
TOWN OF COLONIE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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



To: Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC)
From: Katie Crawford, Land Use Planner I – Barton & Loguidice, D.P.C.
Re: July 19, 2017 Committee Meeting - Summary Notes
Date: July 20, 2017

Meeting Location: Town of Colonie Public Operations Building
Meeting Time: 6:00 pm – 8:00pm
Meeting Attendees: Committee, Barton & Loguidice, and several members of the general public

Summary Notes

This was the eleventh meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) for the Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Update project. The meeting was attended by the CPAC, consultants (B&L), and several members of the general public.

The meeting began with a review of the agenda (attached).

Update – Status of Related Projects

- Airport Area Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS)
 - Internal kick-off meeting expected July 28th
 - Public meetings will be scheduled for the fall
- CDTC – Albany Shaker Road Corridor Study
 - First public workshop was held in June
 - Working meeting of the Committee on July 20th
 - Next public meeting will be held in September
- Lincoln Avenue Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Study
 - Committee is being finalized
 - Looking for business and residential representatives for the committee
 - Kick-off to come after committee is finalized

Community Outreach Process

- Community Survey Results
 - Siena provided committee with Executive Summary and Cross-tabs
 - Cross-tabs for the Town as a whole and for each geographic area
 - It was noted that Seniors feel satisfied with Town's work for seniors and services available to them
 - Top areas of concern identified this time were similar in the 2005 survey
 - Traffic

- Overdevelopment
 - Lack of sidewalks
 - Willingness to pay results
 - People generally responded favorably to paying for additional amenities given the limited information available as part of the survey questionnaire
 - Current efforts in Bethlehem provide an example of open space conservation techniques that are being implemented in a neighboring Town
 - Massachusetts also utilizes different techniques for open space preservation
 - There are lots of options available to the Town
- Business Roundtable – Looking at either September 13th or 14th (perhaps 8:30 am – 9:30 am) – details still being finalized
 - Chambers, CIREB, development community, builders groups, and resident representatives
 - Meeting to be held at The Crossings
 - Meeting open to the public
 - Similar format to the previously held public outreach meetings
 - Meeting to see what we can learn from the developers perspectives and from employers in the Town and what their experiences have been (positive, negative, etc.)
 - What brings these people to the Town – why is the Town so attractive?
 - How to balance these needs with quality of life of residents?

Draft Vision & Goals

- Preliminary discussion of vision and goals presented by Mr. Welti (B&L)
- Draft Vision Statement: In the Year 2030...
 - The Town of Colonie is a well-managed and forward-thinking suburban community in the heart of the Capital District. It has an exceptional quality of life with strong, well-established neighborhoods, excellent schools, and generous amenities such as parks, trails, and conserved open lands. Its central location makes it both convenient and busy, yet the Town has worked with its regional partners to ensure that all impacts of traffic are controlled and that safe and attractive transportation options are available for all. The Town balances fiscal responsibility with long-term infrastructure maintenance and great community services. It protects its natural resources, promotes environmentally sustainable development practices, and carefully guides development and redevelopment in its existing commercial and industrial areas to support the tax base and create and retain jobs. Colonie's varied housing stock meets the diverse needs of the community and, in combination with relatively low taxes, the Town has retained its status as an affordable and desirable community for living, learning, and doing business.
 - Committee to send additional feedback about draft vision statement, and the preliminary goals described below, via email after this evening's meeting (to Mr. LaCivita and Mr. Welti by July 31st, 2017).
- Goals are broad policy-level statements – what to build recommendations around (based on committee review of 2005 goals from previous CPAC meeting and public outreach to date)

1. **Housing** – modified to focus more on affordability of new housing units to appeal to all income ranges
 - a. Multi-generational housing should be considered as a specific focus to accommodate the changes in national trends and changes in housing and familial needs
2. **Neighborhoods** – modified to focus more on the relationship between residential and commercial development
3. **Mobility** – modified to include investment in roads and highways to accommodate active transportation and public transit users and to reduce traffic congestion
4. **Commercial/Industrial Growth** – modified to concentrate further development where development already exists and targeting properties that remain vacant or abandoned
 - a. Mixed-use development has yet to be fully embraced by the Town, but progress has been made to make developed areas more pedestrian oriented rather than traditional big box development
 - i. Review of COR Zoning District may need to be completed – possible refinements to individualize these to the unique characteristics of the areas where this zoning designation is located
 - b. Emphasis should be placed on redevelopment rather than new development
 - i. Specifically during the approval process – conditional approval to protect against buildings becoming vacant or abandoned as retail trends change
5. **Development Approval** – modified to focus less on zoning changes (which were implemented after the 2005 plan) and towards the approval process to focus on protecting existing neighborhoods and natural resources
6. **Business Friendly Environment** – modified to focus on attracting particular industries – town can be more selective and target desired industries
7. **Protect Natural Resources** – modified to bring attention of natural resources during the development approval process and oversight during construction
8. **Conserve Open Space** – modified to higher priority element of the plan than in 2005 – this is likely to be one of the main initiatives to come out of the comprehensive plan update
9. **Enhance Recreational Resources** – modified to address change of demand to amenities and enhancement of existing resources
10. **Invest in Maintenance of Infrastructure** – a goal dedicated to infrastructure was created because of its importance
 - a. Encourage development where infrastructure exists rather than laying new pipe that need to be maintained (smart growth principals)
11. **Low-impact Development Techniques** – new goal to address innovations in green infrastructure and stormwater management
 - a. Shifting fees to developers through mitigation fees and the GEIS process for their role in expanding pervious surfaces within the Town
 - i. Planning Board has been shifting maintenance of stormwater management practices towards HOAs to not place such a substantial burden on the Town's resources – through complaints and/or code enforcement
12. **Maintain High Level of Services** – goal remains the same as 2005 goal
13. **Cultural and Historic Resources** – goal remains the same as 2005 goal
 - a. B&L will be providing an update to the inventory of cultural and historic resources

- 14. **Energy Efficiency and Conservation** – goal added to promote the use of renewable energy within the Town
 - 15. **Community Involvement** – goal remains the same as 2005 goal
 - 16. **Coordination with Neighboring Municipalities** – goal slightly modified to address shared services between municipalities within the Region where appropriate
- **Two goals were removed from the 2005 plan** - Mohawk River Waterfront & Establishing an identity for the Town of Colonie

The Committee discussed the preliminary draft goals that were presented:

- Discussion about whether the identify goal from 2005 should be removed
 - Gateways that were installed after 2005 plan have proven cumbersome to maintain
 - New development at gateways points have been incorporated in the development approval process
 - Specifically at Tobin's proposed mixed-use development
 - Confusion may also come from people having "Watervliet" or "Cohoes" addresses, school districts, post offices, etc.
- Beautification of roads and rotaries should be a focus to enhance the aesthetics of the Town and promote community service initiatives
- Planned Development Districts – limit these to commercial areas rather than putting commercial-based PDDs in residential areas
 - Town Board has considerable discretion with PDDs - a threat of litigation may exist but the Town is in a strong position. Strengthening language in the Town's code likely to be a recommendation of the plan update.
- It was not that the word "invest" is only used with respect to the infrastructure goal. Probably should remove the word there and instead discuss investment in the recommendations that pertain to infrastructure and other things such as open space conservation, parks and recreation, etc.

Next Steps

- Business Roundtable
 - September meeting will be scheduled soon
- Upcoming CPAC Meeting: September 20th, 6:00 pm @ Public Operations Building
 - There will be no August CPAC meeting

Public Comments

Mr. Welti opened the floor for comments from members of the public in attendance.

Paula Weiss - do all areas within the Town need to be suburban? Or is there opportunity for particular areas to be walkable, bikeable, and community focused?

- The 2005 plan points towards this notion, many of these recommendations will be carried over into the 2017 plan – a complete streets policy may also be a topic to be considered in the plan recommendations

Paula Weiss, is there a waste reduction program being considered?

- This topic has yet to come up, this could be a positive addition to the plan; specifically the energy efficiency and sustainability goal

Mary-Beth Buckner, likes the idea of establishing an identity for the Town – Town symbol or setting apart the Village from the Town or other marketing. The beautification efforts are also supported. Also feels that the Town should not segregate housing types and sizes; a topic that came up at recent Planning Board meeting.

Katherine, likes preservation of open space and farmland goal.

Susan Weber, goals are in the right direction and changes are appropriate. Suggestion on development approval process goal – existing residents feel blindsighted by new development proposals and feel that a relationship between residents and the developer should be fostered earlier on the development approval process. Also supports Bethlehem term-easement program.

Lisa Barren, traffic was a key component in the survey – felt that the goals did not explicitly address traffic considerations. Also feels that an assessment of existing water should be done.

- o Ideas for addressing traffic congestion will be described in the recommendations rather than the goals

Paul Bergdorf, appreciated quality of proposed goals, feels that more attention should be paid to protection of neighborhoods that are located in development sensitive areas – possible through a review of the zoning. Coordination with schools should occur – through planning and funding. The Airport GEIS scoping process should include the County.

- o Draft goals will be posted on the website after the committee further refines the goals. Visioning workshops will then invite the Town to further participate in the development of the vision, goals, and plan recommendations.
- o GEIS – the Town and County have begun to coordinate on this effort – the specific role the County will play in the GEIS process has yet to be determined.

Frank, Town identity may remain important – could possibly identify hamlet areas as part of the Town of Colonie. Additionally, the 2005 plan was to be reviewed by 2010 and was not addressed until 2017. Will the 2017 plan make a recommendation about when it should be reviewed?

- o It is expected a period of time be established in the new plan

Mary-Beth Bucker asked a question about a particular farmland protection program – may be referring to a program from Ag and Markets.

Paula, stormwater management practices are reviewed by the stormwater inspectors; the Town is also part of the Albany County Stormwater Coalition. Infrastructure investments have been identified in respective capital improvement plans. Parks maintenance and upgrades have begun and should be further addressed in the same manner. Open space has been dedicated near Stump Pond. GEIS is incorporating the County, State, and other local municipalities.

Kevin, suggested that public safety and services for seniors and youth may need to be separated as two goals.

Wrap-up and Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned just before 8:00 pm.



Town of Colonie
Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC)
July 19, 2017, 6:00 PM
Agenda

- I. **Welcome and Agenda Review**

- II. **Update – Status of Related Projects**
 - Airport Area GEIS
 - CDTC - Albany Shaker Road Corridor Study
 - Lincoln Ave. BOA (Brownfield Opportunity Area)

- III. **Community Outreach Process**
 - Community Survey Results – Executive Summary
 - Business Roundtable – September 13th or 14th (morning)

- IV. **Draft Vision and Goals**
 - Preliminary discussion – email additional CPAC comments/suggestions to J. LaCivita and M. Welti by July 31st

- V. **Next Steps**
 - Business Roundtable
 - Upcoming CPAC Meeting: September 20th, 6:00 PM
(Note: no August meeting)

- VI. **Public Comment**

- VII. **Wrap-up and Adjournment**