
TOWN OF COLONIE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

TOWN OF COLONIE
ALBANY COUNTY, NEW YORK
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CPAC) MEETING



To: Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee
From: Katie Crawford, Land Use Planner I – Barton & Loguidice, D.P.C.
Re: Meeting Summary Notes
Date: September 22, 2016

Meeting Location: Town of Colonie Public Operations Center
Meeting Date/Time: September 21, 2016 - 6:30 pm – 8:30pm
Meeting Attendees: CPAC, Barton & Loguidice, and several members of the general public

Summary Notes

This was the first meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) since Barton & Loguidice (B&L) was selected as the Town's planning consultant for the Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Update project. Joe LaCivita, Director of the Planning and Economic Development Department (PEDD) and Chairman of CPAC, welcomed everyone. He noted that the room setup was reconfigured and microphones provided to the committee in response to complaints from the audience at the last meeting that it was sometimes difficult to hear the discussion. Hopefully these changes will help. He also noted that the comprehensive plan webpages on the Town's website have been updated.

Mr. LaCivita introduced Michael Welti, AICP, Senior Land Use Planner with B&L and the Project Manager for this project and Katie Crawford, a junior land use planner on B&L's team. Mr. Welti thanked the committee and the Town for selecting B&L. He then reviewed the meeting agenda. A copy of the agenda is attached.

A summary of the discussion follows below:

CPAC Meeting Protocols

Mr. Welti noted that these are working meetings of the committee. Therefore, it is important that all members of the committee feel comfortable discussing sometimes difficult issues around the table. It is also important that members of the public who attend to observe the committee's work can hear the discussion. Hopefully the changes to the room setup will help to achieve both goals. Due to the large number of people in attendance and the work that must be accomplished at each meeting, Mr. Welti asked that members of the committee interact only with one another and the consultant team as they work through items on the agenda. There will always be a place on the agenda for public comment. Feedback from those in attendance to observe the committee's deliberations will be welcomed at that time.

Comprehensive Plan Update Process

- Additional Community Outreach Suggestions? Ideas for consideration:
 - o Committee Ambassadors – *committee was responsive to the idea of going out to organizations in the community to spread the word about the process and bring back feedback and information on key concerns*
 - *A list of potential groups should be compiled for this purpose*
 - o Neighborhood Coalition Meeting – *committee was responsive to the idea of going to an upcoming meeting of the Neighborhood Coalition to introduce the comprehensive plan process*
 - o Additional Focus Group Meetings – *committee suggested the Town be broken into similar geographies as in 2005 Comprehensive Plan (Colonie North, Loudonville, Latham, Colonie South, and West-side), committee also suggested reaching out to the senior and business communities at some point.*
 - *Committee identified that the first round of meetings should be done based on geographies and possibly a second round of meetings organized around key topics later in the process. The first round of meetings would focus on issues identification and would replace the single, issues identification workshop identified in B&L's preliminary scope of services.*
 - *Survey (online) – committee supported the idea of an online survey's to allow public to submit their input*
 - *Other input – Committee should utilize internet resources more extensively*

2005 Comprehensive Plan Review - CPAC Discussion

- Successes and accomplishments of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan?
 - o Preservation of the kettle bog – the Town was able to acquire the property
 - o Conservation overlays and identification of environmentally sensitive areas have encouraged Town acquisition of areas in danger – the map generated for this purpose has been utilized and it has been a useful tool for the Planning Board in the review of projects
 - o Stormwater management regulations have been developed and adopted and updates have been made to the Town's environmental Impact Statement
 - o Implementation of traffic calming measures in new development and routine improvements have been used since 2005 and are making a difference
 - o A significant number of projects have been implemented overtime – in general the plan has actively shaped development
 - o 1st time home buyers program, the re-energizing of older neighborhoods, obtaining grant funds, and keeping older residents in their homes have all been accomplished
 - o Green space, business development, and many other projects have begun – but are still a work in progress
 - o Sidewalks have been better utilized by residents and visitors – especially along the Wolf Road corridor
 - o Apartment complex development near the Crossings and the addition of the WWTP were accomplishments of the 05' plan
 - o The plan was useful when implementing the zoning changes in 2007 and amendments made since then

- In your view, what were some of the shortcomings of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan? Were there recommendations or implementation actions that we not fully executed? Were there items that had unintended consequences?
 - o Gateway streetscape concept has not been practical along Central Avenue – they had to be removed
 - o Saratoga was used too heavily as an example for the plan and zoning code – this is especially apparent in the lot set back requirements and the parking in the back of buildings
 - o Mixed-use zones may not have played out as nicely as hoped – are they sustainable in the long-term? Are the necessary residential amenities available to really attract people to these developments – this is a high profile issue because the board is receiving a lot of applications within these districts and these may not be a good fit for every part of the community
 - o Conservation overlays – affordable new housing is not available for new residents or seniors looking to stay within the community
 - o Traffic mitigation goals should be more realistic – the 2005 plan did not provide real recommendations to address traffic. There should be awareness of what roads can actually change
 - i. People need to be informed about the different approaches that can be taken to local, state, and federally owned roads
 - ii. The plan should be a more useful guide for decision makers that can be used during the development approval process
 - o Snowstorm regulation should be revisited – narrow streets and on-street parking can often hinder snowstorm management in the case of a snow event
 - o Town walkability should be addressed – we need to find more areas to connect people in day-to-day walkability in appropriate locations
 - i. The sidewalk plan should be updated
 - o PDD – they have not always had desired outcomes
 - i. These should be reviewed in order to better understand what went right/what went wrong
 - o Zoning update did not properly address where certain zones were located in different areas of the Town
 - i. Commercial development along Central Ave. should be treated differently than commercial development located elsewhere

Next Steps

- o October 19th determined as the next meeting date – back to 6:00 PM start time
- o December 21st meeting may be rescheduled to avoid holiday conflicts
- o Town website will soon be able to compile a resident email list for those interested in staying up-to-date on the process

Public Comments

- Residents would like the plan update to maintain the same aggressive approach as the 2005 plan and would like to see more emphasis placed on open space management and preservation
 - o New development is creating traffic issues, green space is being lost, and there is a higher demand on existing services– these issues are impacting existing neighborhoods

- Communications should be improved between Niskayuna and Colonie in regards to new development along Route 7
- CPAC meeting notes should be posted online and the committee should think about a social media presence to reach to younger demographics
- The local education communities of SUNY Polytec. and UAlbany should be more engaged in the process to bridge the divide between the two communities
- Local group - Save Colonie – would like to see their written correspondence and all other written correspondence with the committee posted online to improve transparency in the process
- The open space conservation fund that was proposed in the 2005 comprehensive plan was not accomplished – this is something that residents would like to see more attention paid to
 - An open space map should also be prepared
 - The draft bike/ped plan is no longer online – this should be reposted
- The public hearing minutes regarding adoption of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and the 2007 Zoning Code update should be posted online so that residents can review the concerns and intentions that were discussed in the previous planning process
- The Route 9 corridor around Maxwell Road and Latham circle should be reviewed for pedestrian safety measures
- Some residents feel that the makeup of the board is inappropriate and does not properly represent the residents of the community
- PDD should have strict guidelines as to when they are approved
- Survey questions should be written and vetted through residents before being sent out to ensure that questions and responses are representing the issues within the community and that results are properly represented
- Land use maps should reflect the most recent land use data to properly represent the condition of neighborhoods or areas of the town.
- The Town's heritage of agriculture should be honored through the preservation of open space
- Awareness should be raised on the smaller home options that are available in the Town and the resources available to modernize these homes



Town of Colonie
Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC)
September 21, 2016, 6:30 PM
Agenda

I. Welcome and Agenda Review

II. CPAC Meeting Protocols

III. Comprehensive Plan Update Process

A. Review Scope and Timeline

B. Additional Community Outreach Suggestions? Ideas for consideration:

- Committee Ambassadors
- Neighborhood Coalition Mtg.
- Additional Focus Group Mtgs.
- Survey (online)

IV. 2005 Comprehensive Plan Review

A. CPAC Discussion:

In your view, what were some of the successes of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan? What has been accomplished?

In your view, what were some of the shortcomings of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan? Were there recommendations or implementation actions that we not fully executed? Were there items that had unintended consequences?

Looking at the memorandum prepared by the 2010 Comprehensive Plan Review Committee, how do their comments or suggestions sound today?

B. Summary of Zoning Amendments since 2007

V. Next Steps

Upcoming CPAC Meetings: October 19, November 16, December 21

Public Workshop #1: Identify Key Issues and Opportunities – late Oct. /early Nov.

VI. Public Comment

VII. Wrap-up and Adjournment

Proposed Scope of Work

Task 1: Project Coordination and Community Profile

- Project Kickoff and Monthly CPAC Meetings (10)
- Refinement of Community Outreach Process
- Community Profile

Task 2: Community Outreach

- Public Workshops / Public Hearings
 - Public Workshop #1 – Identify Key Issues and Opportunities
 - Public Workshop #2 – Visioning
 - Public Workshop #3 – Draft Comprehensive Plan
 - Public Hearings (2) – One by CPAC and one by the Town Board prior to adoption of the plan
- Interviews with Community Leaders
- Roundtable with Town officials and select stakeholders
- Utilization of Media Outlet Resources – webpage, press releases, progress reports, etc.
- Optional Public Participation Methods – Additional workshops, stakeholder meetings or focus groups, survey (written or on-line), image preference survey, community event outreach, etc.

Task 3: Develop Vision, Goals, and Recommendations

Task 4: Develop Draft Comprehensive Plan

Task 5: SEQR Compliance (Full EAF)

Task 6: Final Plan and Plan Adoption

Proposed Timeline

Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Update										
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Task 1: Project Coordination	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Community Profile	—————									
Task 2: Community Outreach		◆	❖	◆	□	❖	◆		■	■
Task 3: Vision, Goals, and Recommendations				—————						
Task 4: Draft Plan						—————				
Task 5: SEQR								—————		
Task 6: Final Plan and Adoption									—————	

- CPAC Meetings ◆ Public Workshops ❖ Interviews □ Roundtable ■ Public Hearings