



## **PAC Meeting #8, November 23, 2020, Copake Town Hall, 3:00-4:00PM**

**Present:** Roberta Roll (Chair), Alan Friedman, Andy Fisher, Len Barham, and Richard Wolf, Town Board Liaison. River Street Team with Margaret Irwin and Chris Snyder.

**Update on Inventory and Analysis (I&A)** – Draft plan is now produced in InDesign with PAC feedback and edits largely incorporated. The plan will be sent to PAC and then DOS in final format (which will remain the format for the final plan). Margaret reiterated that there are 5 sections: 1) Introduction, 2) Inventory and Analysis, 3) Vision and Goals, 4) Priority Projects and 5) Implementation Matrix. The inventory summarizes the extensive research that has been conducted for Copake for a wide range of prior plans, especially focused on environmental conditions. Margaret addressed PAC member question regarding how employment profiles are reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and types of employment that are excluded from data sets.

**Craryville** – Roberta noted that the draft plan discusses making Craryville a friendly and welcoming gateway, as well as discussing the solar farm project. It seems appropriate to discuss the solar farm in the plan since it is a big issue and should be acknowledged as part of the inventory of what is happening in the town. Margaret noted that this was added because a number of people have indicated at events that it is a big concern. PAC member noted it will affect the character of the area and make it impossible to make Craryville a welcoming gateway. PAC discussed leaving this as part of the inventory of Copake but removing identification of specific farm. Although the Town has taken a position on the issue, it does not necessarily need to be described within this plan.

### **Flooding and Flood Data –**

#### ***Existing Data***

Margaret noted the Copake FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) date to 1985 and have had over 25 map amendment requests, which have been approved. However, building code now requires that anything being built or substantially improved be 2 feet above base flood elevation (BFE). Can't guarantee that any Copake decisions about flooding or flood mitigation measures will be supported by FEMA; FIRM can't be a reliable reference point. Town could ask FEMA to do a new study but won't happen in time to guide these projects. Margaret also described the 2014 Community Risk and Resiliency Act (CRRRA). Majority of projects seeking NYS permits must establish that project has adjusted to account for climate predictions (typically higher than building code BFE requirements). Trout Unlimited did thorough study of culverts throughout Copake. Culverts are often undersized, with inadequate capacity, and can become blocked by debris and overflow banks creating a range of flooding impacts.

#### ***Approach to LWRP Projects***

- Much of flood-related information in Copake is currently anecdotal from people whose properties are flooding. Best current approach may be to have a focus group with these residents to gather information. Town Board can react to these recommendations. A new flood damage prevention ordinance could also be adopted as part of code update. DEC provides good model codes for this.
- PAC members discussed this approach. Past working groups, including committee on highway implementation, have discussed various flood mitigation options such as letting the creek meander naturally, building berms, etc. Alan indicated that 7A and Main Street/South of 7A all have flooding during large scale flooding events, but it's not clear what else people might contribute as far as flood-related information. Margaret suggested discussion with affected homeowners could help frame future



investigations – for example, if people observe that the natural course of the creek is to change direction towards Main Street, that’s a condition that could be examined. Margaret asked if there is anything making flooding worse. In 2011 Copake received state funding for flood mitigation and cleared out sediment in creek but was stopped by DEC and asked to plant instead of dredging.

- Alan agreed to gather names of people on affected properties to help create a stakeholder group that could help to determine what a project might look like relative to flooding as part of the LWRP.
- A feasibility analysis might be the first part of a project followed by implementation, focused on natural resource improvement with approvals to replant and re-sculpt edge of creek, add rain gardens, keep water out of houses.
- **Historic District & flooding** – Alan noted that the same group on 7A that experiences flooding is also part of an area that might be considered in a Historic District at some point. Margaret identified the additional challenges this might create and suggested the Town might reconsider Historic District designation until it’s understood how the district would interact with flood mitigation solutions. FEMA might restrict or preclude historic buildings. Make sure that in considering designation, need to understand what this means if flooded houses are in Historic District – there could be available funding but also restrictions. Would want to share as much information as possible as it is decided whether/where to draw historic boundary. If a district is listed as state or national then federal partners are forever and set of standards will apply to historic preservation.
- Margaret indicated funding for flood mitigation project could also be small part of larger grant application to DOS. Copake has strong partners such as Columbia Land Trust, the Hudson River Estuary, Cornell who would be helpful in evaluation stage. Other issue that complicates this is that for the most part flooding is increasing in upstate NY because of variability of winter temperatures. Freeze/thaw cycle is challenging especially with undersized culverts. FEMA does have new, more flexible programs that require local match (25%) and run through the State. Resilience is big part of DOS mandate. In Plan will recommend an array of natural mitigation measures. Margaret will pull together a memo re: flooding issues and approach that we can run past DOS.

**Board of Realtors Outreach** – Margaret requested that if anyone has relationship with realtors, it would be helpful to gather perceptions of current housing market in Copake, including how hot the market is and availability of inventory. Hudson Valley region currently a hot market, with sense of the same in Columbia County. Could find out who is on Board of Realtors that might be familiar with Copake market.

**Second Community Meeting** – PAC discussed format for second community meeting. River Street will not be conducting in-person community meetings for foreseeable future given pandemic and Roberta indicated PAC agrees with an online approach. Copake residents are comfortable with Zoom meetings at this point, and River Street has conducted online web presentations with hundreds of viewers. A Zoom meeting might be recorded then posted on website for continued access and public comments. Need list of projects that PAC can present prior to next public meeting.

### **Outreach**

- Outreach and postcard mailings may be good way to drive people to the site. The team would work to get a lot of information out ahead of time and need to start putting together list of logistics and choices to be made. Should decide on community meeting date/dates and start to publicize very soon.



- Town Board unlikely to approve funding for postcard mailing. PAC member suggested EDDM might be an affordable way to send postcard save the dates – River Street will provide information on costs.
- Save the date can be included in Connection newsletter, on Town’s FB page, which will reach a lot of people, and send an email blast to past participants. Library, Churches, Ramble, local businesses, online shops – would all be able to get message out to a lot of people.
- If PAC can assemble list of groups to contact, River Street will provide a message requesting help with outreach.

Roberta will reach out to Fred for DOS approval for online presentation rather than in-person meeting. The PAC discussed options of a 7:00 pm evening meeting or a Saturday morning meeting in late-January.

**Schedule** – PAC just received schedule through project completion; please direct any questions about the schedule to River Street. PAC asked about tasks being specified on a calendar; Margaret indicated the team is building in 2 week periods for tasks rather than specific dates; this is largely RSPD work and PAC review. PAC requested that the schedule include a column for percent complete on each task.

**Next Steps –**

- RSPD will finish Inventory and Analysis and send to PAC for one last look before Roberta provides to DOS.
- Margaret will respond with some ideas on Vision statement and PAC can develop at least a placeholder vision. Need to agree on number of goals and main categories.
- Develop and prioritize list of potential projects that will tie well into LWRP. A number of projects already identified; will decide which areas are most important to pursue in order to establish reasonable set of actions.
- PAC meeting on Vision and Goals. Will see what develops via e-mail and then follow up with a meeting. Next meeting tentatively scheduled for Monday, December 7 at 3:00 pm.