



Washington Comprehensive Plan Committee <complan@washingtonny.org>

(no subject)

1 message

Eliza Dyson <eliza_dyson@me.com>
To: CompPlan@washingtonny.org
Cc: Mary Alex <malex@washingtonny.org>

Sun, Aug 15, 2021 at 3:10 PM

Dear TOW Comprehensive Plan Review Committee Members,

May I first thank you for all for serving on this committee and being such thoughtful members of our community.

As you begin the process of selecting your legal counsel, town planner and begin to look at creating a survey, I wanted to draw your attention to a number of areas that I feel are important to consider, and for the town to consider, as you proceed.

1. Location. I thought it was so intelligent when Tim Bontecou pointed out that the vibrancy of towns like Millerton and Rhinebeck are likely due to their common denominators of both a movie theater and small Inn right in town. I think something right in the village of Millbrook would be the smartest solution for allowing hospitality and bringing foot traffic to the town. As these questions are worded in a survey, I think there should be clear delineation of options to allow the town and village residents to note where they think it would be appropriate or not appropriate for hospitality to occur.

2. Scale. As the idea of hospitality is considered - it is important to note that there is a big difference in ripple effect to our town between a 20 room Inn and a 94 key Resort. There are major resource, traffic, construction, and failure risks the larger something becomes. It is my feeling that if we allow something too big to be built, we will end up in a situation where we have something that is "too big to fail." Once built, the owners could demand other buildings, amenities, and tax breaks on threat of closure. (*We should all be aware of the constant Silo Ridge tax adjustment lawsuits filed against the town of Amenia.) I have heard people mention one of the reasons to allow a Migdale development would be so that this property does not "come off the tax role." In practice, any hotel there would have a hard time supporting the current tax cost. Once built, they would likely seek a reduction. If the town becomes reliant on them or fearful of what would happen if they close - they could demand anything from us, and it would no longer be a benefit to the town, but more like a threat. We should not allow something to be built that would become a hardship for the town if it fails or is abandoned.

3. Intent. Why do people want hospitality? What are we seeking to gain from it? Is it for guests, friends and relatives? Is it to draw people to the community? There are big differences in use and accessibility between a \$1,500-\$4,000 per night room and a \$300/night room. What exactly does our town want, and what does it need? It might make sense to hire a hotel consultant who might be able to help us here. What could be supported in our area and town?

4. Competition. How much hospitality can our town support? As we know, the Cottonwood is about to be refurbished which will bring back a much needed resource for our town. If we have that, how much further need is there? We should be careful about considering this. A hotel consultant might be able to help us here as well.

5. Environmental Concerns: We need to make sure we are cognizant of these. Ripple effects can be serious. Look at the driveway run off issues occurring on Killearn road. If there is a big resort with lots of paved areas, at the top of a hill, imagine the run off issues and changes to the surrounding land and roads.

6. Everyone should be involved. I think it is important that everyone be heard during this process. The survey needs to be worded in a non-biased manner, and people need to know they can decide the outcome of this survey. I have heard people think it is a fait accompli - that because we are looking at hospitality in our town, we will have it. It is important to make clear that the town's input will effect this outcome. If it wants to decide against hospitality, it can, and vice versa. It is time for everyone to speak up.

Thank you so much for hearing my thoughts.

Very Best,

Eliza Dyson