

**Minutes of the Comprehensive Planning Committee
Wednesday, April 8, 2015**

Committee: Ted Brumleve, Chairman
Bettie Jackson
Joe Lippolis
Paul Doyle
Laura Fallon

Absent: Ann Gallelli, Village Board Liaison
Ray Clifford

Also Present: Daniel O'Connor, Village Engineer

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

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Doyle made a motion to approve and accept the minutes of February 25, 2015, seconded by Laura Fallon, and the vote carried, all in favor, 5-0. The Committee welcomed new member, Joe Lippolis, to the Comprehensive Planning Committee.

3. Comprehensive Plan

Chairman Brumleve stated that he had two key observations to enable the village to move forward with revisions to the comprehensive plan--commercial access and parking. Mr. Doyle added that consistent "branding", consistent signage/way-finding, and a consistent architectural persona were also essential components. Ms. Jackson noted that improving the storefront's appearance and gardens were a matter of village pride.

Mr. Lippolis noted that the development of commercial areas was important, and that the upper village was a good place to begin since it is small and has some anchor stores such as the Black Cow and Tagine. He noted that in Peekskill there was a trend for owner-operated buildings rather than renting to tenants, and noted that often owner occupied buildings reflected an owner's stake in and commitment to the community.

Ms. Jackson suggested picking a "do-able" area such as the upper village. Chairman Brumleve noted that many of the business owners know each other in the upper village. The committee wondered if there was a financial way to improve the storefronts. Mr. Lippolis stated that the Chamber of Commerce found it difficult to engage all of the Croton businesses, but as a starting point, maybe the upper village business owners would be interested. Mr. Lippolis stated that there might be funding available from the Hudson Valley Chamber of Commerce, for example, for improvement of streetscapes. He was aware of the Main Street Grant Program in which a municipality applies for a small area and business owners volunteer to participate.

Mr. Doyle suggested looking at reports on improvement of streetscapes that in the past the village might have commissioned by consultants.

Chairman Brumleve wondered whether there were funds to create parking in places in the village that were village owned (such as the land near Croton Auto Park).

Mr. Doyle asked what we were trying to achieve when we say destination, other than restaurant. Chairman Brumleve explained that from his point of view, that part of a destination is the character of a place—a place where a person wants to be. Chairman Brumleve noted that there is an untapped cultural depth in the village; for example it would be great to have an arts facility with a blend of uses—retail, food, cultural, unique boutiques. Ms. Jackson offered other appealing things to do in the village, such as Van Cortlandt Manor, hiking trails, Croton Point River, library events. Ms. Fallon added that the the Yacht club offered activities—family day, educational programs, even out of town river travelers who sail up the river and stop at the Yacht Club during their journey.

Chairman Brumleve summed up core destination interests: river and water activities; outdoor activities; heritage and modern culture; and rail traffic. Wherever the destination (upper village, waterfront, or Harmon section, trails), the point is to help them flourish and encourage village pride, character, variety and accessibility that will create vitality. Money and momentum into the hands of business owners could help make this happen. He also cited the importance of a strong digital infrastructure such as WIFI access and cell service.

There was a brief discussion about obtaining grants; the Village Engineer stated that in the past, most of the street improvement grants were CDBG grants. Mr. Lippolis stated that he would contact a staff member in Peekskill who works with Main Street grants.

Chairman Brumleve stated that he will write a summary of this meeting and the observations and key points discussed to present to the planning consultants (BFJ). Chairman Brumleve briefly raised the concept of rail-based development and asked the committee what they thought of this. Mr. Doyle was not in favor of this but noted that there had been a study conducted on this in the past.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 27th.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronnie L. Rose
Secretary to the Comprehensive Planning Committee