

Comprehensive Plan/Economic Development Committee
Wednesday December 2, 2015

Present: Ted Brumleve, Chairman
Paul Doyle
Ray Clifford
Bettie Jackson
Laura Fallon

Absent: Joe Lippolis

Also Present: Daniel O'Connor, Village Engineer
Ann Gallelli, Village Board Trustee

Chairman Brumleve called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

Chairman Brumleve made a motion to approve the minutes of November 10, 2015, seconded by Mr. Doyle, and carried, in favor, 5-0.

2. Status Report

Chairman Brumleve stated that he had updated Mayor-Elect Schmidt on the committee's work on the comprehensive plan. Chairman Brumleve reiterated that the committee's fundamental goal for the comprehensive plan continues to be the goals cited in the Comprehensive Plan—"preserving the traditional qualities of Croton, strengthening assets, protecting resources" while at the same time improving on a good plan. Chairman Brumleve also noted that BFJ (consultants) were in the process of updating the charts and data in the comprehensive plan.

The committee is hoping to have a draft plan to present to the Village Board at a Village Board work session and to present at a meeting with the VEB. Chairman Brumleve summarized the comprehensive plan committee's three main goals: Identity Refresh, Visual Quality and Commercial Vitality through which the public domain and the fabric of the community are preserved.

Committee members recommended that the term "public domain" (exterior spaces that are freely accessible—parks, streets, sidewalks, anything one can see; overhead power lines, broken curbs, storefronts) and the term "fabric" of the community (residential street parking, fences, etc.) be more specifically defined in the plan.

Mr. Doyle noted that although the current comprehensive plan includes a recommendation of preserving the economic diversity, the village is not as economically diverse as it used to be and may becoming more gentrified. Ms. Jackson and Ms. Gallelli noted that although it appeared there was less diversity, Croton Caring and Rotary were both busy this season with deliveries of food to needy families. Mr. Clifford stated that diversity is a strong point and that it was important to acknowledge in the plan that changes will happen in the community as it evolves.

Chairman Brumleve stated that the committee needs to reduce the 37 recommendations Chapter 4 of the Comprehensive Plan to a more manageable number.

Ms. Jackson stated that the plan discussed protecting resources but says nothing about protecting human resources, i.e. “human capital”, the people that make up Croton and the volunteer organizations such as Lions Club, Croton Caring, the Food Bank that contribute to the community’s identity. Protecting human capital should be included in the plan.

Chairman Brumleve reviewed the procedure for approval of the comprehensive plan and stated that the comprehensive plan update is mandated and that the Board of Trustees is the lead agency. This update will be required to go through an environmental review. Mr. Fish of BFJ recommends that there also be one public community review session.

Chairman Brumleve outlined a tentative schedule for the plan’s approval with an end date goal of June, 2016. Mr. Doyle stated that the notion that the comprehensive plan would be approved by June 2016 was unrealistic. Ms. Gallelli added that the majority of the Village Board was new and in the beginning of March, the tentative budget will be presented, and most likely, the budget will consume March and April board meetings. That being said, however, Ms. Gallelli said she saw no harm in pressing on with completion of the comprehensive plan update and attempting to conclude by the end of the summer.

After a discussion of the procedural path that the comprehensive plan must go through to be approved (public hearing and public input), the committee agreed that the presentation about signage can continue in a parallel path to the overall comprehensive plan update and that the meetings about signage with the Village Board and the VEB have been set for January and February 2016.

Mr. Clifford requested that the Village Engineer be involved in reviewing the locations for the proposed signage with respect to utilities, available footprint, land ownership, etc. The Village Engineer agreed to assist as needed.

The committee discussed how branding, signage, and identity can contribute to the overall improvement of the economic development of the village. Ms. Jackson noted that the committee had not discussed brochures/literature about the village that could be available at shops and the train station. Mr. Clifford stated that the original presentation was how gateway signage impacted the economic improvement of the village. Mr. Doyle commented that a great brand will attract residents and attract people to the village. Chairman Brumleve stated that the goal of improved economic development has been and is pervasive in all the discussions the committee has had on signage, branding and identity. These three ideas all contribute to the goal of bringing people to the village and therefore improving the economic development of the community. The committee agreed that BFJ could be asked to assist with this process of helping the public understand the benefit of signage and branding.

The next meeting will be with BFJ to discuss traffic patterns and parking issues and is scheduled for either January 12th or 19th, the date to be determined. The meeting with the VEB will be at the VEB’s regular meeting on Wednesday, February 17, 2016. The committee members agreed that a strong visual presentation on signage is important.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronnie L. Rose
Secretary to the Comprehensive Plan Committee

