

The **Master Plan Committee** Meeting of the Town of Cortlandt was conducted on **June 3, 2015** in the Vincent F. Nyberg Meeting Room of the Cortlandt Town Hall located at 1 Heady Street, Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567 with the following committee members and appointed staff in attendance:

Master Plan Committee:

James Creighton
David Douglas
Michael Fleming
Seth Freach, Town Councilman
Barbara Halecki
Adrian C. Hunte
Michael Huvane
Theresa Knickerbocker
Maria Slippen

Absent:

Dani Glaser

Staff Advisors:

Edward Vergano, P.E., DOTS Director
Chris Kehoe, AICP, Deputy Director of Planning
Rosemary Boyle-Lasher, Assistant to Director of DOTS

AKRF Consultants:

Anthony Russo
Michelle Robbins
Flaam Hardy

Anthony Russo opened the meeting stating this will be the second meeting of chapter reviews. Chapter review meetings will continue into September.

The Agenda was reviewed:

Review Public Outreach Meeting (held May 19, 2015)

Everyone agreed that the meeting went well. Michelle thought we received interesting comments from the public. Some of these comments will be placed into the Master Plan.

Michael Fleming had an interest in the Aging in Place topic, which he had never heard of before. Anthony asked for suggestions or ideas on how to get this into the Master Plan. Michael stated that it goes against a lot of what has been talked about so far but it is thought provoking.

Michelle noted that it comes back to services and how we would provide that and how we would create an economy that would provide that. Rosemary thought it could be an over arching policy. If you live in a remote area of town, how can you age in place and expect to have services (i.e.

transportation). It becomes a financial decision, as well. It is a personal decision about “aging in place” in your existing home vs. possibly relocating even within Cortlandt to a more walkable location. Anthony suggested a policy that would encourage and support these types of services. Chris added that you support aging-in-place by encouraging mixed use developments, encouraging residential development in commercial corridors. Several MPC members agree with this. Michael H. asked if you have an elderly parent with a large house, how aging-in place is accomplished. Michael Fleming responded in the residential section we talked about making accessory apartments easier to do for a family member so that would address Michael H. concern.

Anthony noted that all the big concepts; MOD, TOD and WSD have been well received by the public that attended the meetings. Michael H. was not impressed by the number of people that attended and expressed that he wished it was more. But we did have a very successful response to our survey. Michael brought up the comment from Mr. Vargo expressing the concerns about future crowds that will come to Verplanck were interesting. We put money into the area and put in beautiful sidewalks and to not expect people to come? Seems like is not a realistic expectation. Michael Fleming said for a long time Verplanck has been a small community and now that the town is developing it, because it is a gorgeous piece of property, you have to expect that more people from the town will use it. Rosemary noted that there were many people from Verplanck in attendance at the public meeting and Mr. Vargo’s statement is simply one person’s opinion. However, her feeling is that no one wants it to become the next Beacon, because that is now getting to be a more expensive place to live. The balance between making a place attractive vs. gentrification is an issue which we are deeply aware of.

Rosemary asked if the comments from Karen Wells regarding conservation easements were understood by the committee. It was first thought that she wanted better enforcement. Later, the thought was that if someone had a conservation easement, she wanted to be able to do things with the property. Ed Vergano spoke that she mentioned property that already has a conservation easement and the town should not discourage development. Chris believes it may involve a disagreement between her and the way our Code Enforcement office is enforcing an easement on her property. Barbara H. thought she was saying that even with the easement she wanted it to look like it was the still the same size. Chris thought she has something she wants to do with either a portion of her property or building and Code Enforcement is misinterpreting what the conservation easement allows her to do. Barbara thought she wanted to benefit from having a larger lot size. Michelle explained that this is typically figured out when you write the easement, if you are going to keep back some rights that should be done at the time you set the easement. No policy for this is needed. Michelle thought it was similar to transfer development rights but the thought is that was not where she was going with this. Michael Fleming suggested that conservation easements still be encouraged but still encourage people to be able to fully develop the land within those easements. David Douglas stated that this is contradictory because a conservation easement cannot be developed. Michael F. thought she was saying that if you have a lot and a portion of it, specifically the perimeter, if the land is big enough for 3 lots, but when there is a conservation easement now there are only 2 lots, why can’t it still count 3 as the .. Chris noted that Karen is claiming that someone in the town is subtracting out conservation

easements. It is a mis-communication and not a topic for the Master Plan.

Sign pollution was another topic brought up at the public meeting. Signs are put up but not taken down. The problem with billboards was also talked about. Anthony asked for the current town policy on signs. Seth noted that there is a sign ordinance on the books. It is a matter of enforcement, not legislation. The general rule is 30 days before an event and 7 days after. The town is trying to phase out the use of billboards. There are also weekend directional signs (the Valeria signs), that are put in place only on the weekends.

Rosemary felt one of the most important comments made by members of the public at the meeting was balancing the need for regulation versus over-regulation and incentives and how to attract businesses that we want. This is basically everything that is in our form-based code concept. Ed noted that at the public meeting that question actually led into a nice discussion of TOD, MOD, WSD and ultimately form-based code. So that was really excellent.

Commercial Land Use & Economic Development – Chapter Review

Anthony stated that one of the vehicles to get economic development done was to have a DGEIS (**Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement**), a GEIS would allow the Town to look at the overall proposed development vision, so when a developer comes in the work has been done, which could allow the vision to happen faster. This will be further described in the Economic Development Chapter. Michelle noted there is a separate thing that she is adding to it. A box may be needed to describe this type of process. Chris stated that the way it gets done is you still have a lengthy process within the Town (prior to a developer arriving on the scene) to layout the approvable development. Rosemary noted that once it is done well you will attract what you want. You are setting the table.

Seth asked for the zoning that allows the development along Rte 9A in Crugers. It is HC 9A. It is a zoning district that permits as-of-right residential in that zoning district because the other 2 commercial districts do not permit any residential zoning. It is residential that allows mixed-use. Seth asked if we are looking to expand that type of zoning into other locations, why that zone wouldn't work in other locations. Chris explained that this zone is not dense. CC allows mixed use but the town has never done it before.

Chris stated that if you take the TOD area and it gets "master-developed". Then you go through SEQRA (GEIS mentioned earlier) and all the hearings and then someone wants to build a 20,000sq ft. commercial building, then they don't have to do an environmental impact statement. It would be quicker in theory if they had met the guidelines of what you have already considered. The Committee agreed that this is the overall plan with form-based code.

Seth asked if we currently have an existing zone that we would like to see exist. Chris noted that we are trying to find an area around the train station that would be the TOD area where this would happen. Michelle suggested looking at the current pieces of zoning codes that are working really well for the Town. Chris asked could you in anyway piggy-back so when the Town Board is contemplating creating the TOD, simultaneously plan it out?

Michelle said creating the TOD, you do the GEIS, so the zoning happens as part of the conceptual plan. Rosemary stated that the challenge is going to be deciding what the Town is willing to fund and identify which of our major themes to start with. TOD, WSD or MOD. It will be up to the Town Board to determine where the best bang-for-the-buck is. We will need to be aware that the creation of a regulation Plan: for each of these (TOD, WSD or MOD) all will be an investment from the Town. MPC agreed this is the crux of the entire Master Plan for these visions to be funded in the future. It truly is the implementation phase where the Town will be investing in what we want to attract.

Michelle asked what the policy will look like for the GEIS.

We have identified strategic economic development and re-development areas. (Page 13, policy #1).

Chris suggested #10 *Seek funding to hire Master Developer for the TOD, MOD and WSD* be tweaked. Michael Huvane stated that after the public outreach meeting it was asked if we are affirmatively reaching out to developers, as part of this. Have we gotten the development community's input on this and do we care to? We want to make sure what we are proposing is something a developer may or may not want to approach. Anthony and Michelle explained this would be done as part of the Regulation plans for each of the visions – TOD, MOD, WSD.

Michelle explained that ultimately one of the strategies to consider is to talk to some of the property owners in these areas and ask their experiences and issues in the past as to why haven't they decided to try to make other things happen on these properties. We need to get some feedback from them as part of the future regulating plans. . This will help existing property owners around these areas (MOD, WSD, TOD) understand the vision and not be threatened by it. The outreach part is key as of course most existing property owners are concerned about their economic future. Hopefully they will join the process. Chris noted that the committee has definitely decided not to undertake this effort (creation of regulating plans) as part of the creation of the 2016 Comprehensive Master Plan. That was agreed that it is part of the implementation and needed to be funded separately.

Rosemary explained that a lot of time was spent on Page #6 *Examples of Commercial Projects Approved since Adoption of 2004 Master Plan* list and page #8 *Examples of Cortlandt's Major Employers with over 100 employees*.

Anthony asked a question regarding page #10 - *According to the U.S. Census, 5-year American Community Survey, approximately 16,670 people were employed in the Town of Cortlandt in 2012*. He asked what this figure was in previous Master Plans and what that delta is.

Michelle will try to find the answer.

Michael Huvane asked if the projects approved (page 6 in the Economic Development and Commercial Land Use chapter) were also implemented. Michelle said it could be separated out on this chart. Barbara Halecki asked for the addresses of the projects be noted in the chart. Everyone agreed that was a good idea.

Chris added generally speaking, he wanted to show on this chart, there hasn't been a lot of larger

scale, commercial development in the town in the last 10 or 12 years. Michelle will note this and Chris agreed that it should show what has been constructed since the last Master Plan. The approved projects and constructed projects will all be shown.

Seth asked the difference between the mean travel time to work and the average to commute time. Michelle explained that one is for the Town of Cortlandt as a whole and the other is for Croton and Buchanan. The Villages are taken out.

Anthony asked on page one, if it could be separated - *overcoming the Town's geography (Hudson River and no interstate highways bisecting the Town) and the economic data and market studies that suggest Cortlandt is not a destination for upscale high-end retail stores and services*. Rosemary explained that this is one of our challenges. In the past market studies have shown there is not the demand. Seth suggested the wording be *Cortlandt does not have the geographic characteristics sought after by high end retailers look to locate*. It was agreed that this would be changed. Michelle noted that this is probably untrue, and the retailers are looking at the studies but not realizing that there is a market here. Anthony noted that Cortlandt's median household income is higher than the county average.

The TOD and MOD maps were reviewed.

Michael F. Asked if TOD and WSD would be boxed out in the Master Plan and the answer was that they would be. TOD is in the traffic chapter.

Anthony asked on Page 2 C. *Top Priorities*, outside of MOD, should we encourage an office space type of use in Cortlandt. Michael Fleming asked how high a priority office space was on the survey. Michelle said it was not very high. Seth asked the occupancy rate of the office buildings in Tarrytown. Rosemary noted that these are very large and would not be built in Cortlandt. Michael spoke of prime office space in Peekskill, near the Rite-Aid that isn't fully occupied.

Adrian added that as a service professional she feels strongly there has not been any outreach done to ask what would be wanted, in terms of office space. She has not been asked what would be needed for her business to stay in Cortlandt. Rosemary suggested that a professional office use is needed in several areas of our master plan and code.

Adrian believes there is a need for general office space, not just medical. Seth believes there is a need but not a demand that would sustain an industrial park. Chris asked if a developer would develop a flex office building, not really with tenants but space that could be used for conference rooms. Seth suggested this be pursued in TOD. The flex office building is a business model, where do we draw the line between encouraging types of development spaces versus going out and looking for specific businesses to come in to town and run a business in our borders. Adrian said both can be used. Michael F. said this would be a question for the economic czar.

On page 1 Key Challenges For the Future - *attracting specialty grocery stores like Whole Foods, Adams, Mrs. Greens to provide a wider range of food choices*. It was asked if these specific stores should be mentioned. Michael F. noted these specific stores were requested in the survey.

This may be a good spot to reference the survey. It was agreed to state “as per the survey” these were suggested and should stay.

Michael H. Suggested on page #13 G. #2 *Establish and economic development position*, should be stated as an Economic Development Director (Michelle will explain the duties they would have). It was agreed to change this. Michael stated that with economic development if you really are talking to people that are self employed, working in the community, what do they need, do they work out of their house, do they have mixed use - that should come out if you have the outreach from an Economic Development Director. This will be the primary resource. Economic Development Director will be added to the Top Priorities list.

Seth asked if the Economic Developer was the same as the Master Developer. It is not.

Rosemary explained she felt that the Economic Director is a position within the town government. They would be hired to be the outreach to figure out what we need. It should be made clear that the Economic Development Director and the Master Developer is a person that will achieve your vision in the future.

Chris Kehoe asked to develop the TOD (and MOD, WSD) are we going to be relying on staff and consultants in talking to developers or are we going out to an RFP and hiring someone like a Ginsburg Development and have them design it all. Michelle explained that is a discussion for the Town Board. Michelle will show the MPC the plan from New Rochelle - they hired a Master Developer. Chris would like to learn more on how a municipality would handle this. Michelle added that the municipality would have to have everything in place so the Master Developer could come in and operate. Chris thought that the town would want the Master Developer to do the work and be involved from the start. Ed agreed. Michelle said you have to specify your vision.

Flam Hardy prepared the Economic Incubator box and Seth was asked to review the content (page 12). Michelle would like technology to be tied into this topic. *In the 2nd paragraph Economic incubators are locations that have a particular set of (SHARED) resources that are beneficial and appealing to businesses to set themselves up in a cost-effective and synergistic way.* Michael H. suggested the word shared be added.

Seth asked about the existing commercial routes: Route 6, Route 202/35 and Route 9/9A - because 9A is segmented should it all be treated the same from Putnam to Croton? It was noted that Putnam to Annsville is Route 9. It was suggested to define Route 9 (perhaps state north of Annsville). There is some commercial development in that area. Route 9A is from the Peekskill border to Croton. Rosemary also mentioned Rte 129 in Croton, which has 4 or 5 vacant commercial sights. This is an HC zoning district. Chris asked if there should be a policy to rethink that zoning.

A new concept should be thought about. The body shop sets the character for the area. Michelle suggested developing a conceptual vision for this area. Chris added that presently residential is not permitted there. Perhaps the existing uses can remain but we can encourage other mixed uses, including residential. The MPC agreed that a vision for all these commercial routes is needed.

On page 7, Industrial districts- Seth suggested eliminating that *Cortlandt is discouraging MD* (Industrial Districts) but to direct it to the correct location (Annsville, Verplanck, Furnace Dock Road, Roa Hook, and 9A).

Michelle asked if there should be any changes to the Major Employers Table (page 8). There was a lengthy discussion over this chart. Chris suggested that only the larger, major employers be listed. The chart should just show the large (5-10 employers). If there are less than 50-100 employers, it should not be listed.

It was noted that historically all the town's and municipalities are listed as major employers. Everyone agreed that should be listed. Seth asked for the purpose in the Master Plan of showing the major employers? Rosemary explained that it is a base study that is always shown in the Master Plan. Seth asked if only full-time employees should be listed. Michelle explained this chart gives a snap-shot of where people work and who the employers are. Seth asked if this should be shown in a pie chart. Michael H. asked why Lakeland is not included. Rosemary responded – good catch – it should be. Lakeland crosses over different municipal borders so we will have to distill to just the Cortlandt piece.

Theresa Knickerbocker corrected the statistic that Entergy employs 1,000 people, not 1,500. Seth stated that he can see lots of uses for this chart, i.e. - transportation, development, housing. Maria asked that Metro-North be included.

Michelle suggested showing a map of where the employers are located and will try to include this.

Seth suggested having a heat map of the town, showing where the density of the employment is. Michelle will check with her GIS person; however Rosemary noted that a heat map will not be appropriate for this chart. After discussion, it was decided that dots would be used to show this information.

Michael F. stated that the purpose of the map is to show where the employers are located. It is just a snap shot of the major employers and should remain in.

Cortlandt town Center will be listed as a whole and the individual stores will be listed. Anthony concluded that the chart will be left in, listing the largest to smallest employers, with 100 as a cut-off, and acknowledge other major employers in the area. Michelle added that Cortlandt is a significant, regional economic center because of the major roads that transect it, because there are two Metro-North train stations, a big hospital, and V.A. hospital.

Next meeting is July 8th.

Minutes submitted by Judi Peterson