

Town of Waterloo Comprehensive Plan
Steering Committee Meeting 3
July 15 2014

1. A motion was made by Colby O'Brien, seconded by John Butlak to approve the minutes of the May 8th meeting. Passed unanimously.

2. All Committee members were present with the exception of Jim Cleere, Carl Altameri, Tim Luce and Linda Hannan.

3. Pat Nicoletta of the MRB Group reviewed several maps specifically prepared for the Town of Waterloo as part of the comprehensive plan process. They included:

2011 Aerial View, 2013 Address Point Locations, Agricultural Districts; USDA Agricultural Production, High Speed Internet Availability, Fiber Optic to Business Availability, Existing Real Property Land Use, USDA Approximate Forest Type, 1874 Atlas of Waterloo, Parcel Heat Source Type, Parcel Based Sewer Use, Tax Parcel Boundaries to, Transportation Map, USGS Elevations, USGS Map, Public Water Availability, National Wetlands Inventory, NYS DEC Wetlands Inventory, Year House Built and Existing Zoning Map.

4. Smith opened a discussion regarding the community assessment "homework" that was given out at the last meeting. Several comments were offered by committee members. Discussion noted differing concerns from two age groups: under 40 –housing affordability, proximity to activities, public safety and recreation; for those over 40 - landfill, clay mine debates, downtown area and less on affordability. Everyone agrees that generally nicer neighborhoods are valued, and the community has a problem with upkeep of multi-family rentals, specifically those owned by absentee landlords. These comments will be added to the information gathered thus far.

5. There was a discussion about property maintenance codes and a question about whether they need to be updated. MRB noted one value of a completed Comprehensive Plan to be providing justification for codes and permitted land uses. If board decisions support the goals of a comprehensive plan, they can better withstand challenges.

6. A general discussion followed on data and perspective gathering from conducting interviews with Town staff and members of the planning and zoning boards. Several specific comments were shared with the committee, including the difficulty of small farms staying in business when competing with big, corporate farms. The lack of available acreage for big farms makes it difficult for Waterloo to compete with other areas for agricultural growth.

7. A question was posed as to sharing data and efforts between the Town and Village, since the Village is also engaging in a comprehensive plan process. Smith explained that the Village's comprehensive plan is funded by NYSERDA and therefore is energy- and conservation- oriented, where the Town's planning process is more generally focused on land use and town concerns. The Mayor and Supervisor have both expressed interest in collaborating in all ways possible and discussions are taking place about the most efficient ways to do this.

8. Next steps in the process were discussed, specifically the survey. A discussion ensued as to how it should be circulated. MRB Group suggested using the web and, for those who do not access the internet, mailing paper surveys to each household in the town. This includes the Village within the town. A determination will be made at the next meeting.

9. Sample survey questions were distributed for review. Committee recommendations included reducing the number of rankings, or simplifying the responses. Everyone agreed the goal is to make it easier to respond, so residents don't bypass questions or choose not to participate.

For example, on Land Use questions, it was suggested to simplify the choices to "Important, Minimally Important or Not Important." Another issue discussed briefly was topics that could be hot buttons – and overshadow all other issues. These were identified as dissolution, shared services, clay mines, and the landfill. Nothing was decided. However, homework for the next meeting would be for the Committee to review the sample survey questions and determine what categories, if any, should be shortened or eliminated.

10. Jim Cleere will check on some available meeting dates for the next meeting in August and will inform Committee members and MRB Group by e-mail.

11. Motion made by Mike Smith, seconded by Colby O'Brien to adjourn meeting.