

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
 August 13, 2014 - APPROVED
Comprehensive Plan Committee Members

Name	Position	Email address
Jim Schoenig	VOB Mayor	jschoenig@brewstervillage-ny.gov
Christine Piccini	VOB Deputy Mayor	dpiccini@aol.com
Tom Boissonnault	VOB Trustee	TJBVOB@gmail.com
Mary Bryde	VOB Trustee	MBryde314@gmail.com
Terri Stockburger	VOB Trustee	tp.stockburger@verizon.net
Peter Hansen	VOB Clerk/Treasurer	phansen@brewstervillage-ny.gov
Bob Cullen	Town of Southeast Councilman	rcullen@southeast-ny.gov
Jack Gress	VOB Zoning Board, Coalition for a Better Brewster	jackgress@verizon.net
Richard Ruchala	VOB Zoning Board	rrr845@gmail.com
Rick Stockburger	VOB Planning Board	rstockburger@verizon.net
George J. Gaspar	VOB Planning Board, Resident (architect by profession)	gjgaia48@gmail.com
John Folchetti	VOB Engineer, Consultant to Committee	John.Folchetti@jrfa.com
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Bob Dumont	Business	Bob@thebowlcompany.com
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Barbara Barosa	Putnam County Planner	Barbara.Barosa@putnamcountyny.gov
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Harold Lepler	Covington	haroldlepler@gmail.com
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Don Rossi	Covington, Legal Council	dmrossi@hoganandrossi.com

Members present August 13, 2014	Members absent August 13, 2014
Jim Schoenig	
Christine Piccini	Meghan Taylor
Richard Ruchala	John Folchetti
Mary Bryde	John Saccardi
Peter Hansen	Don Rossi
Rick Stockburger	Tom Boissonnault
Bob Cullen	
Jack Gress	
George Gaspar	
Bob Dumont	
Anthony Mole	
Joe Czajka	
Harold Lepler	
Terri Stockburger	
Barbara Barosa	
Larry Nadel	

Work session – Meeting held in gymnasium of Saint Lawrence O’Toole

- . Ms. Piccini announced that this was a work session of the Comprehensive Plan Committee.
- . She asked that the Committee Members sign the sign-in sheet.
- . She announced to the audience that this presentation was for the Committee and that no public comments are permitted at this time as this is a work session. However, audience members can submit questions to the Committee.
- . The pledge of allegiance was said.

Ms. Bryde made a motion to open the work session. This was seconded by Ms. Stockburger and unanimously passed.

First order of business

Mr. Gaspar made a motion to accept the amended minutes (correction of Ms. Czajka to Mr. Czajka on p. 3, first line) from the July 9, 2014 meeting. This was seconded by Mr. Stockburger and passed unanimously.

Second order of business

Ms. Piccini continued the meeting by introducing Tecton Architects and the Urban Renewal Area presentation made by Mr. Craig Saunders. Mr. Saunders addressed the audience with multiple drawings of renditions of what he proposed.

- . Mr. Saunders explained that he works for Covington Realty and that he has reviewed the Village of Brewster, particularly the dramatic difference in land elevation between Main Street and Marvin Avenue (50' to 60' difference). He stated that this topography will be difficult to address with conventional development. It will require a unique approach.
- . He is suggesting a "Village Green" as the area to encompass the area between the railroad station to the Village Offices to the Library on Main Street down to Marvin Ave. There could also be a promenade. There could be three or four stories between Main Street and Marvin Ave, depending which street one is on.
- . There could be a "Cultural Square", which could include a pedestrian area surrounding the Library and Museum.
- . There could be a "Brewster Square", a large open space right in the center of town, including shops and amenities, maybe a fountain in the middle in the Summer and a fire pit in the Winter. Someone mentioned an ice skating rink.
- . He is recommending establishing a focal point when one departs from the railroad station. Perhaps a winter garden, an area surrounded by glass walls, including retail, commercial and residential properties, and could "step down" from Main Street to Marvin Avenue. Could include a lot of grass and lot of open space culminating in connecting to a cultural square.
- . There needs to be a critical mass of dwellings to make this a place where people want to live and to come.
- . Mr. Saunders expressed wanting to draw on the architecture of existing buildings, and to build up this area to look like individual buildings as done in the nineteenth century. The new construction would include a large variety of architecture, but would preserve the current character of the Village and be complimentary to the existing architecture. Could include a series of terraces.
- . Mr. Saunders suggested converting the current Record Storage Facility to a mini-Chelsea Piers recreation center.

The next presenter was Ms. Gina Martini of VHB Engineering. (See VHB attachments distributed by Ms. Piccini on August 15, 2014 for more thorough details: 1) Economic Development and 2) Land Use, Zoning and Community Character.

- . Ms. Martini presented various maps of the Village outlining various areas within the Village.
- . Community Structure – residential areas, commercial areas, open spaces, historical buildings
- . Road System – people circulation, vehicle circulation, signage, railroad, major roadway (Route 6) and the surrounding feeder streets, gateways into the Village.

Ms. Martini turned the next phase of the presentation to Dave Schiff

- . Mr. Schiff talked about the importance of zoning and that they've looked at current ordinances to see what needs to be addressed. Zoning will be the tool to implement the changes.
- . He cited that there is an existing parking overlay already done by the Village.
- . Mr. Schiff talked of potential zoning modifications because currently 1) land use and zoning don't match up, 2) there are five business districts, which are too many for a Village this small, 3) there are two important non-highway business districts designated, B1 (downtown area) and B3 (area less dense), and that they will have to look at regulations vis-à-vis what they want to do, and 4) R20 residential zone doesn't seem to be appropriate for where it is.
- . He also talked about needing design controls to accentuate the positive, and in context of historic buildings. And that Garden Street School will need zoning to accommodate what is planned for that site.
- . There may also be a need for an R&D zone.
- . All zoning will evolve as the development plan evolves.

Ms. Martini continued the presentation discussing the following:

- . Lighting Considerations
- . Building Conditions
- . Blight Factors – topography, underdeveloped areas
- . Ms. Martini also talked about incompatible land use, e.g., residential next to industrial; front of facades okay, but sides of buildings not conforming; auto businesses next to residential areas; obsolete buildings, e.g., the historic archives building.
- . Ms. Martini went on to say that the Village’s topography was challenging to the redevelopment; there is an underutilization of land; there are challenging curb cuts and set backs of buildings; many buildings are in need of improvement; many buildings are vacant and damaged. The assets of the Village are its historic buildings, churches and railroad.
- . Ms. Martini itemized the areas subject to change as follows:
 - Area 1: Along Main Street and railroad areas
 - Areas 2 & 3: Potential redevelopment sites, keeping some existing buildings (museum/library)
 - Areas 4 & 5: Archival/historic buildings
 - Area 6: Large setbacks and underutilized buildings
 - Area 7: Mixed use areas (with auto businesses)
 - Area 8: Auto-related spaces and residential spaces next to each other
 - Area 9: School
 - Areas 10 & 11: Potential redevelopment; underutilized buildings
- . Ms. Barosa asked if they are addressing parking. Ms. Martini responded, Yes, they are looking at existing parking areas and shared parking, and they are looking into how to accommodate the deficiency of parking in the Village.

Mr. Gress asked about town houses and bed & breakfasts, and how would town houses improve the Village. The response was that they would provide higher density. But to do that, the Village would have to implement a “town house zone” to allow for a density that the Village would be comfortable with.

Ms. Martini added that they are looking at ownership vs. rentals, and that town houses may encourage ownership, which is why they are being considered.

Ms. Piccini announced that there would be a break in order for the Committee to assemble around the meeting table for discussion and to provide feedback to the planner. Ms. Piccini also reminded the audience that they may remain to listen to these discussions.

The discussion among the Committee continued after the break.

Mr. Stockburger explained that B zones were established so that gas stations couldn't be set up in the Village. And that's the same rationale for Brewster Honda, which is considered an "as of right" zone. He reiterated that this was still the consensus of the Committee. . Mr. Stockburger explained that R20s are to accommodate cluster housing; townhouses would allow denser development.

Ms. Piccini explained that the Committee isn't married to the current zoning, but is providing the background behind it.

Mr. Mole asked if the concept presented by Mr. Saunders was to be implemented throughout the entire Village, and Mr. Saunders responded that he wasn't sure. He did say that there should be balance and that the "Zoning shouldn't be wagging the plan".

Mr. Stockburger expressed wanting to present incentives to moving forward and to tweak older building requirements.

Mr. Saunders stated, in terms of development, he's spoken with some people who said they wanted to come into the Village but were concerned with the water and sewer rates.

Mr. Mole asked if the current parking overlay will be worked into the new plans.

Mr. Gress stated that he was always in favor of one district consisting of B2, B4 and B5 and saw no benefit to keeping them separate districts.

. Ms. Martini added that there didn't seem to be substantial differences among them, and Mr. Gress agreed.

Mr. Saunders asked what would happen if the current gas station goes away or the auto store goes away...what would replace them?

Mr. Gress stated that he was impressed with many things in this report and would support going in this direction, but the FAR needs to be changed. However, he stated that there weren't sufficient details. And he would like to have copies of the new maps.

Mr. Gress also stated that he was concerned that all of this was happening as one project, rather than addressing the planning phase first, e.g., zoning, existing land use with more details, community character details. And then, address the development aspect. Are we doing them in reverse?

. Ms. Barosa responded that this discussion was to gather all ideas together and how they could be incorporated together.

Mr. Gress reiterated that the overall plan is overwhelming, however, liked the historic preservation of the Village aspect, and that those structures should be protected, since there is currently no historic overlay.

Mr. Stockburger asked about rezoning and if Mr. Saunders could give a ballpark idea of what future zoning would be to implement the current project.

. Mr. Saunders responded that they need to divorce parking and property zoning topics. Then, look at combining individual properties while maintaining open space. He added that the steepness of the streets could lead to garages without ramps and allow for multiple transfers of getting around the Village.

. Mr. Lepler added that there could be an interconnectivity among all levels.

. Mr. Saunders added all of this is very preliminary.

Mr. Stockburger asked about the project being implemented as an entire project all at once verses a phased-in approach.

. Mr. Lepler responded that the high risk will be encountered early in the redevelopment process. That there needs to be a credibility established that says that what is happening at one end of the Village will also take place at the other end of the Village. This reinforced the “entire project” approach rather than the phased-in approach.

Mr. Dumont talked about transforming the Village of Brewster from a sleepy village to an urban center. He asked if that meant all buildings were demolished or would they be incorporated into the overall plan.

. Mr. Lepler responded that many properties will benefit, but that the redevelopment will have to happen all at once, from the railroad to the museum.

. Mr. Schiff added that they must preserve single-family neighborhoods and add higher density development to be balanced.

Mr. Gress addressed Ms. Martini’s presentation that talked about establishing “parking by number of bedrooms”.

. Ms. Martini responded that it makes more sense to evaluate by number of bedrooms, as it’s likely that a four-bedroom house has a need for more parking than a one-bedroom apartment. And that the closer the residence is to the railroad, the less parking needed; more shared-use parking.

. Ms. Piccini added that the parking would match the zoning established throughout the Village.

Mr. Czajka shared that a recent study on 52 housing complexes in four counties showed that 52 percent of parking spaces established were empty all the time. They don’t want to incur those upfront expenses.

Mr. Gress asked about how the current revenue to the Village that is generated by parking would change. In other words, what revenue benefit would the Village reap from the new parking plan. What would compensate for the loss of parking income currently received.

. Mr. Mole responded re: current income parking vs. new parking, that there would be other revenue generated from the new development to offset any parking revenue loss.

. Mr. Gaspar wanted to know why the Village should lose the current revenue stream. New development should generate added revenue.

Mr. Stockburger stated that on the south side of Main Street it is easy to implement parking, however, on the north side of Main Street it is difficult to implement parking. He suggested leasing south side parking to north side businesses.

Mr. Gress asked about roof parking off a structure off of Oak Street.

. Mr. Lepler responded that that would be a function of cost. He then asked if parking would be public or private.

Mr. Lepler stated that studies show that redevelopment has doubled values of properties in a Village.

Mr. Schiff stated that he envisions that down-level parking could support all of Main Street, and that they could implement five levels of parking without ramps in the back area.

Mr. Piccini reminded the Committee that they need to include loading zones/docks.

. Mr. Saunders stated that he didn't see the need.

. Mr. Gress stated that delivery trucks double park and interfere with traffic on Main Street.

. Ms. Barosa suggested that times be established for deliveries, including limitations to delivery times.

Mr. Schiff asked about how refuse trucks passing through the Village.

Mr. Lepler stated that he'd like to get the involvement of first responders (police, EMS, firefighters) to include their needs.

Mr. Gress asked about putting bed & breakfast housing in the B1 zone.

. Ms. Martini responded that previously this type of use was not allowed.

However, if we are looking to bring people into the Village there might be a need for overnight accommodations and this should be considered. These could be included in the B1 zone, with controls.

- . Ms. Piccini stated that this now takes us off of B1 districts to older, larger homes.
- . Mr. Stockburger stated that the Village got away from that, leaning towards single-room occupancy and enforcing it.

Mr. Czajka stated the need for a town-house zone and that there are benefits to this as town houses are different than condominiums. He added that he'd like to see a clear definition of each.

- . Ms. Martini reiterated promoting home ownership.

Mr. Dumont asked about the presence of gas stations in the Village. The positive to having them is the convenience; the negative is the risk of possible leaks resulting in contamination and the cost of clean up. He asked what protection would there be in the zoning to protect the Village from these costs.

- . Mr. Stockburger stated that there are four gas stations with only one in the "as of right" category.

Ms. Piccini presented a question from the audience: Which buildings are considered historic and what were the plans that would affect town hall?

- . Ms. Martini to provide a list of those buildings listed on the state national register, with some not listed on the state national register, but are considered of county-historic significance.

Ms. Piccini asked for any other questions. There were none.

Ms. Piccini reminded the Committee that the next meeting will be on September 10 at 7pm, which has already been noticed.

- . Ms. Martini will provide chapters to be discussed at next meeting.

Mr. Lepler extended thanks to Father Gill and St. Lawrence O'Toole for the use of their facility on behalf of the Committee.

Mr. Hansen asked where the Committee stood against the current schedule.

- . Ms. Martini responded that they are ahead of schedule.

. Ms. Barosa stated they may slip a month, as they'll need thirty days to review comments. They don't think they'll be ready for the public hearing in October, 2014.

Mr. Gress asked about the importance of public and institutional uses mentioned in the report. There is no mention, however, of design controls or zoning to preserve these districts.

. Ms. Martini will look at design controls and development.

Mr. Stockburger made a motion to close the meeting. This was seconded by Ms. Bryde and passed unanimously.

Meeting concluded at 8:30pm.