

Minutes of the Comprehensive Planning Committee
Wednesday, October 1, 2014

Present : Ted Brumleve, Chairman
 Ann Gallelli
 Bettie Jackson
 Ray Clifford
 Laura Fallon
 Frank Fish, BFJ Consultant
 Susan Favate, BFJ Consultant
 Daniel O'Connor, Village Engineer

Absent: Paul Doyle
 Jeremy Ezra

1. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Jackson made a motion to approve the minutes of August 20, 2014, seconded by Ms. Fallon, and carried all in favor by a vote of 5-0.

Ms. Jackson made a motion to approve the minutes of September 10, 2014, seconded by Mr. Clifford, and carried all in favor by a vote of 5-0.

2. Accessory Apartments

The committee reviewed the draft revision to Section 230-41 of the village code on accessory apartments.

The recommendations are as follows:

1. Instead of the special permit having to be renewed every three years, the permit should run with the owner. No longer would an accessory apartment be restricted to family only. Removing this restriction would open up more housing opportunities for rentals outside the family.
2. The age restriction should be removed. No longer should the owner or the lessee of the accessory apartment have to be 55 years or older. Removing this restriction would open up more housing opportunities to all age groups.
3. The requirement for a covenant with the Westchester County Clerk's office should be removed. This requirement places an undue burden on the applicant.
4. The Planning Board should be the board to issue the permit for an accessory apartment. The committee agreed that the Planning Board is the appropriate board because of the Planning Board's experience in reviewing site plan applications, and reviewing issues such as traffic, parking and neighborhood impacts. There was also consensus that a public hearing (which requires two meetings and therefore is more time-consuming and financially burdensome

- on the applicant) was not necessary for approval of an accessory apartment, instead only notification of neighbors within 100 ft. should be required.
5. The permit should be called an “accessory apartment permit” and not “special permit,” given that a special permit has other restrictions and requirements that are not applicable to accessory apartments.
 6. The committee agreed that restricting the accessory apartment to the main structure is consistent with the village code on customary home occupations. If an applicant wants to build over a garage (which has a 15’ height restriction for an accessory structure), the applicant could request a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals.
 7. Accessory apartments should be allowed only in RA single-family districts.
 8. Off-street parking requirements will remain the same.

The Comprehensive Planning Committee believes that these recommendations for changes in the existing accessory apartment code should make it easier for residents to legalize an existing apartment (increasing the worth of the property), and potentially generate more applications for accessory apartments.

3. Commercial Development and Planning

Chairman Brumleve summarized the committee’s previous discussions about the commercial vitality and vision for the village. One of committee’s goals is to create a 5-7 year action plan, and in light of this, the committee should begin to consider gathering community input. At the same time, the committee needs to look at some immediate actions that can be implemented.

Mr. Joe Lippolis, resident, business owner, and active member of the Hudson Valley Chamber of Commerce, was present and joined the discussion on Croton’s future.

Ms. Fallon noted that Croton was not a walking town like some of the other river towns nearby (Irvington, for example). It was not easy to get around from one section of the village to the other since there isn’t one unifying main street.

Mr. Fish commented that there are places where there is more than one center. Mr. Lippolis added that there are towns that are divided into separate districts, each district having distinct characteristics. Mr. Lippolis stated that he thought Croton has lost its identity and needs to create a new one.

Mr. Clifford recommended focusing on the upper village as a good place to start creating an identity, and to begin to address the limited parking issues there. He also stated that in addition to looking at the parking in the upper village, a good place to start with a plan of action for helping to create Croton’s identity is directional signage and a new logo for the village.

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Mr. Lippolis commented that he thought the upper village could be spruced up and there are available Main Street grant programs which assist with improvements with facades, signage and streetscapes.

Mr. Fish noted that the trend in development is to move away from malls towards recreating a village concept.

Chairman Brumleve summarized the recommendations of this evening's discussion—the need for signage and “way finding” markers, the need to articulate the characteristics of different districts in the village, to consider how to integrate some of the historical destinations and attractions of the area with the village's vitality, to examine possibilities for more accessible parking, and to accelerate the findings of the committee to the Village Board so that some action can be taken.

Chairman Brumleve recommended that for the next meeting, committee members re-read the Comprehensive Plan, particularly the section 4.0 “Plan Recommendations.”

The next meeting will be held on the second Wednesday of the month, November 19, 2014, at 7:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronnie L. Rose
Secretary to the Comprehensive Planning Committee