

David E. Church, AICP
3540 State Route 52, Pine Bush, New York 12566
dchurch@hvc.rr.com / 845 702-0050

To: Gardiner Town Board
From: David Church
Re: Summary of Public Outreach, Comprehensive Plan Update
Date: July 5, 2021 **updated July 26, 2021**

The following is a summary of the Comprehensive Plan Update public outreach and comments received during the months of May, June & July, 2021. This includes outcomes from group interviews held with a range of Town boards, committees, and civic groups, as well as individual comments received directly via email and phone.

Group interviews were scheduled for the convenience of group members. Groups were provided in advance a set of common questions to consider – and these questions were partly built from the public opinion survey done for the 2004 Comprehensive Plan project and input from the Town Supervisor and Deputy Supervisor.

Town Supervisor Marybeth Majestic and her assistant Emily Sperry scheduled the group interviews. With exception of the two (2) in-person interviews with the Gardiner Senior Resource Committee and with farmers and farm property owners, all other interviews used a combination of Zoom and phone-in options, reflecting COVID-19 protocols. Interviews with official Town boards and committees were recorded and were conducted as public meetings with a quorum of the applicable members present, along with members of the public able to observe.

The following group interviews are a part of this summary:

Climate Smart Gardiner Task Force	June 2
Town of Gardiner Planning Board	June 3
Gardiner Fire & Rescue Department	June 7
Gardiner Library staff	June 9
Town of Gardiner Open Space Commission	June 14
Gardiner Senior Resource Committee	June 15
Town of Gardiner Parks & Recreation Committee	June 17
Gardiner Association of Business	June 28
Town of Gardiner ECC	June 30
Open Meeting w Farmers & Farm Property Owners (18 farmers / farm property owners)	July 20

An additional Zoom/phone meeting was held July 1 for those members above who were unable to attend the earlier group interviews.

A set of individual comments were received – some as follow up from individuals in group interviews, and some from other individuals via phone or email. The Town Superintendent of Highways and representatives of Walkkill River Watershed Association, Riverkeeper, and Mohonk Preserve also replied individually.

Comments included various attachments. Notable are:

- ❖ Seniors Enrich Gardiner, A Study of Comparable Towns
- ❖ Drainage Districts – various background documentation gathered by Brian Stiscia, Town Superintendent of Highways
- ❖ Aquifers – various studies and documentation on these Town resources – gathered by Michael Hartner

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS (as of July 1, 2021)

Note commonly repeated comments are **BOLD**

The Town Board will be provided with a spreadsheet summarizing all comments provided. In this report, I have abbreviated and divided the comments for follow-up discussion into the following categories:

VISION – general comments leading to a “vision” for the Town.

PLAN ELEMENTS – related to what the Updated Plan should include.

POLICIES & REGULATIONS – related to recommended non-regulatory Town actions (policies) & recommended regulatory Town actions. Includes a subsection of farming.

INFRASTRUCTURE – related to sewer, water supply, roads and sidewalks, transportation, parks and trails etc.

FINANCING – related to budgeting, taxation, capital projects.

ORGANIZATION – related to the structure and organization of Town business.

PLACE BASED – related to specific locations or physical features. These may be repeated under other categories.

MISC – issues not easily categorized.

VISION

Positives / Comments about the Town:

Land and People = community

Rural

Quaint

Town Next to New Paltz (also seen as a challenge)

open spaces

open space & development balanced

a “best kept secret” place / “live in a postcard” / more recently “loved to death”

great landscape

preserved lands

Hamlet more active or vibrant – library, rail trail, lighting, existing and new biz, sidewalks

all positives

great Library

Address recent growth and busy / pass thru traffic

Gardiner as gateway to outdoor recreation and Shawangunk Ridge

Make the Hamlet happen

PLAN ELEMENTS

Sustainability Chapter – including climate change vulnerability

address community needs to reduce need for traveling - & driving - for services

include Climate Smart Action Plan, GHG inventory, etc.

The Hamlets – smart development, design standards, walkable / bikeable match the vision for each hamlet with policies & codes

Town Services and Management – organizational chart / job descriptions

Vision Statement should be included – what is positive & makes Town unique Environment & Landscape & Sense of Community should anchor this Vision

2004 Plan Vision / Executive Summary still valid

Water as the key for the future

Wallkill / Shawangunk Kill riverfront plan

Ecosystem & Biodiversity priorities

NRI incorporated into Plan Update and Code

Open Space Plan incorporated into Plan Update

Recreation Plan element added

Senior needs (see “Seniors Enrich Gardiner”) including AARP livability index findings

Affordability and Affordable/Diverse Housing Needs Now
Affordable Rentals needed – not just STRs

Economic Development – focus on hamlet vitality, farm business vitality/sustainability

Infrastructure Capital Plan – sewer, water, roads/intersections, parks & rec, trails, community gathering

With goals should be actions with a schedule

Inventory of protected lands & publicly owned lands & tax exempt lands

Traffic Safety plan

POLICIES & REGULATIONS

Water is most important

Better design standards for development

Code needs to synch w Plan

Affordable Housing – need incentives, County help, overcome lack of infrastructure

Roles of cluster housing & tiny house options for affordability

Large gathering permit requirements & enforcement to insure safety

Traffic enforcement on the ridge

traffic enforcement including weight limits everywhere w increased traffic & cut thru routes

Watershed friendly zoning

status of Aquifer & Water Course/wetlands draft regulations?

Checklist created & keyed to NRI for all development permit reviews

issues w “orphaned” parkland from past subdivision approvals – clarify policy for land versus payment in lieu of land w subdivisions

TDR not viable

In zoning, address better transition from between zoning districts

evaluate pros/cons of 5acre zoning

SP districts well done – rest of district could use review

Better definition in code of the zoning districts

oversight w impact analysis of any larger scale developments

Importance of Hamlets – better implementation w incentives

ECC authorization to review certain planning/zoning applications

Incentives to attract needed businesses

Define Critical Environmental Areas (CEA)

Inventory of protected & publicly owned lands

source water protection – including greater setbacks from water resources in code

tree protection – timber harvesting / clearcutting rules updated

abandoned properties - appearance, incentives to improve

property maintenance code

campground policy – fires, water use, noise

Dark Sky

water law – related to pollution reduction

NRI incorporated into code for permit reviews

limit on one gas station = monopoly?

protect farmland and mountain views

support for senior housing

Short Term Rental – pro & con comments (seems support for allowing these with minimum regulation to address impacts to neighborhoods)

Policies that support options to driving for services

POLICIES & REGULATIONS CONT – FARMING SPECIFIC

Need means and location for farmers to gather on occasion

Town being more farm friendly – access to land, allowances for events and other activities on farms

lower land assessments / make farm building exemptions longer or permanent

Limit regulations on farms adding sustainable energy projects

Support vehicle charging stations on or near farm businesses

Poor drainage in places – town improvements for culverts and ditches

education & awareness for new resident neighbors about farming practices

An attractive active hamlet will help farm businesses attract visitors

hold one or more community agricultural events

support something like Marlborough Farm Trail – as Town has lots of attractive farm businesses

collaborating marketing – including work between business owners, between businesses and Town, with GAB, and with Ulster County Tourism

mixed view of Community Preservation Act / transfer tax use. Voters should decide.

INFRASTRUCTURE including traffic

Lack of infrastructure

STP small in need of upgrade

Address inadequacies of sewer, water

Aqueduct tap for water, including for fire use?

Traffic control improvements – notably at intersections Rt 44/55 & Brunswick Road and Rt44/55 & Rt 299

Warning lights at each fire station

Better labeling of addresses – with reflective markings – to assist emergency services

Enhanced shoulder on Rt 44/55 for bicycling safety and for emergency services response safety
improvements to road ditches and culverts – drainage problems to farmlands
Improve trail access and parking, both on the ridge and along the rail trail
Accessible trails and recreation you don't have to drive to
Townwide - drainage improvement districts are needed.
Evaluate new town roads versus private HOA roads for future action.
fix McKinstry Rd bridge
improve access to Walkkill River
need locations for new turf recreation fields – inventory options
Town vehicle fleet needs to be smarter
Greening Town buildings
better enforcement of traffic speeds and weight limits with increased traffic

STP inspect and reline pipes, evaluated I & I, septic system inspection program (for those discharging to plant)

FINANCING

Impact of tax exempt properties
Dedicated open space funds – real estate transfer tax / subdivision recreation fees
Town wide reassessment due
research “vacancy tax” to help address vacant, derelict properties

ORGANIZATION

Improved monitoring (aka inspection) & enforcement of existing codes
Improved monitoring of conserved lands
Hire a Grant Writer
Contract an environmental professional to review projects as needed (to supplement engineer & attorney)
Better interaction between boards and committees – for example between Open Space Committee & ECC, between ECC & Planning Board ...
Roles & Reliance on Volunteers (will volunteerism decline with changing demographics)
Better Planning Board implementation of plan and policy priorities
Clear protocol on taking care of parks and rec facilities
Senior needs (senior center, transportation, benches on trails etc) need to be addressed
Educational program about protected open spaces
Education – public safety training thru incentives and messaging
Optimizing Town services

more partnering with neighboring Towns
research assessment grievance procedures to avoid current “scam” pushing challenges
to unfavorable court rulings

PLACE BASED

Hamlets – support growth but w clear vision and standards for each

Improve access to Wallkill River

In main Hamlet – underused/vacant properties

Field next to Town Hall needs to be used

Trails on old landfill great idea

Road intersection safety – Brunswyck Rd & Rt 44/55. Others?

on site address labeling, including night reflection or illumination, at gathering places including Lazy River Campground, other recreation areas, etc.

Community uses – better use of underused spaces (i.e. Majestic Park (pole building, amphitheatre...), field next to Town Hall, former Town landfill....)

Make better use of the lands Town owns (21+ parcels)

Concerns about potential development @ various locations including off Church Farm Road, next to old landfill, and as part of growth of Lazy River Campground

Assess impacts (water/sewage, noise, night lighting, traffic) & control of growth @ Lazy River Campground

Welcome to Gardiner signage

a municipal parking lot in hamlet

Post Office needs to move and expand, w parking

Jenkinstown Road (and other roads) used a cut thru roads – increased traffic and lack of weight limit enforcement

need for a seniors / retirement community project

MISCELLANEOUS

Need a market & pharmacy

Driving – you have to drive for everything

More arts, food, and commerce in hamlet and main street

5 A zoning around hamlets

fix McKinstry Bridge

support trail and ridge access

Tilson Dam – keep and remove comments

STRs – good idea but not if makes housing less affordable

Wallkill River as a water trail – more access for paddlers

lack of cell service

improve bus service – seniors, public

importance of water – lead by water supply / water source protection

dam removals

reduce nutrient loads into Wallkill and likely MS4 requirements w new TMDL

Campground @ Lazy River impact with rapid expansion

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS (random order)

Brian Stiscia, Superintendent of Highways	6/14/21
Matthew Goodnow, Chief, Gardiner Fire Dept	7/19/21
Michael Hartner	various including 7/1/21
Stephen Weir	various including 6/23/21
Shirley Santagada	7/26/21
Joan Mitchell	7/2/21
Bill Trinkle	7/2/21
Richard Koenig	6/30/21
Kevin Case, Mohonk Preserve	6/30/21
Scott Bittner	6/29/21
Alana Pikulski	6/29/21
Rob Ferri – WRWA	6/21/21
Leonie Lacouette	6/19/21
Dan Shapely, Riverkeeper	6/18/21
Linda Geary	6/15/21
Laura Rose	6/15/21
Kim Meyer	6/8/21
Carol Richman	6/3/21
Brian Tietje	5/30/21
JR Cunningham	5/11/21

NEXT STEPS

The following are the next steps for the Plan Update Project thru July into August, 2021.

- ✓ **Town Board review of interview and public comments.**
- ✓ **Draft Plan Update Chapter 1, Town Profile, to Town Board.**
- ✓ **August Meeting with Town Board to review above, finalize format and content priorities for full Plan Update.**