

The **Master Plan Committee** Meeting of the Town of Cortlandt was conducted on **August 5, 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
Dani Glaser
Barbara Halecki
Adrian C. Hunte
Theresa Knickerbocker

Absent:

Seth Freach
Michael Huvane
Maria Slippen

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:

Michelle Robbins
Anthony Russo
Flaam Hardy

Anthony reminded everyone that the September 9th meeting will begin at 6 pm for the purpose of taping a final interview with members of the MPC and the Town Supervisor (from 6 - 7 pm) discussing everybody's experiences while serving on the 2016 Master Plan Committee. Rosemary noted that the committee was appointed in July 2013 so we have been in existence for just over 2 years.

Envision Cortlandt will be the title of the Master Plan. Everyone agreed on the title, which will also include the wording - The 2016 Comprehensive Master Plan.

The Agenda was reviewed:

The Vision Statement

David Douglas had raised an issue about government getting involved with "healthy lifestyle choices". Flaam explained that Healthy Lifestyle choices is the first one of 4 bullet points, the others are economic development, socio-economic diversity and a range of housing choices.

Chris agrees that it should be included but maybe should not be the first listed. Rosemary added that the premise behind it was to come up with very generic words to convey something that is all encompassing. Chris said it should touch on pedestrian connections, walk-ability, open-space, farmers markets, which are all part of Healthy Lifestyle choices. It was agreed to move it to the 4th bullet point, but keep the wording.

Review of Chapters:

Chapter 4: Infrastructure

Michelle and Ed Vergano met and reviewed this chapter; a lot was taken from the previous base studies for the 2004 Master Plan. Currently a map is being created to show all sewer districts, water districts and drainage districts. Michelle had spoken with Code Enforcement and currently they have 75 permits for solar energy, which includes Croton. Dani asked that we make sure to get the most updated numbers of permits issued into the final Master Plan. The solarize program is mentioned in the Sustainability chapter (although the program is now done). On page 7, Chapter 4, Dani mentioned from an infrastructure point of view, the fact that the Town is encouraging residents and businesses to use solar energy should be mentioned. Dani stated that there is a law that allows for an expedited solar permitting process. Ed Vergano confirmed this. David added that not everyone is installing solar only because of the incentive programs, so the word “partly” should be added to the sentence - *Partly due to the NYS incentive programs the use of solar has grown considerably since the 2004 Master Plan.*

Rosemary asked where the topic of Roads is located in the Master Plan, as they are not mentioned in Infrastructure. Michelle stated they are in the Traffic Chapter. In the Infrastructure Chapter roads are not mentioned but drainage is. Michelle noted that on page 2, under Existing Conditions, it is mentioned that DES includes 5 divisions and that roadway maintenance is also discussed in Chapter 5. Rosemary agreed that was fine and that would help with any confusion. Chris mentioned that photos will be included when the document goes to In Design.

One of the biggest points that Michelle wanted to make in this chapter was that growth and development can be limited or induced by sewer and water infrastructure. MOD, TOD and WSD are dependent on whether or not we can get sewer and water infrastructure into these areas. Ed Vergano agreed with Michelle’s statement of the importance of infrastructure to achieve the vision of MOD, TOD, and WSD.

Dani asked if MOD, TOD and WSD will be spelled out in the finished document. People do not know what they stand for. Flaam explained that there will be a glossary for definitions but perhaps it could be mentioned in each chapter. Michelle suggested their might be a way to have those terms live in the document where you can click on and get the definition. Flaam thought it could jump right to the glossary.

Anthony stated that the e-mail that Barbara Halecki had sent to the group (#14) was good. The policy in evaluating taxes assessed in sewer and drainage districts should be specified. Is it sufficient to cover costs? Is it enough to collect to cover future expansion? Michelle said that when you are determining how much each person is paying to special district like a sewer

district, does it cover expansion or just maintenance costs? Ed Vergano replied it does not cover future costs. Michelle asked if this should be a policy. Rosemary said she would guess that if we apply it now the question would be how come this development has it and everyone around it doesn't. It gets complicated. Chris noted that we already have the policy (#10) *Evaluate the tax currently assessed in each sewer district*, so the question is to not so much to change the policy but get an explanation (or why you are evaluating it) and what do we want to learn about the taxes that each sewer district currently pays. Chris asked if we have determined in the past that there is not enough money for maintenance in these districts. Rosemary explained that process requires senior staff makes a recommendation to the legislative body which is the Town Board as part of the budgetary process each year. The Supervisor and Town Board then set the rates each year. Chris asked if you can go back to the taxpayers and get more money from them in the district. Ed answered that theoretically you can; however, we have many districts that exist with no funding. Chris asked if we have sewer districts that are not funded. Ed responded, yes. Ed explained that what can be done is you can back-charge the district for maintenance work that is needed to be done. This policy needs to be clarified more. For policy #10 *Evaluate the tax currently assessed in each sewer district - for the purpose of covering the ongoing maintenance and plan for future improvements*, should be added.

Adrian asked to review page 7:

Disasters can cause loss of life, damage buildings and infrastructure, and have devastating consequences for a community's economic, social, and environmental well-being. Hazard mitigation reduces disaster damages (should be damage), and is defined as sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from hazards. Adrian noted that you are using the same terms to define what you are trying to define. Local mitigation actions and concepts can and should be incorporated into land use plans and building codes. Adrian asked what local mitigation actions are. Michelle explained those are little things that local municipalities can do to reduce flood risk. Chris suggested "such as" be added. Michelle agreed that an example should be given. Ed suggested using constructing sea walls as an example. Adrian stated that the whole paragraph is very wordy. Michelle will review and rewrite if necessary.

The bullet point Disease Outbreak will be moved to page 6.

Adrian reviewed Telecommunications:

A number of service providers supply telecommunication services (Adrian stated this is a bit wordy) She suggested it be changed to A number of providers (or vendors) supply telecommunication systems to the Town of Cortlandt. These include telephone, internet, and wireless equipment. Michael Fleming suggested this entire paragraph should be tightened up. The first two sentences can be combined into one.

Chris and Rosemary discussed tweaking the references under the Sewer on page 8, as to not specify the Planning Board developments and to list the street names instead. These are all separate projects that show what has been accomplished since the last Master Plan.

The Sidebar Facts were discussed. It should be written in such a way that is engaging to the residents and it can be understood.

Chris noted that the Key Challenges section is located in the same place in every chapter, right before the Policies.

Chris spoke about policy #14 *Identify areas outside of the Village of Buchanan (such as Verplanck and Montrose including the area around the Cortlandt Train Station) which could be served by the Buchanan Sewage Treatment Plant.* He noted it should be of great interest to Mayor Knickerbocker of Buchanan because she had mentioned in our previous Master Plan Committee meetings that there may be capacity at Buchanan's treatment plant. Mayor Knickerbocker stated that there would be some discussion of that shortly. She agreed that the policy will remain in the Master Plan. Everyone agreed this is an exciting discussion from an infrastructure perspective.

Chapter 8: Municipal Services (changed to Community Services) and Recreation Chapter

Michelle noted that Recreation originally was in the Open-Space Chapter but it was determined that Open Space should be with Natural Resources and Community Services and Recreation should go together.

Adrian suggested in Chapter 8, Relationship to vision, 2nd sentence the word responsive be removed because it is used twice in the same sentence. Adrian spoke about the quote from the Town Supervisor, stating "Sharing services are critical in order to save taxpayers money and to plan efficiently for our future" and suggested the grammar be corrected to Sharing services is critical.

Theresa will explore what Intermunicipal Agreements the Village of Buchanan has with Cortlandt regarding shared services. Rosemary believes that we jointly purchase road salt as one example and Theresa agreed.

Michelle noted that the Fire Protection Services and Ambulance Services section needs updating. Ed spoke about the 2nd sentence under Fire Protection Services, *Fire districts contain at least one fully equipped fire station whereas fire protection services supplied by fire stations in an adjoining fire district pursuant to agreements with the Town* and that it does not make sense. Michelle will fix this sentence. Rosemary suggested she coordinate with Holly Haight and get back to AKRF with updates to this section prior to our next meeting.

Michael Fleming suggested that on page 7 under Municipal Buildings and Facilities, Municipal functions are distributed throughout the Town but the majority of the Town's administrative functions are located within Town Hall, the word *but* be removed.

Chris will get better numbers for the Group Home information listed on page 6. He will double check the information. Rosemary believes the Care for elderly information needs updating also.

Michelle asked what should be said about the Central Maintenance Garage (highlighted on page 7).

Rosemary noted that the Hudson Valley Hospital Center is no longer a trauma center with a helipad. It will be removed.

Michelle stated that Dani had asked about the Sustainability long-range plans for the school district and Michelle had noticed that a few of the schools had listed Sustainability Education and Green Issues. Dani stated she is glad they are doing things but they are not doing things as a part of the Town of Cortlandt, which she believes is very important. Maybe we can change this. It would be nice in the Master Plan to really plan for collaboration between the school districts on sustainability. The schools are the only sector missing from working together on sustainability. Jim added that it should be encouraged. From a recreation standpoint it took a lot of years to establish open communication or partnership.

Chris Kehoe noted that on top of page 8, regarding the school districts, we do not need to include the other school districts served by Lakeland School District (Somers, Carmel, etc.) Chris Kehoe noted that school enrollments have gone down in the past six years.

On page 7 under the MOD topic in paragraph 2, the establishment of a MOD in Cortlandt will help the Town be more proactive in responding to impending healthcare reform and an aging demographic. Adrian suggested eliminating the word *impending* in the last sentence.

Jim asked if there is something the town would want to do in terms of recommending certain medical uses not be located in certain parts of the town that aren't within the MOD. Would we want to direct certain facilities to the MOD if they are not appropriate to be located in other parts of the town? (He referred to a proposal currently before the Planning Board). The Committee agreed that this was one of the major ideas behind the MOD.

Dani asked about the joint use of facilities (with the schools) and are we doing a little or a lot on the Recreation level? Rosemary said we do a lot and that it took years of effort. An enormous amount of programs are run in the schools, not just in the gyms or on the fields. The call out box should list what specifics with respect to that.

Jim spoke about the Youth Center in our town and the idea of bussing students directly from the schools to the Youth Center. We built the Youth Center to help with after school and all kinds of great things that schools say they need and say they want and they don't have the money for. It is all there at the Youth Center and the districts just have to pull the trigger about getting them there on a single bus. Hen Hud is much more interested because it is directly in their district. Lakeland is less interested or expresses concern because they would have to bus their children out of the district. There are opportunities for the town to further engage those school districts to use the facilities that are available to their children.

Dani asked if Policy 23 (on page 16) *Continue to collaborate with school districts, public and*

*private entities to create joint-use partnerships at existing and new public school campuses - the words **expand** collaboration, should be used.*

Michelle asked how the PRC Advisory Committee fits within the structure of the Recreation Department. Rosemary suggested explaining the make-up of the committee (students from each school district are on the committee). It is not a decision making board. They recommend and they do create a long range Recreation Plan. They are the advocacy group for the development of Recreation and Parks projects. Every Planning Board application gets referred to them. They review all sub division applications because they have to comment whether they want recreation land on-site or money in lieu of recreation. Jim added that there is a piece of the state law that requires that the PRC exists. Jim and Michael will review this section (on page 10 and 13, with Nor-West). Michelle noted that Nor-West in another shared service because Nor West is a social service agency that is supported by several municipalities; we are not the only town to pay the salaries.

Chris suggested that on page 11, Existing Conditions, *the Town of Cortlandt prides itself on providing residents with an array of parks and recreation facilities* - the word **array** (of parks) be removed and Dani and Michelle agreed it should be removed. The number of sites (39) should be changed to state about 40.

Michelle stated that Michael Huvane had provided her with the list (on page 10) regarding the Parks, Recreation, & Conservation Advisory Board (PRC). There may be larger policy things that should be included, specifically key recommendations from the long-range plans.

There was a discussion about turf fields. Policy 39: #6 *Explore opportunities to construct artificial fields in all areas of Town and seek cooperative partnership agreements with school districts; youth sports programs and other stakeholders.* Jim suggested using the term environmentally safe turf fields should be used. Let whoever is making these decisions, decide what is environmentally safe to use. We don't just want artificial fields; they need to be safe also.

Ed Vergano spoke about Policy 1 under Community Services (page 14) - *Continue to provide incentives for volunteers to our Fire Department and Emergency medical Services such as property tax reductions for volunteer service.* Ed suggested to add and locally administered affordable housing opportunities. We can do this for a county opportunity, not federal. Rosemary noted that in the past we have given priority to volunteers and veterans for affordable housing opportunities. However that was prior to the Federal lawsuit with Westchester County. Chris stated that it can continue to work if we provide the affordable units outside of the County mandate. Jim noted that regardless of the Westchester County mandate the Town of Cortlandt would like to see affordable units. Michelle suggested it be stated to support affordable housing opportunities for Veterans. The same should be used for Policy 1. Jim noted that regardless of the Westchester County mandate the Town of Cortlandt would like to see affordable units. Michelle suggested it be stated to support affordable housing opportunities for Veterans. The same should be used for Policy 1.

Dani asked about Policy #10: *Strengthen enforcement of building and zoning codes, environmental and other regulatory compliance. Make the development process more efficient, informative and less time consuming* - what do we mean by strengthen enforcement. Anthony asked do you need more personnel to strengthen the enforcement. Michael Fleming thought we would like to see the enforcement improved. Adrian suggested the wording to provide the means to strengthen the enforcement - be added. David suggested removing the wording *other regulatory compliance*. The policy would read *Provide the means to strengthen enforcement of building, environmental and zoning codes. Make the development process more efficient, informative and less time consuming*. Michael Fleming asked if these were both part of the same policy. It was decided to remove - *make the development process more efficient, informative and less time consuming*.

Dani asked about Policy # 20: *Seek approval from New York State to allow Cortlandt to develop more energy efficient building standards for commercial and residential construction that help reduce per capita energy use*. Michelle explained that we need to seek approval when we go outside of the existing regulation. Ed added that there are minimum standards and if you want higher standards you need approval from the state. Dani asked if we are enforcing the strictest standards currently. Ed explained yes we are but we want to go above and beyond the existing standards. Greenburg is a community that currently does this but it requires an act of the State. Michelle explained that for example some towns on the Hudson River will say you need to bring all of the mechanical boxes to the 2nd floor; you can't put them on the ground level. This is currently not a NY State standard but you can ask for this. It was agreed that this policy be kept in the Master Plan.

Dani will send Michelle language of the Micro-grids to expand this section further.

Chapter 1 - Sustainability Chapter- This will be the umbrella chapter in the Master Plan.

Rosemary stated that the purpose of "Sustainability" being the 1st chapter is to convey that sustainability will weave through every chapter of the Master Plan. Michelle agreed that the whole idea is to create a more sustainable town.

David asked if sustainability is the central policy goal of our plan or is it one of several goals. Dani said it is the sustainable Master Plan and is more a theme than the goal. This chapter is thin because Sustainability is mention in all the chapters. There was a lengthy discussion of the diagram on the 1st page.

Under Cortlandt's Vision for Sustainability - The wording should be revised and be moved. Anthony mentioned that sustainability is the common thread. Rosemary suggested the Vision Statement should be on its own page. The Committee agreed. AKRF will work up a visually appealing page for the Vision Statement for our September meeting.

Chris asked do we define sustainability as we do on the first page, and then go into Cortlandt's

vision for sustainability. It was decided to have Cortlandt's Vision for Sustainability first, followed by the definition of sustainability. Dani will assist with the definition.

Dani noted that Supervisor Puglisi has an excellent quote on sustainability on the Town's website. *Sustainability is our promise to our children and grandchildren that they will inherit a tomorrow that is at least as good as today and hopefully better. To keep this promise will call for the participation of every one of us. Our town has a long standing record of environmental stewardship exemplified by our leadership in protecting open space, natural resources and smart growth practices. The Town Board and I are fully committed to this effort as we look forward to your participation on becoming a sustainable community.* It was suggested to take out the last sentence. Dani likes using this quote. Other members also agreed this would be a nice quote to include in the Sustainability chapter of the Master Plan. Dani offered to review the three objectives.

The icons were reviewed. Flaam noted that when it is asked what is sustainability for Cortlandt the 8 icons will be listed. Rosemary complimented Flaam on all the icons.

Rosemary reminded everyone that one of the tenants of the grant itself was sustainable with economic development.

Dani spoke that she is nervous about introducing MOD, TOD and WSD in the Sustainability chapter. Michael Fleming believes that it should be introduced in that chapter. It is the first chapter and if you take out the major themes you don't have an exciting Master Plan. Rosemary reminded everyone that one of the tenants of the grant was sustainability with economic development. Chris agreed and noted that is a component of the NYSERDA grant.

Michael Fleming asked that Cortlandt Boulevard not be referred to as the downtown area. It is not the center of our town. Committee members agreed and Michelle suggested changing this to the Cortlandt Boulevard Area.

Minutes submitted by Judi Peterson