

Minutes of the Public hearing by the Comprehensive Plan Committee of the Town of Durham held February 5, 2020 at the Town Hall commencing at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Joe Sniado, Committee Chairperson
Joan Breslin, Deputy Supervisor/Committee member
Bernard Rivers, Committee member
Ray Armstrong, Committee member

Recording Secretary: Janet Partridge, Town Clerk

Others Present: Tom Sutton, Police Sgt.
Linda Sutton, Councilmember
Scott Hulbert, Councilmember
Shawn Marriott, Supervisor
11 community members

Chairperson Joe Sniado opened the public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan Draft B with the pledge to the flag at 7:32pm.

Sniado gave an overview of the action taken by the committee throughout the process of revising the Town of Durham's Comprehensive Plan. The last plan was developed over 10 years ago. They have been working on updating the Plan for the past two years. At the start of the project there were several members, but about a year ago the group seemed to become four members and they have been the core group working on it ever since. They developed action plans to understand the priorities of the community that involved having focus group meetings and then the creation of a survey. From information obtained from the focus groups and the small amount of feedback from the survey, the committee was able to create the new Plan.

Bernard Rivers stated the first 14 pages are what they will be reviewing tonight. There are another 30 pages that are Appendix I and Appendix II that the committee encourages everyone to review. He explained they built the Plan on the knowledge of the community and data available.

Joan Breslin read starting at page 10, recommendation 1, 2, 3 and 4. After review of the supporting information, feedback was given. The committee developed a time frame for implementation to make sure structure was there for moving the plan forward. They are looking for community members interested in being on the implementation committee. They would probably meet monthly and would need to keep the Board updated. A lot of the recommendations rely on the public volunteering their time to help accomplish these ideas. Once the committee gets started on a topic of interest, sub-committees can be formed to implement everything. They tried to think outside the box to come up with starting ideas and recommendations.

As the committee has worked through the process, the Board is actually progressing on some issues already. The website is being updated and communication is better. They have increased the use of the calendar of events. Setting up the implementation committee is going to be a big amount of time commitment. Breslin expressed her concern with finding 8 community members fully committed. This will reflect how soon the Plan can take action.

Concern was also express with the Board getting fully behind the plan. It was questioned what the community can do to get the board involved in following through. The same volunteers are involved and we need to get younger people involved.

Partridge offered to print copies of the full plan for anyone who stops in at the office. Questions were asked about who operates the Durham School building and if it would be available during the day. For security reasons it is not because of students there for the Boces program. The school district does offer use of the building in the evenings and our community center uses it Thursdays along with the basketball program on Wednesday nights.

Rivers read starting on page 13, recommendations 5-8. He explain under recommendation 7, the committee would like all the historic committees in town to work together and they encourage communication.

There were suggestions to recommendation 6: reduce blight. The committee feels it is a delicate subject but one that should be addressed. More dumpsters at the town hall for community members to use for free was suggested. Discussion followed. It is a topic for the implementation committee to address once they are established.

How this Plan is implemented is totally up to the Board. All recommendations will have to be approved by the town board, so the power is in their hands.

The last recommendation was discussed. It was suggested that the language was negative and suggestions were made that the committee restructure it to be positive. It was also suggested to have the School board minutes linked to our town website.

The committee projects the plan to be implemented and finalized in 10 years. Giving a timeline develops accountability for the town board.

The committee asked for anyone interested in sitting on the implementation committee to please sign up before they leave.

Several community members in attendance thanked the committee for the time they put into the Plan. Lots of positive feedback was shared.

Sniado thanked everyone for taking the time to come and give the committee feedback. They will take into consideration all the suggestions tonight and present the final Draft C to the town board within the week so they can set up a public meeting at the town board workshop on Tuesday, March 3rd.

The public hearing was adjourned at 9:12pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Partridge
Town Clerk