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TOWN OF COLONIE

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The original Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Town Board in 2005. Section 7 outlines time-related actions to achieve implementation. While such timelines were designated, Section 7 also realizes "... that an incremental approach is likely to be more efficient and realistic..." regarding Plan implementation.

Section 7.5.1 of the Comprehensive Plan recommends "... that the Town of Colonie review and update, if necessary, the comprehensive plan within the next 5 to 10 years. An assessment of the progress achieved on the implementation actions would also be beneficial."

In 2010 Supervisor Paula Mahan formed a Comprehensive Plan Review Committee to assess the status of the Plan's implementation and to report such to the Town Board.

The Comprehensive Plan Review Committee consists of the following members: Town of Colonie Director of Senior Resources Christine Cary, Town of Colonie Commissioner of Public Works John Cunningham, residents John Fahey, Kathy Ordway, Ralph Schimmel, and Gary Rinaldi, resident and business owner Chris Bette, Town Board members Daniel Hornick and Linda Murphy, Rebekah Kennedy from the Town Attorney's Office, Town of Colonie Director of Planning and Economic Development Joe LaCivita, Town of Colonie Director of Community Services Alicia Osur, Town of Colonie Building Department Director Mike Rosch, and ad hoc members C.J. O'Rourke, Planning Board Chairman and Jean Donovan Assistant to the Supervisor.

The meeting dates for the Committee were June 30, 2010, July 21, 2010, August 11, 2010, September 15, 2010, October 27, 2010, November 10, 2010 and November 17, 2010. Meetings were held in the main conference room of the Town's Public Operations Building.

Meetings to present the Committee's findings were held on Monday December 13, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at Colonie Town Hall and Tuesday, December 14, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. at the Crossings.

A public hearing was held on December 20, 2010 at the Public Operations Center to receive public comments regarding the proposed changes.

The Comprehensive Plan Review Committee has reviewed Section 7 of the Plan, and based on current economic conditions and the realization that an incremental approach is beneficial when implementing the Plan the Committee offers the following analysis and suggestions:

- 1) In 2007 the Town of Colonie adopted a new Land Use Law which updated zoning and subdivision regulations to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

While this was an immediate action recommended by the Plan the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee recommends, as with the review that has taken place in 2010, further review and updates of both the Plan and the Land Use Law be an on-going action by this Committee or another appointed by the Town.

- 2) The Committee agrees that a regular system for monitoring the implementation of the plan continue and be on-going action by this Committee or another appointed by the Town.
- 3) The Committee believes that the consideration of the acceptance of the Mohawk River Waterfront Revitalization Study and the Route 7-Route 2 Corridor Land Use Transportation Linkage Study be deemed a mid-term action, as parts of these studies have either been implemented or are on-going.

The Route 7-2 Corridor Study provided land use recommendations which were adopted in the Town's current Land Use Law. The Committee recommends a review of the study to determine if the coverage area should be expanded.

The Committee is awaiting further input from the Planning and Economic Development Department's Senior Planner on the status of the Mohawk River Waterfront revitalization.

- 4) The restructuring of the Planning and Economic Development Department continues, resulting in the Committee recommendation that this process be deemed an immediate action.
- 5) The Town of Colonie has enhanced gateways to the Town as recommended in the Comprehensive Plan. In 2008 the Route 5 gateway was constructed between Colonie Center and Northway Mall. In 2010 the Troy-Schenectady Road gateway, west of the I-87 Exist 6 interchange was completed. Based on the current economic conditions and the cost of gateway improvements and maintenance the Committee believes that this action be deemed a mid-term action while the Town continues to work with developers, New York State, and other parties to achieve the gateways.
- 6) The Town of Colonie is currently preparing a first ever Town-wide economic development strategy as recommended in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. The Planning and Economic Development Director has stated that this strategy is in draft form thereby placing this goal as an immediate action.

In conjunction with this action the Town of Colonie is participating in a CDTC Linkage Study known as the Railroad Avenue Transportation and Revitalization Plan, as well as the current Route 5 Corridor Study.

The Town's IDA is working with the Planning and Economic Development Department to identify development and re-development incentives.

- 7) The Town of Colonie IDA is actively working on with the Town's Planning and Economic Development Department regarding redevelopment initiatives for the Lincoln Avenue Industrial Revitalization Area. The IDA is promoting a Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program application for this area and has completed a Phase I and Phase II Environmental Study to determine the feasibility of future redevelopment of the Adirondack Steel site. In addition the IDA, in partnership with the Village of Menands and the City of Watervliet has been awarded a Linkage Study grant through CDTC to study the Route 32 corridor between Menand Road and the Watervliet Arsenal.

Based on the progress of this action and the fact that the Town is currently conducting a Route 5 Corridor Study the Committee is requesting that the Route 5 corridor also be addressed and that these should remain a short-term action.

- 8) Based on current economic conditions and the continuing analysis of draft reports such as the 2008 Pathways Plan, the on-going analysis of providing alternative transportation routes such as bicycle routes, the review of traffic calming measures, and the recommendation that a Town-wide sidewalk plan be adopted, the Committee recommends that these on-going reviews and studies be deemed mid-term actions.
- 9) The Town has reduced the widths of streets in residential subdivisions from 36 to 32 feet. This reduction of street widths was recommended in the Comprehensive Plan therefore no further action is needed.
- 10) It is recommended that the establishment of an Official Town of Colonie Map be designated a mid-term action.
- 11) The development of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan has been initiated and the Committee recommends that this action, as well as the identification of areas for open space conservation be deemed on-going actions.
- 12) The Town of Colonie Land Use Law allows the Town's Planning Board the authority of design element review in an effort to make certain that design elements, such as architecture, are in harmony with the surrounding neighborhoods. In conjunction with this authority given to the Planning Board the Town is currently reviewing the formation of an Architectural Review Advisory Committee or a similar committee to refine and expand on existing design guidelines. These initiatives, as well as the development of neighborhood planning initiatives should be moved to short-term actions.
- 13) The Comprehensive Plan has recommended the compilation and organization of historic and cultural resource information so that a comprehensive Town-wide inventory can be established. The Town Historian's Office with the assistance of the MIS Department has located (GIS) all accessible family cemeteries and has referenced these coordinates into an ARC View map layer.

The Committee recommends the compilation and organization of the Towns historic and cultural resource information and that this be designated an immediate action. It is further recommended that Town Historian's Office continue to work in conjunction with the MIS Department.

- 14) The Town is currently updating its traffic portion of the Boght Area GEIS and the Committee recommends that such GEIS updates be on-going or immediate actions. The determination for such reviews should be made by the Planning and Economic development Department and the Department of Public Works and should be accomplished in partnership with other agencies.
- 15) While New York State Law requires training for Planning and Zoning Boards throughout the State, the Committee recommends training sessions, as-needed and as economic conditions allow, for related Town staff.
- 16) Through its Residential Rehabilitation and First Time Homebuyer programs the Town currently provides assistance to homeowners in purchasing and maintaining their homes. These programs are funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and therefore, participation is limited to low- to moderate-income residents. Additionally, a variety of programs exist to assist low- to moderate-income residents maintain their homes i.e., Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), Emergency Heap Program, weatherization programs, Albany County Rural Housing Residential Rehabilitation Program. Reverse mortgage options, community based in-home services, and Umbrella of Colonie are limited to senior citizens and/or disabled residents.

The Committee believes that efforts should be made to enhance the existing residential programs within the Town with an emphasis on stabilizing the older residential neighborhoods in the Town.

Given the uncertainty of future federal funding, the Town may no longer be able to rely exclusively on these subsidies to support its housing programs. To preserve the existing housing stock, the Town should investigate new revenue sources by encouraging collaboration among the non-profit community, the private sector, and local governments and the Committee believes these should be on-going actions.

- 17) Training recommendations for Planning and Zoning Boards no longer need to be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan as such sessions are mandated by New York State Law. The Committee therefore recommends this action be considered complete.
- 18) All Phase II Stormwater Management Regulations were adopted by 2008 and the Town of Colonie is in compliance. As stormwater regulations continue to evolve the Town will remain committed to implementing these regulations. The Committee deems the Town's action complete as relating to the Comprehensive Plan but realizes that compliance based on changing regulations is an on-going process.

The Comprehensive Plan Review Committee recommends that the vision of the Plan be amended to read:

2.1 Vision:

The Town of Colonie is the center of the Capital District's tech valley development with desirable residential neighborhoods, pedestrian safe roadways, open green spaces and superior recreational resources balanced with business friendly development, broad based economic

growth and employment making it the region's most desirable place to live, learn and do business.

The Comprehensive Plan Review Committee recommends that the goals referenced in Section 2.2 of the Plan be consolidated and reworked to read:

2.2 GOALS

The Town of Colonie has established a set of goals to guide decision-making and help achieve this vision. These goals address a wide range of issues that have been raised through the public involvement process and through the development of an inventory and analysis. The goals are as follows:

- A. Provide an increased enjoyment for the residents of the various neighborhoods throughout the Town.
 1. Provide opportunities and incentives for the development and redevelopment of a variety of housing options in the Town to meet the needs of its increasingly diverse population.
 2. Improve mobility and connectivity throughout the Town.
 3. Establish an identity for the Town of Colonie that transcends the Town's size and diversity while maintaining the integrity and distinctiveness of individual neighborhoods.
- B. Provide a business-friendly environment that is supportive of local business that encourages entrepreneurship, and that helps assure the provision of quality employment and a diverse economic base in the community.
 1. Improve the development approval process by establishing land use regulations that guide development in a manner that is consistent with the vision, goals, and recommendations contained in this plan.
 2. Encourage the reuse or redevelopment of existing sites and buildings.
 3. Promote commercial, industrial and high-tech growth in specifically designated areas, taking advantage of the Town's infrastructure, location, and critical regional assets.
- C. Maintain the Town's superior level of services and resources such as:
 1. Public safety
 2. Community services for youth and seniors
 3. Public utility infrastructure and services
 4. Cultural and historic resources
 5. Active and passive recreational resources
- D. Protect the Town's important natural resources.
 1. Enhance the Town's Mohawk River waterfront.
 2. Encourage the conservation of viable farmland and significant open spaces throughout the Town.
 3. Develop a network of open lands to provide wildlife habitat and potential recreational trail corridors.

- E. Expand opportunities for sharing information and for encouraging community involvement. Promote volunteerism and community service.
- F. Cooperate with the Villages of Colonie and Menands, and other neighboring and regional municipalities, agencies, and organizations on issues of mutual concern.

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