in in the Hudson valley.

Ms. Stolzenburg said she wanted to emphasize that your 2015 Comprehensive plan has a lot of really good recommendations in it that hasn't been incorporated into the zoning or in the subdivision regulations yet. I think the community has reaffirmed those directions, and I think you have a lot to go on already That, you know is waiting there. The policy is there to be included and updated into the into the zoning.

Ms. Stolzenburg discussed the question of the town and the village and how they interact together, which was something that the committee spent a lot of time discussing. It's confusing to all of us in some way, shape or form. We did make a recommendation that there was a fair amount of support for hospitality within the village itself. We also recommended that in the village itself it's a somewhat narrow area, where the hospitality is allowed. There might the opportunity for some areas for the village to look at and add some areas. There were some interesting places near to the Bennett Commons. It is not our business but it is our recommendation.

Ms. Stolzenburg discussed was the notion of density. One of the densest areas in the town is in Washington Hollow, and as you progress east and north you get less and less dense. We did get the sense from all of our findings and all of our communications that people supported a bit more hospitality in denser areas. So, one of the things that we talked a little bit about was the idea of a density bonus for proposals greater than 20 rooms and maybe the Town Board consider a bit more density in Washington Hollow and a little less density in Mabbettsville, and there could be a little bit of a sliding scale. We also thought about the idea of a density bonus if they did things that in the eyes of a town were good for the town for posterity. For example, if they did a Leeds building which was very environmentally clear that might get them a few more rooms. A town needs to think about today and tomorrow, and have a little bit of leeway in there, so you'll see in some of the fine print, put some thought into that.

Regarding glamping or RV lots and things like that Ms. Stolzenburg said we made recommendations against that. We also did make some recommendations against glamping or against Rv. Lots and things like that. There is just very little support for that kind of hospitality.

Overall, a balance is what the community is seeking. It's recognizing that some kinds of hospitality are needed and consistent with who you are as a community, but those were limited in location and limited in scale. It's trying to find the right style and intensity, and scale that fits in with all of the other goals and values of the community.

Chairman Mayhew said regarding short-term rentals, the community itself is still trying to understand short-term rentals. Our recommendations in short-term rentals were reasonably limited. What we said is that you ought to try to be able to fine, and you should regulate them. You should understand where they are. You should charge a fee so that you can actually pay for the permitting process and pay for the kinds of oversight that you need. That's where we stopped. We didn't say anything more about that. We do essentially allude to the notion that you should pay attention to it, because I think there was a fair amount of concern about remote corporate ownership of the short-term rentals, and what that could do to our community. On the one hand, it's great. It provides liquidity and perhaps could be a floor value to real estate values. We take that pretty seriously. On the other hand, if you have a nameless corporation in some state across the country that owns these things, we could sense that that could create a loss of the community that we care so deeply about. We are asking you to essentially regulate and monitor it. That would therefore give you the data to be able to assess it down the road if you wanted to make incremental steps in that area.

It was noted that tonight's discussion is highlights of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee Report. There's a lot of detail in there, and we included all of the public comments, all of the survey results. All of the maps. Everything is in there.

Councilman Audia said you spoke to and use various tools to speak to the public. Are you satisfied with your return? Statistically analysis proportion to nailed out what we received back, at least with the rate of return that we got on those? Ms. Stolzenburg said yes, very much so. It is very hard to engage the community and even with these online or in-person type things. I think it was very much consistent with what we what kind of feedback we get, with the percentage feedback, we get when we do some sort of planning effort in the community. Um, and we can, and that's why we do. We didn't rely just on a survey focus group and the two open house efforts. What we look for is consistency. So, we learn something from the focus groups. We reaffirmed those things, or looked to see if those were going to be consistent with what we got in the open house effort and with the survey, and there was consistency Ah! And really in the direction that the community was telling us through all of those things. I did look it up. I think that the survey response was a little higher for this time, compared to what was in the 2015. So yeah, I think it's very much in line. I felt very comfortable with it. Um, you know where we never get one hundred percent of our communities involved, but I think it was. It was a really good representation, and I it wasn't anything unexpected from my experience. There's a lot of material in here a lot of recommendations.

Ms. Stolzenburg was asked what do you foresee as a timeline to kind of start to address these issues? She replied what I would like to see is have the comprehensive plan as recommended, updated and formalized as the direction you want to go. The Comprehensive Plan is adopted or updated and then the zoning follows it. Some communities do them at the same time they. You still have to have a

public hearing, do SEQR, which is the Environmental Review. It still has to go to the County Planning Department for review. There's a little bit of time and process that goes into that. The zoning part is often unpredictable, because we never quite know what bumps in the roads we might get as we start drafting things. Ms. Stolzenburg said if you accepted these recommendations in the direction that it said, that to take those recommendations and put them into the zoning language is not a heavy lift. It's more time from my experience is more of the discussion locally. To make sure you have all words are all right, and everyone agrees with them on the technical side. I don't think it's law that it has to be that long. I think you could get there if you did the Comprehensive Plan, and then the zoning as separate entities. You would need probably three months, by the time you have the public hearing, County Planning Review and SEQR, it would be the three months to get that adopted. If you set a tight timeframe for a zoning update with good direction it could be drafted in a couple of months and discussed. It still has to go through public hearing, SEQR and County Planning Board Review. So, it has its own process to update the zoning, but it's not one month's worth of work. I'd say realistically you need six or eight months.

Councilman Rochfort said we have a list of things that we need to do, not to update the comprehensive plan but implementation steps that will come after you adopt the plan. The Board had a brief discussion on the best way to accomplish everything.

Councilwoman Heaney asked about the National Resources Inventory. Ms. Stolzenburg said many of the things that we mapped would be the same maps and the same information that would be part of a natural resource inventory or an NRI. The NRI is more in depth. So, instead of just having a map with a paragraph of conclusions of what the map is telling us, if you look at any NRI you'll see it goes into great detail about interpreting all of the resources on every map. I think that it's the level of detail the NRI's tend to. There is definitely overlap between an NRI and a comprehensive plan, and many comprehensive plans have full components of that. You know of all that in there. It depends on how you use it. Some communities use their NRI to go on to do an open space plan, and so and that would be a further step. We didn't do any analysis that said here's some really environmentally sensitive locations in the town, and here are our recommendations on how you could promote protection of those areas. So that really comes from further analysis of the information that could come. The mapping that we did was as extensive as any normal comprehensive plan would be. You have a lot of information to make some decisions.

Councilman Murphy said, just for the community's information, this past January the Town Board reaffirmed our commitment to review the 2015 Comprehensive Plan in 2025 which would ensure that we get a ten-year rolling process. It would not be like here, where we pull a piece out and take an immediate look at it. The full comprehensive plan would be looked at. Hospitality has been just the minor pieces. On short-term rentals. I spoke to Tim during the process. We've begun to take a look at short-term rentals as an economic entity, and also a hospitality entity within the Town. The State is sponsoring a program on Short Term Rentals which Councilman Murphy and Attorney Battistoni will be attending.

Ms. Stolzenburg said as the Town Board members begins it review and start to do this type of stuff and then plug it into the recommendations, you have the comments of the committee, which has reviewed, discussed, tweaked and changed recommendations. All of the recommendations in here were reviewed by the committee, changed, expanded shrunk some. They like some they didn't like

others. It's like when you go to the doctor, and they say I think you should go on the diet. But do you go on a diet? It's up to you whether you're going to take those recommendations or not, and it has to fit what you all feel is right for the community. From an outsider's perspective, I think they all add value. It's like the 2015 plan. Not all of them have been implemented, and that's what happens. Sometimes we start off with a really great direction in the comprehensive plan, and through the updating the zoning process it kind of morphs because we think about something else that came up, and it tweaks it a little bit, so as long as it's consistent. The main thing is what you get out at the end in your zoning update needs to be consistent with the goals and the vision of the community.

There were certain things that were so overwhelmingly recommended from the data. We felt compelled to follow. We'd say we might want to tweak this or tweak that and we'd have a lot of debate about it. We are a listening body. you're an you're an elected governing body. That's a different thing. But I will say that we spend a lot of time trying to think about the major issues and tying that back to what the data was. It's clearly telling us that in the committee we had an initial set of recommendations, but every single one of them was discussed by the committee. I don't think you should look at this as just my report. It's a report of the committee because they discussed every single thing in it. You would not be doing your job if you didn't look at this and debate this among yourselves. Our goal was to try to deliver something that was as close to a final product as we knew how to do. I know how important the short-term rental is because we talked about it. We tried to think that sort of stuff through as well.

Councilman Audia said the thing I want to say is more of a statement than a question. I know that you say that six hundred and ninety responses at a forty-seven hundred people is a good response. I find that extremely hard to swallow myself personally. I kind of wish we had tried a little harder to reach out to people that we'd never hear from. And there's quite a few people I've spoken to that say they don't do surveys. They are busy all the time, and Gee! I just couldn't make the meetings. We had one hundred and eighteen people at the open House, one hundred and thirteen people at the virtual meetings. We see the same faces over and over. Again, it's a statement, I'm not questioning you. You're the professional. You say that's a good response. I believe you one hundred percent. I just feel it's not the voice of the whole town.

Councilman Audia said the second thing I want to bring up and I read the plan. You did a great job. I really love the priority recommendations. The one, though, that I really want to question is the current size limitation on non-residential uses within Mabbettsville. I wish somebody would tell me where you can put more residential houses in. That that goes back to, I believe, the eighty-seven plan. I questioned it then. I'm questioning it again now. And I'm actually asking you, did you guys look at the map? The hamlet zoning that where, unless you put houses at the town Park., I don't know where else you could put in any residential houses. How can we have a hotel in that area? You know I want to see it, even if you took some houses and made hotels out of them, we still need to get double the amount of square footage. In Mabbettsville, we're allowed to have, hotels and motels in our eighty-seven plans. But you need to have twice as much residential growth. So as far as I'm concerned. If we were to move forward with making changes, that's a change we should make.

Chairman Mayhew responded. Did we get to all of the voices? Does this represent the community? All I can tell you is we tried. We did bulk mailings, and we did three of them actually. We got better at it every time, and we ended up trying different vendors and the like. We ended up doing

many, many posters. We ended up starting to play with Instagram and Facebook and areas like that. The relative participation in all of our elections has not been that high. We do seem to get somewhere between five hundred and one thousand people who are consistently in this. To a certain extent we were proud of what we got.

As it relates to Mabbettsville, oh, baby, did we look at Mabbettsville? We thought about it a lot. We debated it a lot, and this was one of the areas where we tried to be fact-driven. We did not sense support, perhaps just because there's not enough understanding about the matter to make a recommendation to change it. On the committee there was a full range of opinions. There were people who wanted to get rid of the mixed use altogether actually not have any hospitality there, because it's not particularly dense. There is an aquifer there, and let's just leave it in Washington Hollow. We said. No, no, no, no, that's starting to be our opinions. We have to be able to follow where the data was. As you see, there is interest in Mabbettsville for hospitality, but it is substantially lower than what the interest was in Washington Hollow or in the village.

A question was asked about the proper definition of residential density. Residential density is measured in the number of dwelling units per acre. Some communities flip that around and say we're going to have a three-acre minimum size, which is a way of looking at density. I wouldn't necessarily say that it's more dense in that, you know number of units per acre. It's a more developed area, and it has more opportunities for commercial development and it was an area that was more acceptable for that kind of commercial development.

Councilman Audia stated, Mabbettsville, I was born and raised there my whole life. The area had customary home occupations in them and it's on the highway. I don't think they're going to be building any houses. I don't know of any vacant lots. I know there was a few things for sale, but they are either home or a business already. So, to continue those non-residential uses within the Hamlet of Mabbettsville with that formula. It didn't make any sense when they came out of the law. I tried to fight it back in those days.

Chairman Mayhew said you guys get to debate that and decide that. What we were trying to say in our piece is when it came to hospitality there was much more interest on the part of the community to put hospitality in places outside Mabbettsville. Regardless of what you do on the mixed-use piece which wasn't really our charge as related to hospitality. Our view was caution in Mabbettsville, but keeping it in in there. That was kind of our sense of the community.

Supervisor Ciferri said he would open the meeting for questions. He asked that people identify themselves when they speak.

Councilman Murphy asked if they were pleased with the process and the results. The mailing on the open house? Were you satisfied with the rate of return. Ms. Stoutenburg said they used both online and in person opportunities, because it is difficult to engage the community. That is why we didn't rely just on the survey. We looked for consistency. We asked did the survey, open house and focus group align with one another. The survey response was a little higher than the 2015 plan. You'll never get 100% but you have a really good representation.

Fernando Nottebohm said things have changed a lot from 1985 and 1987, we're getting warmer, water is suffering, whatever is recommended, water should be kept in mind. You should consult with Cary Arboretum; they are intelligent people and it is free. We might have a severe fire season this fall, anyone dropping a cigarette or match, our fire department would be overwhelmed. Give it some thought.

Alec Pandaleon stated we have five other villages with towns in Dutchess County. Have any of those other towns gone through this and can any lessons learned from them? Ms. Stolzenburg said she's worked in Northeast and Pine Plains. They have various development pressures and issues. They haven't had a specific look at hospitality.

Skip Ciferri asked them to clarify how they determined Washington Hollow is denser than Mabbettsville. There's very little businesses in Washington Hollow. I don't see it as dense unless you include Pleasant Valley. Chairman Mayhew said the committee is familiar with Dutchess County. We spent time thinking about Rhinebeck, Amenia and Tivoli. There was a fair amount of discussion, and we thought about Washington CT as a proxy. What we found was good communication between the town and village is pretty sacred. Finding # 2 – you can be successful having an inn in a village, but you want to make sure you don't have too many. You might undermine the community itself in the village. That was very much on our mind. Your supposition is right in understanding where the town line is. As you get off the Taconic and head east and north, you get more residential and rural. We have included those Washington Hollow Pleasant Valley businesses. Tim Bontecou was quite articulate on this matter and addressed it with the committee after driving from the Taconic to Amenia.

Eric Alexander asked are you recommending a specific number of inns? Ms. Stolzenburg said we did not address a total number. We discussed the location of scale. When you have a zoning district and you say we are going to allow inns, then yes, you can have more than one. Chairman Mayhew said we thought maybe one, if it works, then maybe two. Nan kept us honest, and said the community did not tell us this. We had to take our opinion out. The committee got comfortable thinking this is a great market, but we don't think we will have 15 inns coming soon. Mr. Alexander followed up and said he noticed you mapped short term rentals, other venues outside the town. Ms. Stolzenburg said that was an error.

Margaret Doyle said to the Comp Plan Committee, you did a great job. I got things multiple times. You have to be a good citizen, if you don't vote and you don't do surveys, then you don't have a say. Councilman Audia disagreed He said he just want to bring out the point, it is disappointing when we don't hear from people, then we hear from them on the street. That is my point. He agreed, I think they did a great job. So many things are good. Ms. Doyle remarked that some people might think your comments are not legitimate. We all have schedules; we do need to step forward. You need to say you have to be a part of this. You do have 960 voces here. This is a great testimony of our community.

Andrew Capitman asked how do we get a copy of the report. Town Clerk Alex said it is available on the town website www.washingtonny.org on the Home Page or CPRC page. Residents may request a printout.

Chairman Mayhew said he wanted to take a moment to thank Town Clerk Mary Alex for her help. We could make her an honorary member of the committee.

Howard Schuman said he was on the 2015 Comp plan. This response was higher than typical. That represented the same input we have now. He said it is good to hear the consultant agrees that our plan was good. We want our community to stay as is, we are glad we are living here. I didn't want to do this. I think one of the possible exceptions is go slowly with hospitality and implement it in phases. He said buildings never come out. Someone else comes along and tries to use them. I like the fact that if you do it in phases starting with Washington Hollow, they are already there. The Cottonwood, it had a historic restaurant. If that works well, where would we go next. There is a danger of this failing. You have to look at the aesthetics. Go slowly. I recommend overlays be used in a phased in approach Washington Hollow. It will serve the town well. Basically, you have to care about the long run.

Tracy Kimmel Florac said she is concerned about the water issues and it is my biggest focus. This summer has driven home the importance of water. Our property is brown. If you're running an inn or hotel, you will be irrigated. The Town must be cognizant of where they are going. What kind of landscapes will they have and what kind of irrigation? They will suck us dry with flushing toilets, showers, pools, landscaping. This Summer is a big reminder of the concerns with water and hospitality in a rural setting.

Skip Ciferri asked about the Cottonwood expansion if we only allow 20 rooms. If they expand, how does an expansion fit with whatever we are doing. Chairman Mayhew said that gets back to the notion of some give and take. The idea of starting with a definition of 20 rooms, and maybe in Washington Hollow you say 30. You could offer, Leeds bonus. You're not going to get 2 times or 3 times 20. A room increase bonus is a great idea because it is something the community wants in exchange for the extra rooms. You could have a Recreation opportunity, LEED construction, density incentives We tried not to think about specific situations.

Councilman Murphy said we have to develop the rule book. We have to make the rules for any applicant. A developer still has to go through the Planning Board, maybe the Zoning Board, and a Public Hearing. An entrepreneur wouldn't build an inn, if there is already 4 or 5. This committee has done exactly what we asked. Thank you.

Councilwoman Heaney said everyone in the room and on Zoom will have the opportunity to provide input through future Public Hearings.

The Town Board thanked Nan, Tim and the committee for their tremendous work and Councilman Rochfort for seeing the project through.

On a motion made by Councilman Murphy and seconded by Councilman Rochfort, the meeting was closed at 7:40 PM. All ayes were recorded.

Mary Alex, Town Clerk