

TOWN OF WASHINGTON
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE
BACKGROUND & CHARGE

The Town Board of the Town of Washington has created a committee to perform a limited review of the Town Comprehensive Plan. The Town Board provides the following background and charge to this committee.

First, amend the Comprehensive Plan to suggest definitions for hospitality uses, including air b and bs, and to suggest locations in Town where such uses might best be located. Examine what was intended for hospitality in the Comprehensive plan. Consider input on the need (or lack of need) for hospitality from the community at large and judge whether the comprehensive plan is succeeding or failing on meeting that need. If the plan is failing the committee is charged with seeking improvements based on feedback from the community at large via a survey discussed further on.

Second, the Town Board has always been sensitive to the real property tax base in the Town. There is probably a general awareness that more and more people are shopping online and that the need for traditional retail and commercial space has been declining. As that decline continues, the real property tax revenue generated by such properties may decline and will have to be made up elsewhere. In addition, there is probably a general awareness that more and more people can work remotely and possibly from home, and the need for traditional office space has been declining. This has become particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. As that decline continues, the real property tax revenue generated by such properties may decline and will have to be made up elsewhere. The committee is charged with determining how hospitality could play a role in mitigating said risks to the potential erosion of the tax base, including property tax and a potential hospitality tax.

Third, the Town Board is concerned about the viability of businesses in the Town as a whole, but particularly in the Village of Millbrook and the traditional hamlets of Mabbettsville and Washington Hollow. The committee is charged with determining how hospitality could be of help to the business within the Millbrook village and the said hamlets. The committee is further charged with considering a way for the Comprehensive plan (and then the Zoning Code) to be updated to better support these areas of the Town.

Fourth, if a property contains a unique structure of historic significance, even though that structure might not be on a registry of historic places, should the Comprehensive Plan be amended to support an adaptive reuse of such a structure? If so, what is the best way to do so?

Fifth, the Town will retain a planner or consultant to work with the committee.

Finally, community input is essential in this review process. The committee is directed in conjunction with a planner or consultant to prepare a survey for town-wide circulation and present it to the Town Board for approval, along with a recommendation as to the best method for circulating the survey (e.g. electronically versus paper and mail, or a combination of both) and tabulating the results.

The Town Board looks forward to a collaborative working relationship with the committee and gives thanks to our committee members for their willingness to serve.

Dated: June 8, 2021