



Village of Perry Comprehensive Plan
Steering Committee Meeting #2
August 20, 2014

Notes from a meeting of the Village of Perry Comprehensive Plan Committee held at The Room, 23 South Main Street, Perry, New York on Wednesday, August 20, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Jacquie Billings Barlow
Brian Bieger
Ann Burlingham
Rich Eliaz
Giuseppe Gentile
Bridget Givens
Dana Grover
Rick Hauser
Anne Humphrey
Eleanor Jacobs
Daryl McLaughlin
Bethany Zerbe

Committee Members Absent: Josh Wolcott

Others Present: Nicolette Barber, Hunt Engineers
Charles Buki, czb

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. The Steering Committee discussed whether or not CPC meetings should be open to the public. The Committee decided that the public should be invited to attend meetings, but not to participate. There is no requirement to meet the legal requirements for public notice. Meeting notices will be posted on the Village website and in the Penny Saver. The meeting notes can also be posted online if the Committee wishes.

There were some additions to the focus group ideas listed in Rich's minutes: public safety, service organizations/non-profits, and senior housing (to be combined with senior concerns).

Comprehensive Planning

Charles Buki led a discussion on what a comprehensive plan is and the Committee's role in developing the plan so that there is no more confusion at the conclusion of the meeting. He is often asked what makes a successful comprehensive plan, and his answer is that a successful plan is one that has prompted substantial change in the community after the plan is drafted, whether or not it is later adopted. For change to occur, the community has to recognize that there is a need for it. The SC has to be a supportive group that listens carefully to the community and leads the process of outreach in order to ensure community ownership of the plan and the vision. The SC also needs to be able to improvise. It is Anne's job as Chair to mobilize the SC to be capable of working together.

The Committee discussed whether or not Perry is headed in the right direction. Knowing the community's trajectory is important in order to inform what kind of comprehensive plan the consultants will write: should it be aggressive (with a short time frame to achieve ambitious goals), or a modest plan (with less ambitious or time-sensitive goals) or a very modest plan? The discussion revealed that, while in some ways Perry is building momentum and heading in the right direction—for example, with Main Street improvements—in other ways there is a sense that Perry has hit a plateau or is declining—for example, in terms of home ownership and median age. Ultimately, the SC must decide what kind of plan Perry needs.

Draft for Steering Committee review

These are difficult questions: there is no clear narrative that says Perry is *only* in trouble or *only* succeeding; there are a number of truths.

A comprehensive plan has a technical piece: baselines (where you are today), a statement of what the community wants to be and how to get there. There is also a very important non-technical piece: a plan is a guiding philosophy. Ultimately, the comprehensive plan gives meaning and legal standing to a community's regulatory framework. It is the SC's role to define the philosophy by talking with the community. Because it is not practical to talk to everyone, the SC represents the community as a whole and acts as the eyes and ears of the planning process. The SC has an informal role and only informal authority: the Village Board ultimately has the power to vote down the plan.

Project Timeline

The project timeline will be adjusted to accommodate time for the survey and focus groups over September and October. The SC will lead two public meetings, to be confirmed this fall:

1. Presentation of findings from community outreach ("this is what you told us, this is what we think it means")
2. Presentation of draft plan.

Note: the consultants aren't making the presentation because they don't represent the community and they will leave after the process.

There will also be two public hearings:

1. CPC public hearing to present draft plan.
Revisions will be made based on the feedback from this meeting. The CPC will then forward the draft plan by resolution to the Village Board.
2. Village Board public hearing to present the final draft
The Board will make revisions as it sees fit and decide whether to adopt the plan.

The SC will meet in September and October to discuss progress with public outreach. Charles estimates that the SC needs 36 residents to be substantially involved in conversations and give constructive feedback in order for the comprehensive plan to have standing in the community. The CPC should be thinking all the time about how to mobilize this group of 36 people.

According to this revised timeframe, during November and December the consultants will work on the draft and provide revisions on a continual basis until January/February. This document will form the basis of the second public meeting and revisions will be made based on feedback from the meeting. A public hearing will be held at the end of the SC's process, and then the SC will refer the draft plan to the Village Board. The Board will then conduct its own hearing before deciding whether to adopt the plan.

The Plan has to enable Perry to get the big things right. Therefore, you have to find out what the big things are (3-4 items). The Plan will need to anticipate what the future holds to the best extent possible and plan for it. The Plan will also need to have a framework for decision-making for eventualities that can't be anticipated—this could be anything from a factory closing to a freak weather event to a legislative decision or unexpected investment in a nearby community. This is particularly important when values are at odds with one another (for example, jobs v environment, private property rights v public good).

Stakeholder groups

The Committee should work in pairs or threes on stakeholder groups and aim to have two meetings with each (one in September and one in October) to ensure that all stakeholders have the maximum opportunity to participate. Ask someone in each group to hold the meeting at home or in a business, serve food and drink, and take copious notes to give to the consultants.

Each group must be asked the following questions:

1. What is working and what is not?
2. What are the big matters that require attention?
3. What is in the way of progress in Perry?

4. What else do you know that the consultants need to know?

Face-to-face meetings in groups are much more effective than meetings held one-to-one or over Skype. Part of why doing stakeholder meetings this way is important is to give folks the opportunity to hear each other and begin to develop a community narrative.

A common theme in comprehensive planning is self reliance and independence. Are these concepts important Perry? If so, how important? Is Perry self-reliant and independent now? Does the Perry community want to be independent and self-reliant? If so, how can this be achieved, and what is the community willing to do?

Stakeholder meeting tips: ask people to elaborate on their answers and give examples. Keep the meetings to less than two hours.

The SC should meet to boil down the issues from the first set of focus groups and be ready to discuss them at the September meeting. SC will notify consultants of stakeholder meeting times and locations so they can attend if possible.

Community Survey

The survey is an important addition to the outreach strategy because it people who don't necessarily want to talk or attend meetings to be heard. The SC should start thinking about subsequent follow-up surveys on specific issues.

Feedback on the survey is due to Daryl by Friday, August 22. The URL should be added to the hardcopy surveys. Manual responses will be entered into SurveyMonkey for ease of analysis.

Nicolette will provide draft press release to Ann and provide Daryl with the survey word doc. Survey notices will be published in the Penny Saver and at the Village Hall. The survey URL should also be made available on community websites (PMSA, Library, etc.)

CPC should check that survey works in different browsers and report any problems to Darryl.

Survey launch date: Thursday August 28th

Survey close date: Thursday September 18th

The meeting ended at 8:55 pm. The next meeting of the Steering Committee will be held on Wednesday, September 24, 2014, 7 p.m. at The Room.

Nicolette Barber
Tillie Baker