

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
September 10, 2014 - APPROVED  
**Comprehensive Plan Committee Members**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Email address</b>
Jim Schoenig	VOB Mayor	jschoenig@brewstervillage-ny.gov
Christine Piccini	VOB Deputy Mayor	dpiccini@aol.com
Tom Boissonnault	VOB Trustee	TJBVOB@gmail.com
Mary Bryde	VOB Trustee	MBryde314@gmail.com
Terri Stockburger	VOB Trustee	tp.stockburger@verizon.net
Peter Hansen	VOB Clerk/Treasurer	phansen@brewstervillage-ny.gov
Bob Cullen	Town of Southeast Councilman	rcullen@southeast-ny.gov
Jack Gress	VOB Zoning Board, Coalition for a Better Brewster	jackgress@verizon.net
Richard Ruchala	VOB Zoning Board	rrr845@gmail.com
Rick Stockburger	VOB Planning Board	rstockburger@verizon.net
George J. Gaspar	VOB Planning Board, Resident (architect by profession)	gjgaia48@gmail.com
John Folchetti	VOB Engineer, Consultant to Committee	John.Folchetti@jrfa.com
Anthony Mole	VOB Attorney	am@herodesmole.com
Bob Dumont	Business	Bob@thebowlcompany.com
Joe Czajka	Patterns for Progress	Jczajka@pfprogress.com
Barbara Barosa	Putnam County Planner	Barbara.Barosa@putnamcountyny.gov
Meghan Taylor	EDC President	meghan.taylor@putnamcountyny.gov
Harold Lepler	Covington	haroldlepler@gmail.com
Larry Nadel	Covington	nadels@comcast.net
Don Rossi	Covington, Legal Council	dmrossi@hoganandrossi.com

Members present Sept 10, 2014	Members absent Sept 10, 2014
Jim Schoenig	Joe Czajka
Christine Piccini	Meghan Taylor
Mary Bryde	John Saccardi
Tom Boissonnault	Bob Cullen
Peter Hansen	Don Rossi
Rick Stockburger	Barbara Barosa
Terri Stockburger	Richard Ruchala
Jack Gress	John Folchetti
George Gaspar	
Bob Dumont	
Anthony Mole	
Harold Lepler	
Larry Nadel	

Mayor Jim Schoenig led the Committee in the pledge of allegiance and made a motion to open the meeting. This was seconded by Ms. Piccini and passed unanimously.

Ms. Bryde made a motion to accept the amended minutes from the August 13, 2014 meeting to include a correction of the email address of Ms. Stockburger by adding a period after “tp” so that her email address is corrected to *tp.stockburger@verizon.net*. This was seconded by Mr. Stockburger and passed unanimously.

Mr. Piccini advised the Committee that the August 13, 2014 meeting minutes have been forwarded to VHB so they are aware of any issues/concerns/comments.

Ms. Piccini opened the meeting by asking the Committee if there was any need for further discussion to reach a consensus on the presentations made by VHB at the August 13, 2014 meeting. Ms. Piccini reminded the Committee that VHB addressed many of their concerns in their zoning package.

Ms. Stockburger brought up the topic of historical buildings as she had received a report from the Landmarks Preservation Society and that report listed more historical buildings/sites than the VHB report. Ms. Stockburger would forward the Landmarks' report to Ms. Piccini who would forward to VHB for review.

(See booklet: *The Landmarks Preservation Society of Southeast Inc.;*

*Website: LardmarksSE.org*

*Historic Properties of the Village of Brewster, NY*

*Prepared for VHB, Inc. for the Comprehensive Plan Update for the Village of Brewster*

*By Erin E. Meagher President*

. Ms. Piccini reminded the Committee that VHB's report includes buildings that were either on the Historic Register or in the NYS historic files.

. Ms. Piccini also stated that many of the buildings/sites listed in the Landmarks' booklet might be of local interest, but not part of either the formal register or in the NYS historic files. Once the Landmarks' report is forwarded to VHB and they have a chance to review, they could amend their report.

Mr. Gress stated that he made a lot of comments at the last public hearing since that was where they were supposed to be discussing the review of the presentations.

RE: Design guidelines in the report established for the historic district were vague and that a much better outline of the historic overlays is needed .

He continued to state that there weren't a lot of images of the historic buildings, and many of the images included of today's sites were older images that didn't reflect current building conditions and that this should be updated.

RE: Federal credit tax program – This only applies to general profit-making properties, therefore this program wouldn't be available to not-for-profits, e.g., churches/museums/historic properties, etc. More specificity from VHB is required here for federal tax credits, too.

. Overall, the Committee should be reviewing more specific recommendations from VHB.

Ms. Piccini reminded the Committee that VHB does state that this is preliminary for the zoning chapter.

Mr. Gress responded that they should be more specific, regardless.

Ms. Piccini summarized that Mr. Gress' comments were regarding the presentations and the minutes of the presentations. Mr. Gress agreed.

Ms. Piccini asked if further discussion required on this as no consensus needed as VHB seems to be responding to this.

Mr. Lepler asked if the planning consultant could physically walk the area to see those buildings/properties that Landmarks outlined to see what the impact to the redevelopment plan would be. This gray area could lead to not redeveloping the Village.

- . Mr. Gaspar stated that this is the difference to being recognized federally or at the state level vs. being recognized locally, only.
- . Mr. Lepler recommended facing this discrepancy sooner rather than later.
- . Ms. Piccini added that it would be important to understand the criteria used to determine why one property/building would be on one list and not on the other. If there is pushback on the buildings/properties that should be viable to be redeveloped, it could be an impediment to the overall redevelopment plan.

Mr. Schoenig stated that there are sites on the Landmarks' list that should be condemned, e.g., The Cameo Theater. Why should it be considered an historical building?

RE: Bob's Diner – Parking garage goes in/Bob's Diner goes out. It is part of DEP property.

Mr. Stockburger reminded the Committee that if they are going with the State/National list, there is no need for an historic district. Ms. Piccini added that VHB isn't recommending a complete district. Mr. Gress added that they were vague and that it is open for discussion. And, Ms. Piccini added, the Committee cannot make any decision before reconciling the VHB list and the Landmarks' list.

Mr. Schoenig asked what the criteria is to identify a building as historic.

Mr. Gaspar asked at what level, state or national level. Mr. Schoenig answered, state level.

. Mr. Gaspar explained that one would have to bring the building back to the original state.

Mr. Mole added that some of the listings in the Landmarks' list have U.S. numbers and some of them don't; it's a list of the historic buildings in the Village of Brewster in general terms. Ms. Piccini added that they are part of the history of Brewster.

Mr. Gress asked if a building becomes an historic building, how does that affect/conflict with revitalizing that area and moving forward.

Ms. Piccini responded as follows:

RE: What happens to the individual building - Using the theater as an example, the building would remain intact, but the redevelopment would consist in building around it and having access to it through an elevator/handicapped access from an adjacent building.

Per Mr. Lepler:

. Cameo theater is a knock down; doesn't meet any of the current building codes; Bob's Diner is a knock down.

. The adjacent properties, i.e., Southeast Museum, Library, Church, Town Hall would be part of the cultural plaza. Redevelopment of that property, going across Main Street down to Marvin Ave., would produce grade-level access coming from the side into, for example, the Southeast Museum. There would be access thru the plaza to all of those buildings.

. Without those knock-downs, there won't be a redevelopment project because there wouldn't be parking or shops.

Mr. Stockburger brought up the nationally registered buildings on Park Street and asked how those would be treated. Ms. Piccini and Mr. Gaspar said they would not be affected or removed.

Mr. Stockburger continued to say that any project needs to start east of the Lobdell house; Ms. Piccini added, or around it (which is what VHB is saying), because it and the cottage and the house across the street are listed on the National Register.

Mr. Gaspar's recommendation is to take the village map and identify the national register and state listed sites, and add the local historic sites.

. Ms. Piccini said that the national register and state listed sites are already noted and we'd only have to add the local historic sites.

Mr. Lepler added that they had a conversation about the houses of worship. He suggested having a conversation with representatives from each of those houses of worship to learn what their plans are, establish their needs, see how their needs may have changed. This would deal with redevelopment for current use.

Mr. Dumont asked if there were any applications before the Village for any buildings/sites to get on the national/state register. He asked if it was required that they come before the Village or what the process was.

. Ms. Piccini and others responded that the applicant would go straight to the state.

Mr. Schoenig asked about the Lobdell house, as while it is on the national register, it is considered condemnable. What happens with that type of property. Does someone come in to restore it, or does it become a hassle to the Village.

. Ms. Stockburger stated that the house has already sat for ten years without care and Mr. Schoenig added that no one is living in it now, and now what happens. How can the Village address this.

. Mr. Stockburger added that the Lobdell house and the cottage next door are on the national register and numbered.

. Mr. Gaspar stated that whomever purchases that house would know what the restrictions are, and that they can do anything they want on the inside but the outside must stay intact historically.

. Mr. Schoenig asked if there is a point where the site becomes a nightmare.

. Mr. Nadel suggested that further research is needed.

- . Mr. Lepler suggested going to the DEC to get guidelines/guidance.

Mr. Gress stated that item number IV on the August 13 agenda asked for a consensus on the presentation; item number II on Sept. 10 agenda asks for a consensus on the presentation. Mr. Gress didn't believe that the Committee is ready for a consensus on any presentation.

Mr. Gress continued:

RE: The National Register – VHB mentions the importance of public and institutional uses, particularly the historical ones, but does not suggest any implementation of design or zoning controls. This Committee would have to document those details and implement zoning controls.

- . Not in favor of historic overlay – It will cause problems from the beginning. There is significance to some of the structures.

- . VHB doesn't propose specifics to resolve any of the zoning or text map changes. They make recommendations but don't explain things re: bed and breakfast establishments or B1 zoning district, for example.

- . RE: Town housing – They state new ownership, but don't explain how this is going to create ownership and only provide vague answers.

- . RE: Parking by bedroom rather than dwelling unit – We need more details. How does this help vs. hinder growth in the Village.

- . Overall Mr. Gress agreed with the VHB recommendations re: FAR and heights and setbacks. There were specifics in these areas.

- . Mr. Gress continued stating that their land-use analysis is confusing; there are not enough graphic maps. He suggested that it would make it easier for the Committee to follow if they provided more details.

- . Mr. Gress added that there is no discussion of any community character.

- . Mr. Gress reiterated that the Committee can't have a consensus on preliminary information.

Ms. Piccini reminded the Committee that VHB wanted to present suggestions to establish if there were any issues to prevent them moving forward.

Mr. Gaspar agreed that additional information to explain the parking by bedroom rather than dwelling unit could use further clarification; would like more detail on how they arrived at this. Alternatively, they could provide an

example by picking a parcel and going through an analysis...current status vs. what they are proposing.

Mr. Stockburger stated that the Village added two zones when they did the last rezoning because they had to. If they added automotive uses into B1, that would allow automotive uses all along Main Street, and if you added service stations, they could do the same along all of Main Street.

Mr. Schoenig wanted to confirm that the goal was to consolidate. The response was, Yes, but this would then expand where these other uses would be.

Mr. Mole stated that if they consolidated zones, zone usage would expand. Perhaps redefine the uses of the current districts, e.g. commercial district, general business district, professional services district, service business district, etc. would be a better approach.

Mr. Stockburger talked about unique zones, which might provide for restructured uses, which was okay.

Mr. Gress mentioned that John Nolan recommended consolidation of zones and that VHB only is going along with what others have already recommended. If the Village starts going with restricting people from certain zones, the Village could be accused of spot zoning.

Mr. Lepler suggested that for the next meeting Mr. Czajka present his completed project in order to explain thoroughly the parking by bedroom rather than dwelling parking study.

Mr. Stockburger asked about parking and the number of bedrooms connection. Asked what zones they wanted to consolidate; what were they proposing. Again, VHB doesn't provide recommendations.

Ms. Piccini stated that the Committee was asking about the minutia too early in the process (The outfit analogy).

Mr. Mole reiterated that VHB was trying to present overall concepts.



Mr. Stockburger asked about reducing B zones, but reducing them to what. Again, asked for examples.

Ms. Piccini reiterated that VHB was providing broad based recommendations and that the Committee wasn't objecting to any one in particular, but looking for additional specifics. That's the consensus.

Ms. Piccini next moved on to Item III on the agenda, asking for comments on the Goman & York Market Feasibility Analysis. She introduced the topic by explaining that it speaks to rental property vs. leasing vs. the population. She added that it doesn't include what they want since the Committee is looking for an increase in ownership properties. Currently, Goman & York don't have the Village of Brewster numbers, as they use the macro view. We need to get Goman & York the Brewster numbers to be incorporated into their study.

Mr. Stockburger stated that the Village can provide them with rental information so they can include that into their report.

Mr. Gress stated that it's not public information and is it legal to give out that information.

Ms. Piccini stated that the information exists but they didn't include it, and Mr. Stockburger recommended that the Village gives them this information.

Mr. Lepler stated that Goman & York acknowledges that the desire is for ownership over rental, but that the initial phase (1-3 years) will be spent establishing credibility, followed by the next phase to talk about ownership.

- . Ms. Piccini stated that this document doesn't support ownership.
- . Mr. Lepler stated that he will convey that to Goman & York.
- . Ms. Piccini stated that ownership needs to start in the heart of the Village.

Mr. Gress voiced concerns about the market study.

- . He reminded the Committee that Mr. Goman's proposal stated that there needed to be proof that buildings would be occupied in order for banks to

provide lending, and that home ownership would be what the banks would be looking for.

Mr. Lepler added that the banks need to see 80 percent preleased to be convinced to loan money.

Mr. Gaspar added that the federal government is not in favor of home ownership.

Ms. Stockburger asked what the next generation wants and the response was to rent.

Mr. Hansen reminded the Committee that Mr. Goman did state that this plan is feasible.

Mr. Gress commented that VHB recognizes that the Village has an imbalance of rental vs. ownership and that the Village needs to provide new opportunities for ownership and they recommended town homes. Garden Street property wasn't included.

Mr. Gress also reminded the Committee that VHB's recommendation is the same as the 1990 Village Recommendation.

Mr. Lepler explained to the Committee that he is aware of positive meetings being conducted between a prospective buyer of the Garden Street property.

. Mr. Kevin Callahan from the audience reiterated that there are discussions going on with a serious buyer, who is very active in the artist community, who wants to renovate the building and provide artist lofts. They are looking to invest based on what they've heard at Envision Brewster meetings. They are aware of issues at Garden Street school, but are willing to go forward.

Ms. Stockburger asked if there was any thought to adding on to the school, and Mr. Lepler responded, No. Better to stay within the current footprint.

Mr. Gaspar talked of adding a roof.

Ms. Piccini led the Committee to the review of the August 15, 2014 memos from VHB: Historical and Cultural Resources memo and the Housing Issues and Potential Solutions memo for discussion.

Mr. Gress expressed his concern with having market rate housing and wanted to know if there was further discussion between housing and studios. Mr. Callahan responded no discussion of percentage of housing vs. artist space.

. Mr. Lepler added that everything from this prospective buyer promotes market rate and goes on the tax rolls.

Mr. Gress contested comparing the artist community in Beacon center to developing an art community Brewster center. He stated that Beacon already had an art locale prior to implementing their project, whereas Brewster does not.

. Mr. Callahan disagreed stating that the DIA was started by artists from the city at the manufacturing facility, which served as their seed. In Brewster, Garden Street school would be the seed.

Ms. Stockburger cited another example, The Tornado Factory in Old Town Alexandria.

Mr. Hansen stated that they haven't deviated from the Envision Brewster principles.

Ms. Piccini guided the Committee to the Housing Issues and Potential Solutions memo and reviewed items outlined in this document, stating that affordable housing might be the pushback point in this memo. She also emphasized that Garden Street school come back onto the tax rolls.

Mr. Schoenig asked what the percentage means, and Ms. Piccini explained that the 80 percent relates to the County median salary.

. Ms. Piccini questioned if the Committee wants to promote workforce median rather than the County median.

. The consensus of the Committee was that this needs to be further explored, in order to get the Village income level up to the County income level.

RE: Town houses - Mr. Stockburger stated that it should be specific that the townhouses be owner-occupied townhouses not rental town houses. Don't want a string of rentals. VHB doesn't specify.

Mr. Gress asked about VHB's recommendation of the demolition of buildings near the train station, when these buildings are in fair and good condition, based on VHB's own report. This will affect urban renewal and would pose a problem in implementing an urban renewal project. Mr. Gress asked about getting urban renewal into the blight area.

Mr. Mole stated that VHB is taking a multifaceted approach to redeveloping the Village and not focusing solely on urban renewal.

Mr. Gress expressed concerns about adding affordable housing into the Village and provided some background information. He reminded the Committee that Farrandino, Carney and Saccardi all stated that Garden Street school could incorporate 50 units of affordable housing.

. Mr. Gress remembered that someone said only 20 units could be accommodated.

Mr. Gress cautioned about getting market-rate approvals and then having developers change to affordable housing because the market has changed, and that HUD will come in and demand it and provide funding.

Mr. Schoenig asked how one can stop someone from doing that.

. Mr. Gress responded that as long as they went through all their approvals, they go back to the Planning Board and get new approvals.

Mr. Stockburger stated that the first thing that will need to be done in Garden Street is that it will have to be rezoned. Once that's done for a specific zoning (and a specific number of units), that's all that will be permissible. Mr. Stockburger emphasized that the zoning needs to match what people will spend/build, before the Village rezones.

. Mr. Callahan cautioned about designating how many units because if it's not economically feasible, the space will remain empty.

Mr. Lepler stated that Garden Street doesn't lend itself to cookie-cutter development.

Mr. Mole stated that the Village needs to be careful not to "zone out" affordable housing.

. Ms. Piccini referenced the paragraph in the memo that stated that eighty percent of what Putnam County is, as the paragraph that would protect us.

Mr. Gress reiterated that he would work with market-rate projects to fast track them and pre-approve them.

Mr. Stockburger agreed that the Committee needs to know what's to be built on the Garden Street school site in order to ensure the appropriate zoning is established to make it an economically feasible project.

Mr. Mole reminded the Committee that this time the Committee is focused on implementation at the same time as drafting it. And Ms. Piccini reinforced this sentiment stating that the Village now has the resources to make these decisions correctly.

Mr. Lepler suggested that the Committee authorize Mr. Mole to see the preliminary codes suggested by VHB off the record to ensure that all plans are defensible.

Mr. Gress expressed that this could be a serious legal issue.

Mr. Gress referred to VHB's comments in the report which talked about "with judicious demolition", which can be translated to eminent domain. Again, without specifics there is no indication of which buildings are they recommending be torn down.

Mr. Lepler stated that eminent domain would encompass the whole block.

Mr. Gress asked about this being expanded into the urban renewal plan, and the response was, Yes. However, VHB doesn't include any mechanisms to pay for the rehabilitation where owners are not so inclined to do so. They should make some recommendations if that's what they want to promote.

Mr. Gaspar stated that without better enforcement the issue of demolishing a structure is better handled at the local level through an enforcement agency rather than eminent domain. Mr. Gress agreed.

Mr. Hansen stated that VHB has a list of all the violations from a prior time.

Mr. Gress stated that the Town of Southeast passed a comprehensive plan and asked if VHB is taking a look at that. Mr. Gress also asked if the VOB Planning Board had any comments on that plan.

. Mr. Mole responded that it's different than the Village's and that the Village can have a look at it, but not sure of any influence.

. Mr. Lepler stated to Mr. Gress that it would be a negative to this Comprehensive Plan Committee.

. Mr. Mole didn't see the Southeast comprehensive plan as having any influence on the Village's work here.

Ms. Piccini summarized the meeting stating that the Committee only reviewed item 1-3 on the agenda of Sept. 10, 2014 and that items 4 and 5 will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Ms. Stockburger made a motion to close the meeting. This was seconded by Mr. Bossoinnault and passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.