

2015 Master Plan Committee Meeting

The **Master Plan Committee** Meeting of the Town of Cortlandt was conducted on **January 7, 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:

In attendance

Adrian Hunte
Dani Glaser
Michael Huvane
David Douglas
Michael Fleming
Maria Slippen
Jim Creighton

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

Anthony Russo
Michelle Robbins
Flaam Hardy

Anthony Russo stated that in general during the Saturday meeting, three chapters were discussed - Residential Land-Use and Historic most specifically and Michelle had ask for comments back by January 5th.

He reminded the MPC about the public outreach meeting on 1-15 15. The overall Master Plan and the Verplanck Waterfront Master Plan will be discussed.

Michelle spoke about the **Commercial Waterfront Land-Use Policies:**

#13 Do not allow new non-water dependant uses along the Hudson River but allow existing permitted uses to remain - Chris Kehoe asked if this wording could be changed.

Ed Vergano suggested using the word minimize new non-water dependant uses..

Adrian said to phase out the non water dependant and allow the existing.

#3 New commercial structures along the Hudson River waterfront should be elevated or built on grades above the 100-year floodplain (refer to the New York State Building Code). Michelle explains that Scenic Hudson recommends a 500 year floodplain. Are we going to come up with

a plan that is somewhere between 100 and 500 or are we going to recommend our own standard.

Anthony asked what would NYSERDA prefer (should we stick with the standard 100 year plan?) Michelle thinks that one of the things that some communities do is they actually access the waterfront and tries to figure out the areas that would get inundated under certain types of storms and what is the actual impact from a 100 year storm to a 500 year storm. Based on this certain recommendations would be made. We could recommend this or some sort of study that takes a look at the infrastructure along the waterfront.

Jim asked if this is something that we could require during the SEQRA process. Maybe could require in the process that if rebuilding in the 500 year storm area that there is a heightened level of scrutiny, so Planners know. You bring it to their attention.

Maps will be reviewed at the next meeting of Verplanck and Annsville.

Chris concluded that re: policy #3 any construction in the 100 year floodplain would be required to be elevated. Chris asked what elevated meant, stilts? Ed Vergano gave a brief explanation of what is required by the building code.

Michael Huvane asked how does the hardening of the assets that was talked about after SANDY get incorporated here. Michelle believes that was related only to the disaster recovery. Only places that had a major loss were looked at.

Michelle recommended that at minimum this should be studied. The maps will help will the visual and how it will affect our town.

Michael Huvane asked what form-base codes means in #17 *Adopt form based codes or design guidelines to provide developers with a clear understanding of the community's vision for height, massing, and design of buildings, as well as their relation to the street and public spaces.*

Anthony explained that the definition is in the Residential Land-Use Chapter.

David asked if we decided to adopt form base codes or consider them. Chris suggested saying *consider adopting form base codes in appropriate areas* - to soften it.

Ed Vergano spoke about #4 *Work with federal, state, county, and professional organizations to upgrade, locally adopt, and implement building code provisions for all new commercial construction and major commercial renovations that account for future climate conditions of extreme wind speeds, precipitation, flooding, humidity, and peak temperatures* and that it does not read well. Michelle explained that NYSERD recommends that we consider a revitalization of the waterfront. Rosemary said the wording will be shortened.

Michael asked, regarding #9 *Discourage parking areas immediately adjacent to the Hudson River waterfront* are there any commercial parking lots on the water today? Jim mentioned the Kayak parking lot at Annsville.

Michelle stated that we would want to discourage parking near the water.

Chris added that it be looked at from a form-based prospective that if it is an appropriate designed parking lot with pervious pavements and heavy landscaping and it is associated with a recreational feature, we would want it there.

Michelle noted that it is not stated that it is prohibitive but discouraged.

(From Linda: exceptions would be restaurants, a hotel, etc?)

Adrian asked about #5 Support the redevelopment of brownfields and greyfields along the Hudson River waterfront with water dependent uses such as marina, boat yards, restaurants, gift shops, bed and breakfasts, these uses are not currently allowed in Cortlandt's MD zone.

Rosemary said a definition of a greyfields should be given in a box, being that it is a new term.

Draft Commercial Land-Use Policy

Maps were reviewed - a land use map and 3 aerials that depict the three main traffic corridors in Cortlandt. One of the big questions is do we need more commercial uses in town and more commercial areas and if we do, where would they be located. Are there areas that we should focus on creating higher density and if there is going to be more commercial development should it be targeted in more specific areas or not. Think about if we were to have commercial centers where that would be. Do areas need to be re-zoned or not. Do new policies need to be adopted?

Rosemary explained that in the past zoning came to the town in 1951, there wasn't an elaborate system or a lot of land use; wherever there was commercial property, it was zoned commercial. Our corridors, major highways are where our commercial zoning has mainly existed. This is why most of our commercial properties uses are on these 3 main corridors - Rte 9, Rte 6 and Rte 202.

Chris Kehoe stated that Rte. 6 is the main commercial corridor in the town. Presently there is a 170,000 square foot shopping center (Cortlandt Crossing) proposed across the street from the Cortlandt Town Center, which is presently before the Town Board.

(Maps were reviewed and discussed).

Pond View is an old cottage community, which is now occupied by low-income residents. It was approved for 56 town home units to be built but it was never completed. It is zoned commercial.

Chris spoke that Rte. 6 is zoned and going to develop out as a standard strip retail shopping center. Perhaps this committee wants to think about different zoning techniques.

Anthony noted that Cortlandt Crossing and the car dealership are required by the town to heavily landscape the property.

Michelle asked the question is there enough residential to support the current commercial development that is there? This is something we need to consider before making recommendations for either additional commercial or potentially mixed use residential because if Cortlandt Crossing gets approved you have two major, retail shopping centers and do you have the residential population to support this?

Rosemary thought the answer was yes.

Michael H. added that commercial is beyond just retail malls now. Everyone agreed.

Dani stated that the town is not attracting the types of retailers that the MPC would like. If you have retailer, such as Big Lots, who would want to live near there.

Chris asked is the question really attracting better tenants, not necessarily no tenants but better tenants and that is hard to dictate. Ed added that it is hard to dictate because it is market driven. Michelle asked is the tenant mix that we do not like or is it that we do not have enough land zoned commercially.

Chris stated that Pond View was to have 56 Town Home units apparently the market didn't think so because the development is going away (the developer did not think they could sell the 56 units there) and they want to put more shopping there now.

Do we want to do anything to encourage mixed use or more residents along Rte. 6?

Michael Huvane commented that it is not an attractive area.

Michael added that there are only a few areas that have low wealth opportunities so what are we doing with the people that do not have opportunities that want to be by transportation corridors.

On Rte 6 you can get a bus.

Anthony asked if everyone agreed that Rte 6 is not the right area for mixed-use in the town?

Jim said we talk a lot about the walk-ability and the ability to encourage people not to be in cars so this is one place that this could be achieved. Rte 6 is so spread out that is probably not practical for it to work, unless we get the jitney or trolley actually running.

Dani asked why we need to pick and chose mixed-use. Why can't mixed use just be something we are promoting across the board? If you have mixed use on Rte. 6, perhaps this would attract the tenant mix. Chris noted that currently mixed use is not permitted here. However Pond View was approved because we have a special permit procedure set up. We are talking here about making it "as of right".

Dani asked if any of the developers would contribute to widening Rte 6.

Chris noted that part of the problem is that you would not be able to widen it once you got to the Yorktown border (past Lexington Avenue).

Anthony stated that many options were studied to how to improve the intersection at Lexington and Rte. 6 but it has gone nowhere. (The Sustainable Study with Yorktown, Peekskill, Cortlandt, County).

Route 202 was reviewed.

Chris spoke that Rte. 202 bookends with the hospital on one end and the big vacant commercial piece on the other.

By the hospital most of the property is zoned residential. Hospitals are permitted in residential zones. There are some vacant pieces along Rte 202 and small, under-utilized pieces on the hospital property. There is a possibility for new development, associated with the hospital. The town is interested in some more medical uses or office uses. New York Presbyterian is taking over Hudson Valley Hospital (a merger).

Ed Vergano stated that this area could be used for assisted living facilities or multi-generational housing.

Michelle asked is one of the policies to recommend a concept plan.

A discussion followed regarding a 17.1 acre parcel that is zoned R-40.

Michelle asked is this an area to be considered for the residential section for continuum care, the assisted living area, etc. Everyone agreed that made total sense.

Michelle stated that we need to develop a concept plan at the hospital center that potentially makes zoning recommendations and includes residential living, assisted living, professional offices, etc.

Dani asked if we would go directly to the hospital to say this is what we are zoning this area for and would they have any interest in partnering with us.

Michael H. suggested we encourage professional office space, not just medical.

The DiPaterio property at the intersection of Bear Mountain Parkway and Rte 202 was discussed.

There is an old farmhouse near the Lincoln Titus School.

The zoning is residential. (Maps were reviewed).

Chris mentioned this was discussed in the last MP and the Open Space Committee has discussed it also. It is 8 acres of flat land. The Planning Board did have a proposal for a standard residential subdivision and several commercial proposals but it hasn't gone anywhere

Michael H. spoke that the bowling alley entrance is very unsafe.

Michelle asked if it should be re-zoned commercial.

Property between Baron de Hirsch and Lexington Ave (on the north side) was reviewed.

This is zoned commercial and is our most intensive commercial zone.

Rosemary noted that this site was zoned, years ago, for a big box retailer.

Michael Huvane mentioned that there are no sidewalks or bike lanes on Rte 202.

He believes we should mandate any development here to consider installing the sidewalks.

Michelle asked if that should be a policy.

Michelle stated that if we are going to do a future land-use map in the Master Plan, which we should, showing what we think the future land use in the town should be, we have to color areas and show what the land use should be in the future.

Rosemary asked if we were to create a policy to state commercial development along Rte. 202 should require sidewalks and bike lanes. Does that include any property owners along Rte. 202?

Ed Vergano believes that the intent of the NYS DOT would be to widen Rte 202 from the Yorktown border into Cortlandt.

Ed spoke of two major projects in this area. There is a strip adjacent to Rte. 202 that is reserved for a future connection from the Bear Mountain Parkway to the Taconic (for limited access) because 70% of the trips on Route 202 are ____? They are considering continuing the Yorktown project into Cortlandt (all the way to Bear Mountain) and making a Rte 6-type "suicide" lane. Anthony asked if they are going to widen it all the way, is there a chance for the Town to be proactive with the DOT and this is where they could put a center median and a canopy and make it pedestrian friendly.

Rosemary asked if this was the policy - to encourage the DOT for the future Rte. 202 improvements. Michael H. noted that it is the only commercial corridor that has no pedestrian sidewalks.

David Douglas asked do we want to encourage commercial development before the road is

widened. It seems it needs to be widened first before we encourage the development. Michelle said that was a great segway into the DRAFT commercial land-use policies because one of the first ones was *to provide infrastructure and aesthetic improvements to existing commercial areas*. In other words you have to have infrastructure before you can actually attract the development.

Anthony noted that this is also a transportation policy. So often the project comes in and we try to react to the traffic and we have to determine how to mitigate the impacts.

We do have the traffic mitigation special permit awhile ago, you may want to look at making changes in zoning and land-use to make it fit the transportation system rather than work it the other way around.

Michael Fleming added that we are talking about solving the transportation issue. What that is will guide your decision as what to do with the infrastructure. You do have to decide first as to what we are going to do with this giant piece of property. Do you want to leave it as commercial or have it as mixed use or residential, which would be a different infrastructure development.

Rosemary noted that mixed use would be permitted because we are going to permit mixed use across all commercial. Rosemary asked if this site lends itself to be residential.

The MPC agreed that it could. Chris said that 50 years ago it was actually plotted out as a subdivision. It could all be developed as residential. (The pipeline is located there).

Chris has said to permit as of right mixed use development on all of our commercial zones, but he does not know if that means on every parcel on all of our commercial zones. We could recommend as a general policy but still recommend this be zoned residential.

Jim asked if it is close enough to the Yorktown site that somebody might want to compete in the continuum of care type project.

Chris thinks our zoning permits a Home Depot or Wal-Mart to go there.

Michelle asked everyone to think about what we would like to recommend here and would like everyone to go drive by this site.

Michael Fleming mentioned that once you drive past this lot, there are residential homes (corner of Lexington and Route 202). Rosemary stated that one side of Lexington is Yorktown and the other is Cortlandt.

Michael Huvane suggested a MPC tour of these types of properties.

Rte 9A was discussed.

Chris Kehoe stated there are heavy industrial type uses around the train station.

Montrose has traditional hamlet development until you get near Brookfield recycling center (near Roundtree lane) it starts with the industrial type uses (contractor's yards, asphalt plant).

Rosemary explained that across from the FDR VA hospital is the new entrance to the Cortlandt train station. Chris believes that these heavy industrial sites will not want to go anywhere.

Anthony spoke that the train station gets the two policies in the traffic:

1. The creation of a transit oriented district (TOD)
2. Possibly a new interchange connection, if there is a TOD there with a large mixed use community, to Rte 9.

Rosemary asked for more specifics as to where the TOD would possibly be applied.

Chris said from Brookfield to the train station entrance at Memorial Drive.

Jim explained that if someone could see this as a use, as of right, they could propose something that is higher intensity. Anthony noted that this could be another form-based code concept at the train station.

Rosemary believes there is more of an opportunity at 9A and Memorial Drive (near Doskow's). Behind the Doskow's building there are some vacancies. It could start there.

Michelle stated that in planning terminology this would be called under utilized property. Now the train station provides you with access to a region but there are no residential uses around it.

Chris spoke that this area near the train station is where the focus should be regarding the TOD. This will be a stand alone concept in the Master Plan. Anthony thought it could be under transportation but ripples through other chapters.

Jim C asked if there was a standard to how close to the train station it should be. Anthony said there are certain TOD standards (approx. 1/4 mile).

Michelle noted the Roundtop development that houses 92 families within walking distance to the train. David asked if we had a sense of how many residents in Roundtop do use the train. Chris believes the developer could provide us with that information.

Chris believes this proposal could be a hard sell because 9A does get very busy with traffic.

Anthony added that for this location you needed mixed use, commercial retail but if it is too big and it's a destination, you lose some of the TOD impact and you start attracting more cars on Rte. 9A. You want them to be complimentary commercial uses for people in the area not a destination.

Chris asked if you put in the requirements for the TOD to mandate that they be small commercial uses. Anthony agreed.

Rosemary stated that this is a visionary plan that may start in one or two places. You have to set the table for the long term.

Chris spoke about the Gateway to the Village of Croton. There is gateway zoning on Rte.9A, near the A & P.

Watergate Motel is an eyesore in this area

Dani asked if this discussion included improving the commercial strip centers. She spoke about the small shopping area near the Rte 9 entrance that is run down.

Michelle said there should be design standards. The MPC agreed.

Traffic Land-use Policies were reviewed.

#44 - #52 are policies that were in the 2004 commercial land use section of the Master Plan.

Should these be carried over to this Master Plan? The MPC agreed that they should.

- Provide infrastructure and aesthetic improvements
- Attracting business uses as needed
- Encourage the reuse of development vacant commercial buildings.

· Revise dimensional regulations for commercial uses (floor area ratio) - this policy should

be removed.

Encourage mix of residential and non-residential uses along Rte 9A from Montrose south to the Croton line.

Dani asked how you really move these policies forward.

Chris answered that you can give an Architectural Review Board actual approval authority. Currently the ARC is only advisory.

It can be a policy to give the ARC "more teeth" for commercial development for more strict design standards.

Dani suggested taking pictures of commercial properties around town.

#50 Improve existing Community Commercial areas along Oregon Road by implementing design standards to enhance visual appearance can be changed to improving commercial areas.

#51 Create commercial design standards and guidelines for the Rte 6 and Rte 202/35 commercial areas to unify the appearance of commercial uses along these corridors and #52 Identify areas along Rte. 202/35 to serve several specific economic development objectives such as Community Commercial, general commercial, medical offices and other medical-related uses can be combined.

#1 Identify strategic economic development and re-development areas.

#2 Establish an Economic Development Director position.

Chris suggested that these be more particular.

Rosemary reminded the MPC that Supervisor Puglisi had an idea in the beginning of the MP that referenced a document from New Rochelle, which was a marketing package put together by a group of Realtors. Michelle believes it was for a Master Development for the city of New Rochelle. Rosemary believes this is something an Economic Development Director could assist with. (From Linda Puglisi – I agree).

Michael Huvane mentioned that he was the VP of Marketing and Economic Development and has worked with communities all through the state. The economic development aspects are nice buzz words but there job; you really want someone that is a beautification specialist..because economic development is really how to develop properties, build properties and increase your tax base. If you are not coordinating with the county and if you are competing with Peekskill, you have got to get somebody that really knows what that means versus, it seems too buzz wordy more than actions. It is tough to get the attention of folks. You have to do marketing studies. They are only going to go where they are going to get a cluster of people coming in. New Rochelle has volume, which is different than us.

Chris stated that we have to create our own model

Michael Huvane suggested that you have to coordinate with people that do this already.

Economic development for the Hudson Valley already has a strategic plan. That is at the state level. Michael H. doesn't believe Cortlandt participated in this. (Cortlandt has participated

periodically throughout the years and with the Patterns for Progress – from Linda Puglisi).

Dani suggested seeking funding to hire a Master Developer for the town. Michael H. agreed that is how you need to go because you can't just do it in isolations.

Dani mentioned that Cortlandt was at the table for the Mid-Hudson Regional Sustainabilities.

Michelle noted that Cortlandt's Master Plan got funded because they see it as a strategic location. They wouldn't have funded it unless they saw the right things happening here.

Michelle explained that one of the biggest things with sustainability is having a sense of place. You can't have a sense of place without an aesthetic piece, which is the historic piece.

This is done in many different ways. This is critical.

There may be a perception that high end won't work here because of the aesthetics and/or traffic.

Dani noted that not attracting a bigger type commercial retailer and having the smaller, local businesses is fine.

Michael H. commented that if you don't know what you have, you don't know what you are going to attract. As part of an economic development coordinator you have to meet with all of your businesses. You have to meet with every employer in your community.

Dani added that she has an interest in reaching out to all the businesses because we have the Energy Improvement Corporation so between the EIC (this makes it attractive for businesses to do energy efficiency work in their businesses) and the Solarize Commercial (low cost to put solar on) those are 2 reasons to bring them in. Michael H. disagrees because businesses have to reduce there costs. Dani believes that these do help reduce the cost. Michael continued that renewable has to come from within. Very few businesses do it unless the chairman is committed to the environment. Dani added that if you look at solarize, the program is going to be 50% less which will be extremely affordable and attractive.

Michael agreed that it should be part of the portfolio and is important.

The policy would be to meet with all local employers in the town.

Michelle suggested that #7 *Support the recruitment and expansion of "green" businesses* be changed to say support the recruitment of businesses interested in EIC, energy efficiency and solarize so it can be a direct policy related to them in addition to what Michael is saying.

Any business can be a green business.

Michelle asked for #7 to be re-worded (Dani will assist).

Dani added that with solarize any type of financing is still on table.

January 20th and January 24th is the launch event for Solarize Cortlandt/Croton at the Hendrick Hudson Free Library.

January 15th is the public outreach.

February 4th is the next Master Plan meeting.

Minutes submitted by Judi Peterson

