



WARRENSBURG COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Meeting 2 Summary

Project Number: 2221521

Location: Warrensburg Town Hall

Date: September 15, 2022

Time: 10:00AM

	Name	Organization/Role	Email
Attendees:	Patti Corlew	Warrensburg Planning & Zoning Administrator	patti.corlew@townofwarrensburg.net
	Jim Hull	Warrensburg Code Enforcement Officer	jim.hull@townofwarrensburg.net
	Joyce Reed	Warrensburg Collection Clerk	joyce.reed@townofwarrensburg.net
	John Alexander	Warrensburg Deputy Supervisor	fundirectors@yahoo.com
	Laura Moore	Warrensburg Museum of Local History	Moorela2012@yahoo.com
	Sharon Sutphin	Warrensburg Planning Board Chairperson	nysutphin1@aol.com
	Teresa Whalen	Warrensburg Beautification Chair	taawhalen@yahoo.com
	Norabelle Greenberger	LaBella Associates	ngreenberger@labellapc.com
	Chris Round	LaBella Associates	cround@labellapc.com
	Trevor Lovitz	LaBella Associates	tlovitz@labellapc.com
Michael Allen	ReGrowth Planning	mallen@regrowthplanning.com	

Meeting Scope: Confirm plan themes (issues/opportunities); Coordinate first public event

Meeting Summary:

- Laura Moore, who coordinated Warrensburg's second comprehensive plan, was designated by the committee as the point of contact with the consultant team going forward.
- Committee discussed key themes/issues & opportunities identified by the Committee at the first meeting and related findings from the draft Community Profile. A summary is provided below.

Recreation and Tourism

- Interest in improving access to amenities for locals and tourists alike.
- How tourism can be expanded year-round, and less seasonally driven.
- Warrensburg's bounty of recreational resources, its parks, golf courses, the Hackensack Mountain, the beach and proximity to Lake George. A goal of the plan should be improving the regional visibility of these assets.



- The waterway is underpromoted. Warrensburg's unique siting at the confluence of the Schroon and the Hudson needs further promotion; residents of Warrensburg have true access and true use to both famed water bodies.
- Expanded event programming would increase the visibility of Warrensburg's exceptional recreational areas -- "We don't want to be the best kept secret." Examples: there used to be an informal vintage snow mobile race at Echo Lake; somebody wanted to have a kayak race on the Schroon.
- A strategic item in the Second Comprehensive Plan was increasing the visibility of the park on the river by using it as the venue for the weekly farmer's market. More programming of this sort should be pursued.
- Using rec field for more programming would increase its visibility, especially increasing traffic from other towns.

Short-Term Rentals

- Roughly 80 STRs currently operate in Warrensburg. STRs are a double-edged sword: Queensbury is restricting STRs, as is Lake George (through zoning, zoned out in some areas). In the Warrensburg code, a STR landlord who receives three complaints is brought into court.
- However, the growth of the STR industry has had the effect of reducing housing inventory, making it more difficult for young families to buy a home in town. Increased competition for housing with deeper pocketed families from downstate has compounded this issue.
- Overall, the committee agreed that the STR industry is not tipping the balance yet, but also acknowledged that STRs could potentially pose a problem in the future. Conversely, the LPC observed that housing repurposed as STRs are generally well-maintained and drive tourist expenditures in town. Committee member suggested the solution then is not regulatory, but by increasing housing production. "We need somebody to build homes."

Housing Development and Hamlet Expansion

- In order to spur development on Warrensburg's vacant parcels, the Committee agreed that additional infrastructure in the form of water and sewer lines are needed to entice developers, the cost being otherwise prohibitive.
- The Town is still petitioning the APA for the expansion of hamlet. Although it was generally understood that the APA would approve both expansion zones, the initial application was denied on the grounds of wetlands and scenic concerns.
- The Town also investigated obtaining a land use plan designation from the APA, which would expand local land use control. This however was not encouraged by the APA, largely due to the APA's interest in Warrensburg's riverine setting, some committee members suggested.

Supportive Housing and Aging in Place

- The Town would love to see some senior housing developed on the tract behind what was formerly Tops Supermarket.
- The Town holds a four- to five-acre lot on what was formerly a highway garage. The hamlet is going to give a small piece of this parcel to Warrensburg EMS to form a new ambulance district – the rest the town would love to see developed into a three-story senior housing development. Aging residents are living in homes too large for them (inventory that would be ideal for young families), making aging in place more difficult. Due to the absence of senior housing options in Warrensburg, elder residents are leaving the community to Queensbury, where a 500-unit senior housing facility exists.



- Warrensburg should be an ideal community for seniors, given its walkability and the Warrensburg Health Center. Committee member suggested contacting Habitat for Humanity, who worked on the senior housing project in Queensbury.

Rental Housing and SOGR

- The dearth of rental apartments in Warrensburg furthermore complicates aging in place. LPC members state there used be more apartments, but many have been bought up and converted back to single-family dwelling for the STR market.
- No policy framework in place for the regulation of long-term rentals.
- Strong demand for rental apartments in Warrensburg.
- Absentee landlords have led to dilapidated buildings.
- Aging inventory issue is compounded by lack of able-bodied contractors. Grant money is in hand but the State requires list of qualified contactors (shortage between exit 19 and 26). LPC members suggested expanding vocational training to address this shortage.
- Large white elephant residential structures are an issue. While the town enforcement apparatus can bring the property owners to court, the issue remains that the owners lack the funds to bring their buildings to code.'
- Lack of enforcement options to ensure proper upkeep. List of building codes (beyond height of grass) could be drafted to enforce maintenance for absentee Landlords.
- Typology of a two-family structure in Warrensburg is usually a single-family conversion, not purpose-built multifamily. Some Committee members suggested expanding accessible dwelling units (ADU) zoning to address rental shortage.
- Committee member interested in a sunset law for non-conforming uses (in the mobile home overlay districts). When the uses sunset, the mobile home would have to be moved off the lot and a permanent structure erected in its place. Currently, property owners in the mobile home overlay can replace the mobile home with a new vehicle, so long as it occupies the same footprint.

Economic Development

- Warrensburg's status as a "drive through town" which thousands of vehicles daily pass through on their way into the Adirondacks. Given the advantage of traffic volume, the Town needs to create more reasons for travelers to stop and stay in Warrensburg.
- More independent retailers with longer hours could draw in visitors the way other established independent retailers in Warrensburg do. However, retail is difficult in the present landscape as business owners can't find help, or can't afford it, or they have no desire to keep long hours.
- Marketing, outreaching, and placemaking were offered as another solution.
- Committee member suggested that the town needs additional anchor tenants, citing River Street Plaza and its opportunities for health care tenants and restaurants.
- A brewery is looking to locate in Warrensburg, either renovating a site or a new build. Tavern and bar land use designation only applies to parts of Main Street.

Historic Preservation

- Chain retailer that purchased a parcel that had been occupied by a historic structure on Main which it subsequently demolished, proved a divisive issue in the community. Some Committee members stated that the property owner had been wanting to sell the property for nine years and saw the construction of an anchor store as necessary for the Town's economic development, since no interest was generated in rehabbing the historic structure.



- Committee member noted the Warrensburg Historic District is non-contiguous, as not every building in the historic district is historic, and also noted that unlike other communities, not enough historic legibility survives in Warrensburg to effectively market that asset
- Committee member suggested that the value of Warrensburg's historic properties is worth finding buyers for and restoring them and suggested that the Town needs to better market these assets to attract investment and secure public and private financing. The preservationists in Town were not against the chain retailer altogether but its placement within the Town's historic core. Another Committee member countered that the chain retailer's site selection was constrained by the limited availability of parcels with an appropriate land use designation.
- "The Pillars" on Main was discussed as a representative case of the challenge of preserving Warrensburg's historic structures. To bring it to contemporary codes would require a \$2-3 million investment.
- The new gas station was offered as a success story of contextually built new development.
- Committee member noted that government incentives exist for rehabbing historic homes within the Historic District and also emphasized that a property listing within the Historic District comes with no constraints: there are no historic ordinances in Warrensburg that a property owner must comply with.
- New commercial development in Warrensburg is largely non-contextual. Committee member suggested that if form-based code or another type of zoning ordinance were to be implemented, well-capitalized national retailers could theoretically comply with more rigorous design standards.
- The renovation of the Town's historic bandstand was state-funded, at a total cost of \$310,000.
- A case study in maintaining historic character while attracting new investment, the Town worked with the pharmacy that replaced the Colonial Arms to create a design that maintained and pay tribute to the historic structure.
- Adirondack Architectural Heritage Architecture just received \$750,000 grant for Main Street Revitalization.
- Committee member suggested that new forms of capital and investment are clearly coming into Warrensburg, as evidenced by the STR industry, which could lead to new stream of financing, private or public, for historic preservation, in addition to securing public financing which will enable long-term residents funding to rehab their homes. For instance, Warrensburg received a community block development grant, \$400,000 dispersed over two-year period for home improvement. Over sixty pre-applications, \$75,000 per household.
- Warrensburg Beautification (est. 1984) worked with a consultant team in the 1990s to create a Main Street revitalization plan. The plan outlined focal areas on Main Street, which then received streetscape improvements and riverside parks (financed with grant funding from State and assisted by Warren County Planning). Committee discussed interest in focusing on key areas/buildings, rather than historic district as a whole.
- Committee members agreed that at Main Street supermarket plaza and the five-way intersection by the bandstand would be an ideal focal point of visual improvement efforts.

Public Outreach/Event Planning

- Comprehensive Plan FAQ was added to the Town's website. Committee member asked that LaBella confirm, as they couldn't find it.
- LaBella and the Committee then discussed scheduling the first public event and the event format. Committee agreed that the Warrensburg Elementary School would be the preferred venue for the event, held in the evening hours with catering from Oscar's.
- Committee member discussed Apple Festival planned for following day as an opportunity to advertise the event. LaBella indicated that they would prepare a flyer – either with visioning survey



questions or with event info – depending on whether they are able to finalize the venue location and date in time.

ITEM	ACTION ITEM	OWNER
1	Produce flyer for public input to be distributed at the Apple Festival - <i>Complete</i>	LaBella
2	Book venue for first public event - <i>Complete</i>	LaBella
3	Produce and distribute flyer advertising first public event at Garlic Festival, Garage Sale, at Stewart's, around town, on town social media.	LaBella/Committee
4	Hold first public event in October	LaBella
5	Provide feedback on draft Community Profile	Committee
6	Provide additional stakeholder identification guidance - <i>Complete</i>	LaBella

The preceding minutes represent the author's understanding of the matters discussed and decisions reached. If there are any corrections, clarifications, or additions to be made to these minutes, please contact the sender at ngreenberger@labellapc.com within five business days of issuance.

Respectfully submitted,
LABELLA ASSOCIATES, D.P.C.

Norabelle Greenberger, AICP

Cc: All Attendees