

Subject: Some Ideas to consider for our Comprehensive plan

From: Leslie Smith (isoscelesp@optonline.net)

To: voccomments@frontier.com;

Cc: mayor@villageofchesterny.com; ereilly@villageofchesterny.com; vcblgdg@frontiernet.net; abattiato@villageofchesterny.com; bboone@villageofchesterny.com; CLbatt@optonline.net;

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1. The Village desperately needs an architectural review board. We need design guidelines to be incorporated into our zoning. Determining appropriateness of architecture, signage, parking lots, colors etc. is important. The aesthetics and architecture in the village need to be seriously considered. Mixing historical structures with "standard" corporate branded buildings, looks like a haphazard hodgepodge even if it is allowed by current zoning. We (Chester) could be "Anywhere USA" if only the Rt. 17M strip is seen, and that is all many people do see.
2. Three historic district overlays should be created. One in the West Avenue/ Brookside Avenue area containing the former W.A. Lawrence residence and property, one in historic downtown including parts of High Street where the Rysdyke house still stands and one in the uptown section along Main Street /Academy Avenue where the former Yelverton Inn is located.
3. There at least 2 areas not appropriately zoned.
 - a. Nexans (former Chester Cable) should be residential if and when the opportunity presents itself.
 - b. the M-2 parcel in the village at Camp La Guardia should be agricultural
4. Building, paving and filling in the 100 year floodplain should be prohibited or very highly restricted and compensating mitigation required.
5. Village website redesign is badly needed. The website may be the first impression of our village a person encounters. As is, the design gives a poor impression. It is unattractive, difficult to find what you seek, incomplete and about 25 years behind the times.
One thing that needs to be there that is not, is an up to date zoning map.
6. The village needs and has needed for years, a ridge protection overlay district. The Town of Chester code addresses ridge protection in 98-26 of its zoning chapter.
7. The newest village zone, RS with technology overlay district, needs revision.
8. Village of Warwick 1999 comprehensive plan on page 36 considers how annexed lands are brought into the village. We also need to consider how annexed lands are brought into the Village of Chester.
9. The Town of Goshen Comprehensive Plan (see page 42) advocates round-a-bouts for traffic intersection solutions and calming. We need to consider using round-a bouts at 3 of our problem intersections.
 - a. Move Kings Highway (Orange County #13) back into its old right of way and construct a round-a bout for it with St. Rt. 17M, Hudson Street and Main Street.
 - b. A round-a bout at the intersection of Main St., Oakland Avenue and High St. (St. Rt. 94).
 - c. A round-a bout at the poorly designed intersection of Brookside Avenue (Rt 17M), Academy Avenue (St.Rt. 94) and Summerville Way (St.Rt.94). With a round-a bout here, the traffic lights could be eliminated and traffic could keep moving.
10. We need more sidewalk connectivity for walking within the village. Many people walk into the village from Arcadia Hills. We especially need sidewalks into the Mall from Brookside Avenue at West Avenue (across from Orange Bank and Trust). From the village boundary on Brookside Avenue past the Castle to West Avenue. Within the Mall, Wendy's rear exit sidewalk leads to the traffic exit lane and there is no sidewalk access to the larger parking area to the south. It would be beneficial to have more connectivity between the Chester Mall and Historic Downtown also.

11. Historic Downtown Chester: Get rid of those ugly poles/ wires (move them behind the buildings) to enhance aesthetics, and correct code violations. Read the section of the Village of Monroe Comprehensive Plan re: downtown.
12. Make Main Street one way into Historic Downtown and one way out through Center Street/Hadley Alley.
13. In my opinion, the Larkin Green project is not in a good location. A village green (Larkin) would be great for the village located on the property owned currently by Capricorn lighting LLC ((102-1- 15.21) surrounded by historic buildings and overlooking the distinctive Black dirt area.
14. A well designed tiered parking structure would be ideal behind the village hall where we already have municipal parking. It would provide needed parking and would also provide a visual transition between the agricultural uses on the flat mucklands and the tall masonry buildings on Main Street.
15. Reconsider a Business Improvement District for Historic Downtown.
16. Enact local legislation to outlaw “zombie” utility poles. ie: Cornwall, Town of Wallkill. Local law requires that zombie poles be taken down within a scheduled time frame. State law operates on a “ last wire down” doctrine, meaning the last utility to move its wires to the new pole is responsible for taking down the old pole.
17. Parking uptown: there is a large area behind the Main street buildings owned by Edith Palmer Trust. This area, or part of it, could provide needed parking for uptown businesses and could be paved with permeable material. We need to be more flexible about striping, signage, pavement etc.
18. Reduce curb cuts along the highway and main roads by connecting parking lots where it makes sense to do so.
19. Consolidate signs/ change sign mounting practices to eliminate the multitudes of individual poles and signs. Eliminate those flapping feather sign monstrosities that are already prohibited in our code. Why are they appearing everywhere?
20. Encourage affordable housing and projects like Green Meadows which always seems to have a waiting list.
21. New commercial projects and other types where it would be appropriate: specify and encourage parking behind buildings or beside buildings and construct closer to streets and sidewalks to encourage foot traffic.
22. Consider compatibility of adjacent zones in the village with those in the surrounding town.
23. Incorporate Design Guidelines into zoning. Town of Goshen zoning Chapter 97 at 97-5 States; The town of Goshen encourages development that is compatible with the existing character of the town. The Board hereby adopts the illustrated design guidelines published by the New York Planning Federation in 1994 titled “Hamlet Design Guidelines”, “Building Form Guidelines” and “Rural Development Guidelines” (hereinafter the “guidelines”) Copies of these guidelines are contained in appendix D hereof. Where this chapter specifically requires that the guidelines be followed, they shall be mandatory. In other cases, they shall be advisory only. The guidelines shall be adapted to the specific requirements of this chapter and the Town of Goshen as the reviewing board deems appropriate.
[1] Editor’s note; appendix D is included at the end of this chapter.
[2] The Planning Federation guidelines were prepared by the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development. I have obtained copies from them.