

TOWN OF FORESTPORT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

COMMITTEE MEETING #1 SUMMARY NOTES

Project Number: 2233248

Location: Town Hall/Zoom

Date: October 19th, 2023

Time: 6:30 PM

<u>Meeting Attendance</u>	
Committee Members	
TJ Entwistle	Town Supervisor
Jennifer Hartsig	Grant Writer
Robert Whitehead	Committee Member
Erin Burns	Committee Member
Dave Ultsch	Committee Member
Consulting Team	
Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer	LaBella Associates
Corneil Smith	LaBella Associates
Daniel Lupin	NYSDOS

The meeting was convened at 6:30 p.m.

Introduction:

1. Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer began the meeting with introductions, providing an overview of the comprehensive planning process and the evening's agenda.
 - a. The whole process will take about a year.
 - b. We will be doing a community survey.
2. HBS also reviewed the scope of work.
 - a. Community Profile
 - b. Community visioning
 - c. Identifying issues and opportunities
 - d. Developing recommendations
3. HBS mentioned how developing the vision and action strategies for the Town can set the stage for grant applications and securing funding sources.
 - a. This also helps the Town when it has to make difficult decisions; the Comprehensive plan can act as a general guidebook.
4. HBS also discussed this comprehensive plan's DOS Smart Growth funding.
 - a. DOS will look for Smart Growth principles to be reflected in the plan.

- b. These principles may address issues with housing, green infrastructure, and infill development, as a few examples.
 - c. We will be able to balance grant requirements while focusing on issues important to the Town.
 - d. Communication throughout the comprehensive plan update process will help to achieve this.
5. Daniel Lupin also mentioned that DOS is not looking for a “cookie-cutter” plan; this funding allows Forestport to consider and address how people interact with the land.
 - a. Throughout the update process, we will optimize Forestport’s built, natural, and social environments.
6. DL reiterated that smart growth principles can be used as guideposts but that this comprehensive plan should be unique to Forestport.
 - a. The Committee discussed concerns/reservations about being obligated to incorporate Smart Growth principles that don't fit the Town's character.
7. DL also mentioned that documentation will be helpful.
 - a. The committee needs to show that efforts have been made to incorporate Smart Growth into the plan.
 - b. Things that could be good for one community may not be suitable for another; DOS will look to see that the committee has discussed various options and can justify why certain decisions were made.
8. HBS also mentioned the importance of public participation.
 - a. We will try to capture as much input from the community as possible to get a good idea of the Town's priorities.
 - b. Reassessing what has worked well or not so well in the past
 - c. Using as many platforms for outreach as possible- such as the Town's website.
9. The Committee Discussed different methods for public participation.
10. The committee discussed how population demographics could affect public participation.
 - a. Many of the Town is 65 or older; some may not want to attend evening events.
 - b. Being present at Town events may also help, along with using various outreach methods.
11. The Committee discussed some issues with using census data for Forestport; it may not accurately reflect the population since many people only live there for a portion of the year.
 - a. HBS mentioned that these are the types of issues that will be addressed throughout the process.
 - b. The Committee discussed what level of public participation would be good.
 - i. HBS mentioned that about 20% of public participation is great.
 - ii. We can discuss the methods that will be used in the future.
 - c. DL discussed partnering with local businesses and organizations to help this process.
12. Online surveys will cost less than printed/mailed surveys.
13. Different outreach methods can be used to capture year-round vs. part-time residents.

Future tasks:

14. HBS reviewed the process for developing the community profile and why it is an important preliminary step in updating a comprehensive plan.
15. The committee will meet every other month at the beginning of the process.

- a. Meetings will consist of task review, coordinating public outreach, and developing a comprehensive plan based on public feedback.
16. DL circled back on Smart Growth and mentioned that the Town may already be implementing Smart Growth principles; this plan update will help document those efforts.
 - a. DL also mentioned that DOS is looking for a plan with some creative aspects rather than a generic plan.
17. The committee discussed the community survey.
 - a. Will need to plan appropriately to capture the entire population.
 - b. We will discuss the survey's specifics at the next committee meeting.
 - c. LaBella is developing a survey template that addresses common topics and questions for a comprehensive plan.
 - d. The Town will then personalize it to address things that Town residents value.
 - e. The committee discussed how Smart Growth will be incorporated into the survey.
 - i. HBS mentioned that LaBella could provide the committee with more information on Smart Growth to help people familiarize themselves with the concept and related principles.

SWOT analysis:

18. HBS asked the committee to identify things that make Forestport unique.
 - a. It is a gateway to the Adirondacks.
 - b. The town covers a large area with three distinct hamlets.
 - i. Each hamlet is unique.
 - c. The community generally enjoys snowmobiling, fishing, ATV, and hiking activities.
 - d. Committee discussed Forestport's rural/secluded character.
 - i. Many people come to Forestport for privacy.
19. HBS asked the committee to identify some of Forestport's challenges.
 - a. Committee discussed population trends.
 - i. The younger population is declining.
 - b. Committee discussed the affordability of housing and the need for sustaining employment.
 - c. The Town has noticed that Site review law isn't equipped to address specific land use issues.
 - i. The Town is curious about area zoning.
 - d. Funding for infrastructure improvements/updates is scarce.
 - e. Internet access is another issue that has only slightly improved since Covid-19
20. HBS asked whether the Town has a capital improvement plan that can be referenced in grant applications for sewer and highway improvements.
 - a. DL mentioned that a comprehensive plan can also be used for this.
21. The committee discussed whether having to do grant administration is worth getting the funding.
 - a. DL mentioned many opportunities for technical assistance to lessen that burden.
22. The committee discussed trends in homesteading, tiny houses, and working from home.
 - a. Additional concerns with short-term rentals
 - b. HBS mentioned that we can explore and address those issues as we understand them more.
23. Invasive species within waterways is another environmental issue.

- a. Waterways draw in people from outside of Town.
- b. The committee can bring environmental aspects into the plan, highlighting them as a community resource.

Next Steps:

- 24. LaBella will work on drafting a press release/social media outreach to announce the start of the comprehensive planning process.
- 25. The community profile will be the next big step to be prepared for the next committee meeting.
- 26. The next meeting will also address Planning for the survey and other public outreach methods.
- 27. HBS reviewed the schedule for future committee meetings.
 - a. We will need to pick specific dates in the future.
- 28. LaBella will send draft survey questions for the next meeting.
 - a. Committee will review and decide what to include.
- 29. DL suggested setting up check-in meetings between DOS and LaBella and with the committee to track progress and prevent committee burnout.
- 30. DL also mentioned creating a Dropbox or Google Drive folder for all materials being reviewed and discussed by the committee.
- 31. HBS asked DL for examples of communities that have updated their comprehensive plan in a way that DOS would hope to see for Forestport.
 - a. DL offered to send a list of examples and a few helpful online resources/tools that can be used for the comprehensive plan update process.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Next meeting: December 2023, at 6:30 PM

ITEM	ACTION ITEM	OWNER
1	Send Smart Growth materials to the Committee	LaBella Associates
2	Send draft survey questions for review to the Committee	LaBella Associates
3	Draft a press release/ announcement of Forestport's comprehensive plan update kickoff.	LaBella Associates
4	Send a list of communities to use as examples (along with online resources/tools) to LaBella Associates and the Committee.	Daniel Lupin

The preceding minutes represent the author's understanding of the matters discussed, and decisions reached. The Committee will determine completeness and accuracy at their next scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

LABELLA ASSOCIATES, D.P.C.

Hartley Bonisteel-Schweitzer, Senior Planner, LaBella Associates

Corneil Smith, Planner, LaBella Associates

Cc: All Attendees

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