

Copake Hamlet Revitalization Task Force

Minutes

Wednesday, October 25, 2017

Present: Roberta Roll (Chair), Lenny Barham, Andy Fisher, Tom Goldsworthy, and Jeanne Mettler (Town Board Liaison)

Participating via Phone: Peter Kelly, Jennifer Redman

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1. **Minutes** of the 9/27/17 meeting were approved with minor changes.
 2. **Bike Copake** - Tom Goldsworthy summarized results of a post-event survey of Roe Jan Ramble Bike Tour participants. There were 153 responses from a ridership of 290 participants, or a 53% response rate. 98% “loved it” or found it “enjoyable”. A couple statistics of value to the Task Force were:
 - 73% of participants considered themselves “regular” or “avid” cyclists, which confirms that our strategy of using bicycling as a draw to the Town is appealing to the target audience;
 - 35% “rarely” or have “Never” visited the Roe Jan Area before, indicating our event draws in new people to our Town;
 - 43% indicated they rode and left the area after the event was over, meaning we must do more to encourage people to stay in the area before and after the Ramble through some add-on events or functions;
 - 24% had never ridden the Harlem Valley Rail Trail or didn’t know it existed, meaning the Ramble helped promote and identify the Town’s recreational resources to both local and visiting participants.
 - The total cost of the Ramble was \$3,105.82. The Ramble raised \$3,597.26 from area business sponsors and t-shirt & hat sales, resulting in a small surplus of \$491.44. No taxpayer funds were expended. The event relied heavily on unpaid volunteers.
 3. **Historic District Designation** - Peter Kelly arranged a meeting on October 20 with Bill Krattinger, the staff member assigned to Columbia County from the National Register Unit of the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Roberta Roll, Jeanne Mettler and Peter escorted Mr. Krattinger along Main Street and Church Street. He commented that a Historical District designation was a possibility for Main Street north of Dad’s Copake Diner, and that also various individual buildings may meet the requirements for historic designation. The area around the clock would not qualify. He will draft something for the Task Force to review. Any designation would first require a series of public meetings to provide information and educate people prior to any designation becoming effective. His time schedule for next steps may not be until Spring 2018. Peter will follow up.
 4. **Former Roe Jan School** - Andy Fisher indicated no news. He will continue to reach out to possible developers.
 5. **Housing & Development** - Roberta said that Columbia County Habitat for Humanity

continues to seek does not yet have a homeowner for its home rehabilitation project in the former Callan Health building on the corner of Mountain View & Farm Road in Copake. Tom will work on an inventory of foreclosed buildings in Copake to help identify additional future Habitat homes, as well as an inventory of commercial buildings for future economic initiatives.

6. **Columbia Economic Development Corporation (CEDC)** - Roberta indicated no news, but she will email Director Mike Tucker about next steps. Roberta has emailed Mike Tucker about next steps but has not heard back.
7. **Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)** - In conjunction with the Task Force's efforts to build a Rail Trail "spur" from the Harlem Valley Rail Trail into the Hamlet, the State has provided a \$40,000 grant to study the project. The grant requires a the Town to make a 1-for-1 match of local resources, which can be met through volunteer hours calculated at a specified hourly rate. Roberta is assembling historical information from local activities and community organizations that would meet this requirement.

Separately, Jeanne and Tom met on October 12 with a professional civil engineer, Rod Morrison, who has volunteered to assist with the Rail Trail spur project. Together they visited the proposed crossing at State Route 22 and Weed Mine Road. They rejected the cow tunnel, previously considered, as too difficult to modify to meet State requirements, but did identify a likely crossing under the highway bridge that spans the Bash Bish Brook. Mr. Morrison said it could be a very cost effective solution, with minimal modifications. He will obtain water flow statistics from FEMA and draft a short letter about his recommendation. Jeanne will follow up with him.

8. **New Businesses & New Business** -
 - Bank of Greene County - opened its new Copake branch on October 21 with a Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting. The Bank is very community oriented, and will likely be a good partner to help establish a Copake Roe Jan Business Alliance. Roberta will connect with the branch manager, Jill Simms-Elster.
 - Copake General Store - the former Copake Front Porch Market is currently undergoing renovations by the new owner and expected to open mid- to late-November.
 - Copake Inn - is being renovated to reopen as a bar, perhaps in April or May 2018.
 - Gift Shoppe - a new antiques store is about to open in the "flatiron" building at the corner of Empire Road and the Clock. It will be open three days per week - Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.
 - Hamlet Business District Signs - The Town Board has approved \$500 to pay for six Hamlet Business District directional signs to be located at intersections as you approach the Hamlet. Jeanne is working with the County DOT on the design and placement. Jeanne will also contact the State DOT about obtaining a "Business District" sign near the intersection of State Route 22 and North Main Street.
 - Holiday Tree display - Jeanne reported that Taconic Valley Lawn & Garden will be supplying the trees this year. People can "sponsor" a tree for \$25 by signing up at the Town Hall or Copake Wine Works.
9. **Copake Grange** - The Grange has been reinvigorated with new leadership and new members seeking to make it more active and community oriented. A Tag Sale will be

held on October 28, and an Open House will be held December 10. The “Copake Quintet”, organized by The Two of Us Productions, will play music at the Open House, and some theater performances are anticipated this winter.

10. **Galvan Foundation** - Roberta inquired if the Galvan Foundation should be contacted about possibly buying and rehabilitating the former Roe Jan School. Tom will reach out to someone who has worked with them to inquire.
11. **Vehicle Charging Station** - The New York State Department of Environment Conservation (DEC) is awarding grants to towns to install electric vehicle charging stations. It was discussed that a good location near the Hamlet would be in the Town’s municipal parking lot. Roberta will contact the DEC to get more information about the program.
12. **Conservation Advisory Council** - Roberta said that New York State was offering grants and assistance to towns in connection with its “Climate Smart Community” initiative. Copake’s Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) would need to create a plan to qualify. Roberta will contact CAC members Edgar Masters and Brian Boom about this. Also potential new members from Copake to the County CAC might be helpful in working on this plan.
13. **Community Events & Festivals** - The Task Force brainstormed about possible local events that could bring visitors and economic opportunities to the Town. Ideas included events connected to the Copake Auction, agricultural events such as a Food & Drink, Corn, Bourbon or Dairy festival; and a Hot Air Ballon event. Discussion to continue.

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 13 at 7:00 pm at Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Goldsworthy