

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan of the Village of Montebello held a meeting on Wednesday July 10, 2024 at Village Hall, One Montebello Road, Montebello, NY. Chair Golden called the meeting to order at **3:30 p.m.**

PRESENT

Melanie Golden, Chairwoman
Ariel Aufgang, Committee Member
Ezra Bryan, Committee Member
Debra Munitz, Committee Member

OTHERS

Alyse Terhune, Asst. Village Attorney
Jonathan Lockman, Village Planner
Regina Rivera, Planning/Zoning Clerk

ABSENT

Matthew Moetzinger, Committee Member

Meeting Minutes Approval

Member Aufgang made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2024 comprehensive plan meeting. The motion was seconded by Member Munitz and upon vote, all were in favor.

Recommendations/Implementations from the Adopted 2017 Comp. Plan.

Data Sources and Compilation Discussion

Mr. Lockman stated that the 2017 Comp Plan was successful, and contained a lot of specific recommendations, many of which were implemented and an annual basis for several years in a row. This committee's job is to determine what recommendations should be changed, deleted, expanded or added to that comp plan. We are going to look at where we are, what we did and what needs to be done, he said.

Mr. Lockman referred to the matrix he created to track the implementations, noting that the first part of the 2017 plan was completed. (The matrix is attached.) He guided the Committee through each recommendation that was not implemented:

#9 Home based businesses. While the Village regulated Air BnBs and other short-term rentals, the intention was to tighten and fine-tune the rules for home occupations. However, Covid arrived and everyone was working from home so those measures were shelved.

Member Munitz said that the goal of that recommendation is to identify the home businesses and to ensure they abide all the rules. People must do the right thing, but making them go to the Planning Board inhibits compliance. There needs to be an easier process, such as a registration or permits, she added. Chair Golden said that they recommended that the Village require home businesses with no clients to register with the building department. Mr. Lockman added that businesses with a more intense use should go to the Planning Board for a special permit.

Member Aufgang recommended that the percentage of a home being used for said occupation set the permitting criteria. The committee agreed to further explore this issue. Member Munitz volunteered to compile her recommendations to this end to present to the committee.

#10 Village tax incentives for voluntary historic structures. This is a difficult measure for a Village this size to administer, and the law does not allow this in terms of tax exemptions. The committee

was leaning towards deleting this recommendation but tabled the discussion until a time when HPPC Chairperson and comp plan committee member Matt Moetzinger was present.

#11 Protection for neighborhood character. This was an attempt to create guidelines promoting certain types of house designs. However, this will not change the fact that people will continue to go to the ZBA to get as big of a house as they are able. FAR and height restrictions should be examined more closely instead; Aesthetics cannot be forced upon homeowners. The Scenic and Historic Roads Overlay District already protects the neighborhood character in any case.

Member Munitz said she hoped that FAR restrictions do not change. Ms. Terhune said that the village ZBA does not like to give FAR variances, but they do need guidance from the Village Board. Adding a FAR adjustment to the comp plan gives them the guidance they need. She said she would review what was done in Monroe and share that with the committee.

After a discussion of FAR Standards, the clerk was asked to compile a matrix of all area variances granted in the last ten years for the next meeting.

#13 Climate smart communities. This is a NYS program that awards points and money to municipalities that implement building standards promoting energy-smart homes, and the like. However, larger villages have resources (e.g., people and money) to initiate green measures, while smaller ones, like Montebello, struggle to find people to do the work.

#38& #39 Storage of commercial vehicles. Interest in implementing waned during COVID but this is increasingly becoming a problem. The Committee needs to examine this more closely and confer with the building department.

#43 Greater variety in setbacks incorporate natural materials and colors. In hindsight, this is overreaching and should be abandoned.

#56 - 78 Rural Character design guidelines. The Planning Board and the HPPC have already been working on this case by case; some elements are not applicable, but the committee may want to revisit some of these points.

#131 #132 Natural resources. Creating a list of acceptable trees and labeling catch basins is very possible, and funding is available for the latter.

#136 Developments adjacent to designated landmarks. Mr. Lockman worked on this, but came to believe that it is overbroad and not practical.

#140 Rework standards for local landmark designation and benefits of designation. Committee will consult village historian Craig Long.

#161 Seek special historic preservation protections for Spook Rock Golf Course. The golf course turned 50 in 2019. HPPC should designate it a landmark.

#187 – 191 Sustainability Element After some discussion, Member Aufgang volunteered to write a blurb about green building and energy standards and conservation.

Public Participation Discussion

Chair Golden suggested this Comp Plan Progress be included in the next newsletter as a way to get public comments without doing a survey. Mr. Lockman reviewed his census extrapolation which indicates that the population is dropping, even though this does not seem to be the case now, and he advised that the committee should not spend money on demographic resources.

Chair Golden and Ms. Terhune asked that each committee member return to the next meeting with a formal summary from their respective boards on their comp plan priorities. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 28th at 3:30 p.m. at Village Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.