

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan of the Village of Montebello held a meeting on Wednesday, September 25, 2024 at Village Hall, One Montebello Road, Montebello, NY. Chair Golden called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Melanie Golden, Chairperson
Ariel Aufgang, Committee Member
Ezra Bryan, Committee Member
Matthew Moetzinger, Committee Member
Debra Munitz, Committee Member

OTHERS

Jonathan Lockman, Village Planner
Regina Rivera, Planning/Zoning Clerk

ABSENT

Alyse Terhune, Asst. Village Attorney

Meeting Minutes Approval

Member Moetzinger made a motion to approve the August 28, 2024 comp plan meeting minutes. Member Aufgang seconded the motion and upon vote, all were in favor.

Planner Updates

J. Lockman provided a link to the redlined version of the 2017 Comp Plan showing changes and implementations noted, and asked each committee member to read through the entire document. Should anyone wish to amend anything, they should re-name the document and share with the entire Committee before submitting it to Mr. Lockman, who will serve as the custodian of the document and ensure that members make changes methodically to avoid any confusion. He strongly cautioned that Members should talk through issues that may be controversial before making changes.

Items to be addressed/discussed further:

- Economic Development: updates on commercial properties
- Flood Plain properties
- School Enrollment
- Traffic and circulation

ZBA Report

Member Bryan presented a summary of a recent ZBA workshop discussion. The ZBA Chairman expressed interest in addressing parking in driveways, specifically parking in required front yards, parking in and near the street, and excessive parking in driveways.

The ZBA also wished to promote climate-forward and more energy efficient construction standards, and explored adding such incentives into the comp plan and possibly aligning with state incentives.

To the parking issues, Chair Golden noted that there is no Village Code regulating the maximum number of parked cars in a driveway or overnight street parking, and the increasing trend of many cars parked in the driveway of single-family homes. The Committee discussed parking beyond the required setback and in the front yard and Mr. Lockman agreed to write some recommendations while the Trustees continue their ongoing investigation into the matter, and added that this Committee, while not enacting a new law, can offer possible remedies to the Board of Trustees.

Traffic & Circulation

Chair Golden summarized her discussion regarding upcoming traffic issues with Mayor Millman:

- No further studies on intersections in the Village in 2024
- All new developments are subject to site-specific investigations
- The intersection of Route 59 and Hemion Road is the area of most concern given the future construction of a 1.2 million square foot warehouse and distribution center on the former Novartis property.

Mr. Lockman said that regional traffic problems will not be solved in the next comp plan, but the committee should make recommendations for the Trustees to address in the future since it is their jurisdiction. Perhaps the Mayor can entreat the Town of Ramapo to do further traffic studies on roads west of the Village, he added.

HPPC Report

Mr. Moetzing summarized an HPPC discussion in which they expressed interest in updating the aesthetic preservation section of the comp plan, and to update and strengthen the requirements of the Historic and Scenic Overlay District. The Commission's clerk, Angela Spina, is currently compiling a list of Certificates of Appropriateness that have been awarded since the District was created. As of this date, the workload is manageable, but Mr. Moetzing expects these applications to increase as houses sell throughout the District.

The HPPC also wishes to update the section on recent projects, notably the Washington/Rochambeau Trail signs that were erected in the Village. Unfortunately, the commission was unable to receive a grant for rock wall refurbishment, many of which are deteriorating.

The Montebello Trail, a contiguous hiking/walking trail throughout the entirety of the Village, has been contemplated by the HPPC throughout the years and was addressed in the 2017 Comp Plan. However, the potential conflicts with the County Highway Department and several problematic areas posed too great of a hurdle. The HPPC hopes to discuss the logistics of the trail further with Village Counsel, and acknowledges that the trail may not be contiguous.

Finally, Mr. Moetzing said the HPPC was concerned about the lack of Village-designated historic sites. Currently there are only four, and while that Commission recognizes that an historic designation with its attendant restrictions may seem undesirable to many homeowners, there could be some tax breaks, albeit small ones. The preservation and maintenance of the Spook Rock Golf Course is a top priority, since it has many historic attributes and was the site of the Daniel Beard BSA Jamboree. We do not want it to go the way of other area golf courses, he added.

Mr. Lockman said that there is some restrictive zoning on the golf course, but that could change if someone petitions that zoning, and added that this is a national problem. He recommended that Mr. Moetzing work on revising the historic chapter with his Commission thus:

- Isolate the chapter
- Red line any changes, and include comment boxes
- Recommendations at the end of the chapter should be labeled "implemented" if applicable, add new recommendations in this area as well.

Home Occupation:

Member Munitz recommended raising the allowable number of employees not living in the home from one, as required by the code, to two, as long as the business does not consist of clients coming and going. She also recommended that the process be subject to Building Department permitting, and any business with a more intense use (e.g. clients) will trigger a Planning Board application for a Special Permit.

Mr. Lockman recognized that no one ever applied for a special permit for a home occupation, and agreed with Ms. Munitz's recommendations. Member Bryan recommended categorizing types of business since there is a natural inclination for a business owner to want to expand, but cautioned that it is important not to leave any ambiguity that would allow complacency or that would negatively affect the neighborhood.

The Committee agreed that the Home Occupation standards should be loosened to encourage people to apply for permits.

Other Business

Native manicured ground cover standards: discussion tabled for the next meeting when Ms. Terhune, who researched and submitted literature on the matter, is present. (See attached from Cornell Cooperative)

Design principles and standards: Ms. Terhune found examples of design standards in Pittsford, NY. Planning Board to review and comment. (Link below)

<https://www.villageofpittsford.com/index.asp?SEC=CCC880A1-0EEB-44C9-8E21-10DAA20C2F3E>

LED lighting standards: Will be added to the Land Use Element (dark sky certified lights).

Comp Plan Maps: Most maps in the 2017 Comp Plan will not be updated; One solution is to add a paragraph to any out-of-date map stating that it does not accurately reflect some of the areas.

The Committee will focus on the HPPC additions/changes to the Recreation and Open Space Element (Pages 89 – 92) at the next meeting. Meanwhile, Chair Golden will work with Member Bryan to integrate his comments into the Sustainability Element.