

2015 Master Plan Committee Meeting

The **Master Plan Committee** Meeting of the Town of Cortlandt was conducted on **November 5, 2014** 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
Seth Freach, Town Councilman
Dani Glaser

Barbara Halecki
Adrian C. Hunte
Michael Huvane

Absent:

David Douglas
Michael Fleming
Theresa Knickerbocker
Maria Slippen

Staff Advisors:

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

Also in Attendance:

Michelle Robbins, AKRF
Anthony Russo, AKRF

Michelle Robbins began by stating after the October 1st meeting she re-drafted the policies for the Recreation chapter (which have been sent to all the members). The comments were reviewed to make sure the changes were reflected in the draft.

Review of MPC's Draft Policies Recreation

Michelle asked Jim Creighton and Michael Huvane if she had captured the changes to #23 correctly - *The Parks, Recreation Advisory Council should develop a policy about the appropriate schedule for resting fields.*

Anthony spoke of the recommendation from Barbara Halecki about encouraging more year round recreational activity because currently everything seems focused on the warmer/summer months. Seth believes something is in place with cross-country skiing at Hollowbrook. Jim stated that the skiing has been negotiated but not implemented. Chris said that to implement this would take Town Board action, the Planning Board has reserved the right for it to happen. Seth would definitely want this to be a policy - recommend to the Town Board that they look for partnership type of areas that could be used for skiing (Seth thought it best not to mention the Hollowbrook

specifically) Rosemary added that perhaps ice skating be encouraged in the towns lakes and ponds.

Michael Huvane spoke about the use of technology to communicate everything more effectively, especially the Recreation programs that are offered. How can we get the word out there? We need to promote the use of technology to communicate rather than solely through the use of the brochure. Seth and Dani both agreed that technology should not only be used for Recreation but for many other things as well. It should be stated in every chapter and be an over-riding theme. Michael suggested inter-active forms. He stated that the Town and technology really have to catch up.

Michael also spoke about Supervisor Puglisi's notice about the Town purchasing the Con Edison property in Verplanck. He believes that the intentions are good about what we would like to do with the property, but given how we respond to the people that show up at meetings and complain, he doesn't have faith that this property will be as beautiful as we all envision. Chris Kehoe stated that the town is talking about master planning for that property. Seth spoke about the property and noted that it is 100 acres but about half of that is the quarry. The other half is bisected by the power lines and easements. These cannot be obstructed. You are therefore constrained on what can be done with the property. There are a lot of ideas put out there so far and the town is getting the feedback. Seth has heard from some people in the neighborhood, "great, it is done but leave it as is" and he has heard general feedback from others that said, "no, we are investing community effort, time resource into this, so we are going to make it a community thing" so he doesn't fear that, the sort of situation that has happened (which Michael referred to), he doesn't fear that yet. He believes the reaction so far has been a more guarded approach, see what the master plan comes up with, see how that fits into this new property and really try and not put the cart before the horse. Rosemary added that the town has not actually acquired the property, as of yet, but was successful with the bid. She noted that once the town acquires the property the zoning is the towns.

Chris Kehoe asked if the committee wanted to make a policy to encourage fields at this site. Michael believes it should be added. Ed Vergano suggested it be added to #3 - *Continue to seek opportunities to locate areas for active and passive recreation throughout the Town*, such as the Con Edison property or at locations with 20+ acres.

Michelle mentioned that in the Master Plan, in the future, a land-use map has to be included and typically, the colors are shaded in areas where certain type uses will go. The land use map will not care about zoning.

Rosemary suggested to leave #3 as is and create another policy that will attract active uses to a either a specific size acreage and more, or at least explore it. It can be stated as; the town should at least explore placing active recreation in any open spaces larger than ____.

This just means these properties should be analyzed.

Michelle suggested we say the town should develop a list of potential properties for active recreation. This gives the town a task to do. Michael Huvane would like to go a little further than that because it is one thing to identify properties but it is another thing to actively evaluate

them.

Michelle will change it to say that the town should actively evaluate these properties, including sites, such as (and then specifically mention these sites). Chris stated that it was helpful to mention the properties specifically for when he applies for grants. It was agreed that it will be stated to form a list of properties and actively evaluate them.

Michelle noted the policy will state: the town should develop a list of properties for potential active use and actively evaluate.

Jim asked about the Tall property on Albany Post Road, Montrose. Should this property be included in this policy? Seth asked that it not be included at this time. It can be re-visited at the end of the process.

Michelle will incorporate #18 - *utilize GIS to investigate all existing Town owned land for future active/passive park use* - and she will add - and form a list.

Chris Kehoe suggested that #9 - *Encourage property owners to replace trees that are removed or destroyed by natural forces or through private development or by private homeowners for reasons other than danger, threat or damage, sickness, etc.* be moved to the environmental protection and preservation section. Michelle explained that this came up with open space and does belong in the environmental chapter.

Michael Huvane asked if it would be too bold to encourage an indoor swim facility. Barbara Halecki had earlier suggested that most of the previous suggested recreational activities were in the warmer months. Rosemary explained that this has been explored by the town in the past at the FDR VA in Montrose. Seth thought the wording should say - have access to an indoor swim facility.

Anthony Russo asked if the Town Recreation Department had an assessment ranking. Jim Creighton responded that there may be a needs assessment on a playground level because these are inspected on an annual basis and there is a plan to rehabilitate or replace playgrounds on a certain schedule. Rosemary thought this could be a suggested policy. Chris mentioned that in the long-range Master Plan for the PRC, it says new facilities desired, upgraded facilities desired, then recommendations for specifics but they are not organized (1,2,3,4). It was agreed that an assessment ranking in the Recreation Department, should be a policy.

Seth asked if we should also classify parks by type (i.e. trails, playground). Chris believes this is somewhat addressed in #1 *provide Cortlandt residents with a wide variety of park and recreational opportunities at convenient locations*. Perhaps the PRC should have a long-range plan that will address this issue. Jim believes that the long-range MP from the PRC does identify the parks (but uses different terminology). It wouldn't be too difficult to do this. It would help identify where parks are needed. Jim related this to the field's issue. There are fields in the town but they are located more in the northern section of the town, which is not always convenient for everyone. Seth suggested we develop a recreation type map (showing passive and active sites,

playgrounds, fields, indoor areas).

Sustainability, Energy Efficiency, Climate Resiliency

Dani Glaser will send her Sustainability, Energy efficiency, climate resiliency report to the MP Google Group.

Michelle asked if everyone was aware that the idea for the sustainability chapter is the umbrella chapter where we can talk about the committee's vision for sustainability and then readers are directed to the different chapters to find the policies. Talking about the overall vision for sustainability is a bit tricky because we have very specific policies, like developing lists and then we have others (such as technology) that fit in all the chapters.

Michelle has started to draft some chapters. In each chapter Michelle starts with a section and the very first thing that starts the chapter is the relationship to the sustainability vision. This is the format. Chris added that certain icons may be used to highlight an important sustainability topic. (Michelle will post the icons on Google groups).

Michael wants to emphasis and encourage the educational component of sustainability. Perhaps if the town is doing something related to solar, we can do tours of solar installations, or composting. Seth added these programs could be held at the Youth Center to encourage the youth of the town to be involved.

Michelle suggested that we highlight actions that the town has already taken, such as with the Climate Action Plan. It would be helpful for Michelle to learn specifically which documents we would want to refer to or reference. Dani Glaser will work on this. She believes this type of framework can help organize the town's accomplishments with sustainability. Specific examples help to clarify these achievements.

Rosemary mentioned that when the Town first spoke to NYSERDA, some of the things they were focused on were the Climate Action Plan, and all the green efforts and they told us that these would be counted. It is very important that we reference what we are currently doing

Chris stated that the Historic Preservation Chapter has been written and maps, text, pictures are included. Rosemary added that the report has to read well on paper and on the computer. The on-line version will be very engaging.

Seth spoke that he would like to concentrate on solar panel adoption, residentially, in the town. Michelle has met with Martin Rogers, the Deputy Director of Code Enforcement. The number of permits handed out is steadily increasing over the past few years (for 2014, over 50 permits have been given).

Dani spoke about the Climate Action Plan which identified energy uses (residential and municipal) as the biggest source of emissions in the town, followed by transportation. These are

big areas of focus. She spoke about the Energize program offered in the town for residents and solar. Both energize and solarize can be tracked. Seth isn't sure of the best way to measure the uses.

Michelle explained that the things that we are already tracking will be the best metrics to use for NYSERDA, since we already have a system in place. NYSERDA is supporting all of these programs (energize, solar, etc.).

Anthony asked what the town is doing regarding solar installation in their own facilities what is their commitment and should there be a policy for that?

Dani explained that the municipal buyers groups are a separate issue. Seth said the Solar Task Force has explored this; however most of the buildings are not in the right orientation to accomplish solar installations. (Ground mounts are not effective for the town buildings). Seth asked to discuss if ground mounts are viewed as accessory structures. Adrian has had this issue arise with the Zoning Board as there are now some code issues and also with the tree ordinance. Many trees need to remove to have solar successfully installed. There will need to be setbacks and ratios. Seth added that this has to be looked into and decided what are these and are these a special structure and how they need to be dealt with.

The policy may need to be worded to examine this issue.

Dani asked that the new Con Ed property be a showcase for the town, whether it be land-use or the buildings be completely green, sustainable, solar, etc. no pesticides. It can help the community be educated on all of these issues to see what is possible.

Michael asked why the town doesn't have hybrid trucks. Dani said this has been analyzed but it comes down to dollars and cents. These type vehicles can be very expensive.

Michael Huvane added that solar does not make economic sense but we are encouraging it.

Michelle suggested that one of the most effective things we can do in the sustainability chapter is to lay out our goals, for what we want to do as far as reduction in energy use. Then we can show how we are accomplishing a reduction in energy use via the policies in the other chapters and then we have to figure out where we can take the credit for the policies we are implementing. It is worthwhile to think about the goals. What goals do we have as a town for reducing energy in general?

Chris asked if the DES is actively doing this. Dani explained that she has met with Jeff Coleman for the Climate Smart Community project and she has information on every single thing that is being done from no idling to replacement policies, so they are very aware of it. She added that certain items can be extremely expensive and that needs to be taken into account.

Seth also added that when you start buying different types of trucks, the town mechanics may not have the correct tools to repair and maintain these vehicles and they need to be sent out for repairs. This also leads to the need for more replacement parts, more training and it does get expensive, at this point. Dani said with Transportation, there is a municipal and community category.

Dani added that when the Climate Action Plan was done, we were in the early stages of the Energize program. Now we can look back and measure the success - 70 homes have now gone through this process.

Jim Creighton mentioned we can note the charging stations at Town Hall and at the train stations. All this will count. Michelle added that you just need to show implementation numbers; we just have to show how what we are planning will ultimately have an effect. Seth believes this is another important part that is tied into communications and Dani agreed that communicating is very important.

Michael spoke about a train shuttle that is used in Somers (Heritage Hills) and those are the types of things that he would love to see. Can you have this type of train shuttle that conveniently will run along main streets at specific times?

Michelle would love to see our vision: Stating this is our vision for Cortlandt and showing how we are hoping to achieve it but also use it as the catchall for things that maybe we are not quite ready to put into a policy but want to discuss as future, long-term ideas. This includes education, which we can fit somewhere but don't have as a header and also other topics that may not be typical in Master Plans. She asked for some feedback on these types of ideas.

Dani would like education to come up in every chapter.

There was a brief discussion of the Love'em and Leave 'em program that encourages leaf mulching. Dani explained that educating the community on this program helps explain why we are promoting the program. In Croton they will give the residents a sign to post on their lawn if they are mulching the leaves, rather than having the Village truck come to vacuum them up.

Seth would also like to encourage the ban on plastic bags. Chris Kehoe noted that the CAC has an interest in this issue also. Michelle said that in the Master Plan we can show of a case study in another town/city. Seth said this is something the Town Board has been looking into and would like to move forward on. It is on Town Board agendas. Plastic bags would need to be purchased. Chris explained that the CAC has talked about this at their recent meetings. The Town Board may want to direct the CAC to be the forces that implement this program. As of yet, the CAC has not relayed there findings to the Town Board. Chris added that the CAC is passionate about this issue.

Michelle asked that when you read through all the chapters think of places for "call out boxes".

Rosemary noted the **Special Meeting on Saturday December 6, 2014 at 9:00 a.m.** where we will review some chapters. No public meeting date has been determined but the MPC will continue to meet on the first Wednesday evening of the month in 2015.

The MP survey is noted on the first page of the Winter Brochure, it is also on the front page of the website and in the Sanitation brochure.

Michelle asked for more visuals to include in the chapters and asked anybody to submit pictures of anything they may note of interest that can be included.

Community Character and Visual Quality

Michelle noted that the last page of the handout shows the 2003 Master Plan Base Studies which created a listing of sections of Cortlandt that were identified as the major scenic resources. Michelle asked for feedback on this list and for any other sections that should be added.

Michael Huvane asked if there was a signage standard? Chris noted that the Town does have a sign ordinance. Jim Creighton added that the lawn signs and advertising signs everywhere are so annoying. Seth mentioned that the political signs are allowed but must be taken down 7 days after an election and can't be put up more than 30 days before an election. There are ordinances but they must be enforced. There isn't always someone to give a ticket to but the signs can be removed. Chris spoke of weekend directional signs that are allowed to be put up after 5 p.m. on Friday and need to be taken down by 9a.m. on Monday. This needs to be enforced.

Michelle asked if there is a policy needed.

Jim Creighton said there is a difference between the advertising/commercial signs and community event type sign. He doesn't like when they are placed near our Cortlandt signs on Route 6/Cortlandt Boulevard. Our sign is tasteful but there are many lawn signs place there. Seth reminded that we would still like to develop a Cortlandt Brand to be used on our signage.

The partially implemented policies were discussed:

Policy 131 Maintain and Support the Cortlandt Architectural Review Committee (ARC) as a volunteer committee - Chris said there were discussions about possibly enlarging the role of the ARC, in the context of Historic Preservation. Michelle said this was discussed on a staff level (to give them more authority) because we talked about setting up a Historic Advisory Council as policy from the Historic chapter and it was suggested that it might also be done via the ARC. Chris said that there were concerns about forming another committee so the thought was to enlarge the duties of the ARC. This needs to be determined if we want them to continue to be a volunteer committee or become a board, to give them more "teeth". Chris would like them to be more formalized and more active. Currently, they do not meet regularly but the Planning Board does depend on them a lot.

Dani asked about the Goal:

#1 Improve maintenance of private property through the adoption of a property maintenance law. - Michelle noted that this is being worked on and is near completion. (Dani spoke specifically about a house on Watch Hill Road that is covered with Tyvek and has never been sided).

Seth mentioned there are several properties around town that are not dangerous but that look terrible, which is a real problem.

Adrian asked who decides which properties look terrible and which do not. This is a big concern. Michelle added that we may not have to include this, if the law comes out before the MP is

completed.

Michelle will try to soften the language of #1.

Jim asked that perhaps a distinction be made between the foreclosed-zombie properties and those where the owner is just not able to maintain there property correctly.

Michael noted policy 132 *Develop an Architectural, Site and Landscape Design Manual* because he would love to have some education on some basic, native landscape information, which is easy to read. Was this manual ever created? Dani does have this type of information.

Rosemary gave some background history on this policy; the idea (10 years ago) was to incorporate into a single document, something which was easier for staff to look at, that would incorporate different aspects of site design. She explained that this is a large undertaking.

Dani said we could use the Cornell Cooperative Extension, so we could create a link to that as a resource.

Michael Huvane then asked about policy 135 - *Encourage improvement to existing pedestrian areas*, which Rosemary explained has been implemented with streetscapes on Route 6 and on Broadway, in Verplanck. Michael would like sidewalks on Rte. 202, which Rosemary explained is a New York State road, and is not easy to do.

Anthony asked if this policy should be taken out. Rosemary stated that to encourage improvement to existing pedestrian areas may not be good language for what Michael wants to accomplish. It was decided that this policy will need to be re-written. We now want to create new pedestrian areas.

Policy 141 - *Protect scenic roads* - will stay and #139 *Preserve scenic shore-land areas through the adoption of a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program* are still in process.

Michelle discussed the lighting: apparently in town when lights are in a publicly accessible space a specific Central Park style light is required to be used (round-a-bout, Broadway, Town Hall courtyard, etc.) Rosemary explained that anytime an application is received, this theme will be carried through. It helps to bring identity to the town. Michael Huvane complimented the hanging baskets on Rte. 6, which hang from the light poles.

Dani asked that there be a policy to make these lights LED's. Adrian asked if they could be solar. Seth believes there should be a policy to make all street lighting LED's.

Dani said this will save money.

Michelle asked if the policy should be requiring all LED lighting in all public lights.

Adrian has an issue with boxing us into one particular type of light, perhaps it should state to use the most current, efficient type light - Michelle will add the use of LED to this policy.

Michelle spoke about the goal #6 *In areas sensitive to light spillover, require exterior luminaries to have fixture-integrated lighting controls that minimize light trespass, backlight and glare*.

She noted that if you have a parking lot up against a wetland, (i.e. on Rte. 6 there is a gas station against a wetland that the CAC has been concerned with) this is a big concern with wildlife (bats, turtles, etc). If you adopt a light ordinance, this could be included.

A light ordinance should include a photometric plan which could include standards. The light ordinance could be where you specify different fixtures for different areas depending on the

locations.

Michael Huvane asked the definition of land banking as noted in #11 *Look for opportunities to do more with less parking through better parking management (land banking, etc.)*.

Michelle explained you can set aside parking on a site plan, where you will show you have room for the parking spaces required although you may not need that many spaces. The space is available, if needed. If the spaces are necessary at a later date, they may be required to construct them (i.e. Pikes Plaza). Chris Kehoe explained that the Town does do this on a case by case basis. The Town does have a new special permit that permits land banking and shared parking.

The Cortlandt Crossing plan was mentioned and Seth would like less parking there because there is so much parking on the other side of Rte. 6 if people could safely cross the street, it would be amazing to have less parking.

Seth would like a policy to interconnect already built development parking to alleviate the need for more parking. Jim Creighton mentioned using a trolley.

Michelle asked which chapter this should be placed. Is it a visual or transportation, land-use or sustainable. Rosemary asked if we would have the same policy show up in different chapters. This will need to be determined. It may need to be cross-referenced.

Michelle would like to add the topic of safety into the community character chapter.

There may be more places where it is necessary and others where it is no issue.

Lighting controls could be required in any light fixtures and will come on if there is a security or safety issue. Chris asked if the shopping centers are light up all through the night.

Rosemary gave the example of the Mobile gas station at Annsville Circle which was done correctly. The station is lit up well but there is not much spill-over. Chris asked about the Hyundai sign, which glows at night at Curry, is this too bright.

Michelle noted that the lighting technology is so good that there is no excuse for spillover.

Rosemary asked about the lighting at the Cortlandt Town Center, if there was anything that could be done to tone down the parking lot lighting. Seth would prefer not to use the Master Plan as a way to deal with one location. Rosemary then asked in general when you have offenders, is there a way to encourage less lighting. Adrian mentioned with stores that are opened 24 hours, there is a safety component to consider.

Chris mentioned that a topic like this has not been brought up with the new Cortlandt Crossing development and this would be the time to introduce this.

Ed mentioned that some towns have lighting standards. Michelle said the developer needs to know all standards up front. Currently there is no policy on commercial lighting.

There are standards but no policy. Seth asked that there be a policy on commercial lighting.

Seth asked how many more type shopping centers will be built in the town. Rosemary said it is hard to determine and explained that before the Cortlandt Town Center, there was the Westchester Mall that was re-done into the Cortlandt Town Center.

Michelle mentioned that sports lighting should be covered in the Recreation chapter also.

Dani again would want all lighting to be LED (street lights, etc.) and encourage commercial lighting to be LED also. Jim suggested using our sustainability focus when dealing with shared services. Lighting issues will come up with the new Con Edison property development and any new ideas for the Cortlandt Waterfront.

The next subject to be discussed will be Land-Use Commercial and the focus will be on waterfront tourism and waterfront light industrial. This has been in the previous plan but some work has been done on this topic.