

Planning Ahead

A Comprehensive Plan furnishes the legal basis for all of a municipality’s zoning laws. Among other things, it represents the blueprint that guides a town’s or village’s Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Pittsford’s Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2009. Changes in our community and new considerations since then warrant a review of the Plan to determine whether further update is required.

For example, Pittsford has been a leader in adopting and using zoning laws that offer incentives to preserve open space, including setting aside as open space portions of properties subject to development. Among the priorities I brought with me to the supervisor’s office is to make sure that the open space preserved in this way is configured wisely and consistently with our goals as a community.

Does our Comprehensive Plan sufficiently make a priority of configuring open space in a way that helps to preserve the rural aspect and ambience of the affected area? With that end in mind, does the Plan adequately make a priority of providing for corridors of contiguous open space along main roadways? It should. Therefore, we will review the Comprehensive Plan and, if necessary, undertake a formal update to make sure that it does.

Doing so represents much more than a mere expression of a wish or a policy preference. The Comprehensive Plan gives our Planning Board the legal basis to consider various factors in approving applications for development. The point is to make sure that we don’t squander the open space we obtain through incentive zoning, but rather configure it in such a way as to maximize preservation of the look and feel of Pittsford’s landscape.

Changes in areas beyond the Town’s control also can drive the need to update the Comprehensive Plan. For example, the proposed canalside development in the Village, if it goes through, would have effects on a wider area, as is true for any new construction. Although the canalside project is solely within the Village government’s jurisdiction, the Town administration will need to take into account the implications of traffic and other factors affecting the Town side of the canal bridge and beyond. This in turn may make it necessary to amend the Comprehensive Plan or other zoning provisions.

We have just begun the process of reviewing the Comprehensive Plan with a view toward determining whether a full-fledged update has become necessary or desirable and expect to have a recommendation to the community on the subject later this year. To keep current on news about Town priorities and projects, as well as various items of community news, please consider subscribing to our weekly Town e-newsletter. You may do so via the Town website at www.townofpittsford.org.

Finally, congratulations to our very own Village Mayor Robert Corby, chosen as Mayor of the Month for March, 2014 by the City Mayors Foundation. Mayor Corby’s vision of what makes for a livable community resonates well beyond the borders of the Village. I commend to your attention his online interview with City Mayors at www.citymayors.com. In it Bob offers

the best succinct expression I've seen anywhere of the ideas that have made our community the beautiful and vital place it is. Thank you Mr. Mayor!

If you'd like to comment on these matters or on any other issue involving Town government, please stop by my office in Town Hall, give me a call at 248-6220 or send a message to bsmith@townofpittsford.org.