

**VILLAGE OF CORNWALL-ON-HUDSON  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE MEETING  
THURSDAY, MAY 25, 2017 – 7:00 P.M.**

**Present Were:**

Mary Aspin, Vice Chair  
Dominic Cordisco  
Bill Grisoli  
Lorraine McGuinness

**Absent**

Led Klosky, Chairperson

**Also Present:**

Megan Tenneman, Orange County  
Zack, Orange County  
Chief Steven Dixon, COH PD  
Roberta Hastey, Recording Secretary

Niklas Moran – Mountain Road  
Fire Chief Jeff Armitage, COH FD  
Mike Trainor, SKE#2 (COH FD)

Ms. Aspin opened the meeting at 7:15pm

**Orange County Planning**

Megan Tenneman from Orange County explained where the County was and the other villages and towns in the County. Of the 40 municipalities they service, 20 are working on their comprehensive plans. The County is also working on updating their plan. Most are focusing on developing their main streets, looking into ways to get around the area more easily and capitalizing on their natural assets.

There are five key industries in Orange County: Arts, Agriculture, Health Care, Light Manufacturing & Technology and Tourism.

Light manufacturing might work for C-o-H with careful management they could be low impact. We already have the Food Bank which makes use of a manufacturing space.

Mr. Cordisco pointed out that since we don't have a lot of space to develop new sites it might help us to focus on using other spaces more efficiently.

Ms. Tenneman noted one of the trends they see in warehousing is using smaller spaces that can be more flexible in their arrangements.

Ms. Aspin mentioned other places down by the river such as Scenic Technologies (with the caveat of rising water levels in the future).

The County is looking into more ways to utilize the river and not just for recreational tourism but also for shipping although most is currently going out of Newburgh.

Tourism support services estimate there were 4 million unique visitors to the County last year, Three of the top five non-NYC NY State tourism spots are in Orange County – Storm King Art Center, Woodbury Commons and West Point.

Mr. Grisoli asked if there was any information regarding transportation, specifically Stewart Airport links and how that might impact COH.

Ms. Tenneman responded that there was not a lot the County can control, it rests mostly with the MTA/Port Authority and there is only one rep for upstate New York and she represents four counties. There are many things being worked on but at this time nothing concrete enough to be used for planning purposes.

Zack Coleman from the Orange County Planning spoke regarding regional transportation. Using NY DOT data to map by municipality bottle necks and pinch points, creating a density analysis looking at the data on a regional basis but also on a microscale prospective. Some pinch points are Newburgh down Broadway at main intersections and New Windsor at Five Corners. Orange County Planning is looking to connect multiple modes of transportation together to create transit hubs. They are also looking to provide alternate transportation opportunities including: trails to transit, bike paths, and waterways. Looking at waterways for recreation as well as transportation (ferries) Looking on how to expand transit services (although operators will still provide the services) and route coordination/route efficiency. Looking at where there might be more opportunities like at Harriman possibly at Salisbury Mills.

Ms. Aspin asked about bus service to Cornwall. Mr. Coleman thought there was potential but finding an operator to run it would be difficult. Ms. Aspin asked about ferry service from Beacon to Newburgh to Cornwall, Ms. Tennerman thought that it might be 15 to 20 years before that was feasible for the operators.

Mr. Coleman also noted it would pull ridership from the west side of the Hudson so that might affect support from NJT and transit companies operating in the area.

On the regional side Stewart has increased their flights and the construction of their new customs area will be helpful in increasing capacity. Once ridership is up at Stewart, that will drive other modes of transportation in the area, again about 15 years out.

Mr. Coleman is also working on the County's public engagement website called CoUrbanize (Courb.co/ocny). Everyone should have received an email with the link – the link should also be on the County's website in the near future.

Ms. Aspin asked about any other trends Ms. Tenneman sees in other planning documents. OC Planning is looking at sustainability and resiliency in the face of natural disasters. They are looking for ways to build that do not impact the water sheds as much by keeping the storm water on site and working to leave a smaller footprint. That plays into the transportation aspect as well. They are looking at ways to increase non-motorized modes of transportation such as walking, biking, etc. They are looking for ways to improve their trail network for bicycles particularly but also with walking and that needs to be made as safe and comfortable as possible. Ms. Aspin noted that there is little place to put sidewalks with older, more narrow streets and not all would like the addition of sidewalks. Ms. Tenneman said narrower roads are actually safer. Ms. Aspin added the grass curbs are better for absorbing run off. Ms. Tenneman also said walkability helps with income inequality as those without a car can still get to a local job.

### **Police Chief Dixon**

Chief Dixon has 3 FT and 10PT officers, 4 marked and 1 unmarked vehicles. The department operates 24-7 utilizing mainly 1 officer patrol units. They use more manpower for parades, races and special events. The department uses grant money through the State to provide for equipment: rifles, vehicles, etc.

The department provides community services including:

Vacant House Check

Safe Senior program

Bike ID program

Special Events including: Two proms picture taking down at the river front, RiverFest, races and parades the annual Fireman's Fair in July/August.

One of Chief Dixons main goals when hired was to get better training for the department, get better equipment and to maintain a good relationship with the community as well as working other departments.

Ms. Aspin asked about sharing services with the Town. Chief Dixon said they have a very good working relationship with the Town and departments back each other up.

The challenges the police department faces are typical to other police departments. although not a substantial issues within the Village, domestic violence and drug problems exist in all communities. The officers carry Narcan to deal with heroin overdoses and the officers make sure they are aware of what is going on in the wider community. Most arrests/citations are for driving offenses and drug use while driving. The department makes use of free training through County and State.

**Storm King Engine Fire** Chief Jeff Armitage and Mike Trainor spoke about the Fire Department. Mr. Armitage provided the committee and public with a handout with information regarding the Fire Department. One of the largest issues they face is getting enough volunteers that stay long-term. It is difficult for young adults to find affordable housing without having to work more than one job and once they are working more than one job, it's difficult for them to find time to volunteer. It's provides more stability if the membership are home owners since they are more likely to stay longer and be more invested in the Village. Members range from Junior Explorers up to seniors citizens. They are a great group of men and women and have been serving the community for 150 years.

Recently bought a boat which helps provide service on the water.

Training including EMT

Village is supportive and helps them buy the best equipment they can afford.

The department provides medical since 1993 and they also back up COVAC. The department provides EMT training for their members as well.

Ms. McGuinness asked about affordable housing. Mr. Armitage said they recently discussed possibly buying a house to provide single younger generation members with local housing and they also have spoken with Senator Larkin about possibly providing a tax incentive to volunteers noting there was a study done that if each municipality in NY replaced their volunteers with paid staff, it would cost over \$5 billion. Even the apartments in the area aren't always affordable. Mr. Trainor said they look to get members that own within the Village as they tend to be more invested and each member needs at least 150 hours of training as well as equipment so while the younger members are greatly appreciated, they tend to leave when they grow up. They have been very fortunate with volunteers but looking down the road, they are looking to bring in more members.

Other services the Fire Department provides: Scholarships, Halloween Event, Christmas Event, Fire Prevention training for the schools and for Camp Olmstead. The Department is very involved in community and look to continuing to support the community and working with the other departments.

Mr. Cordisco stated tying affordable housing to the needs of the department is very germane to what the committee needs to do – affordable housing can take many forms and the Committee

would like to have a range options that could be recommended to the Village Board. The Fire Department would be an important voice regarding affordable housing.

Ms. McGuinness asked if the Village had the authority to provide tax exemptions but was told it was mainly the State, the Village's portion is about 11% of property tax, 74% is the school tax. They don't have OT available but when FD needs more help, they can ask and are lucky to have two paid departments nearby (West Point & Newburgh).

Ms. Aspin asked about the number of calls. Mr. Trainor answered over the last three years the department has averaged 180 calls/per year with about 65 of them being medical calls. Now only doing ALS calls. There is a paid EMT with COVAC. The norm is usually 15 calls a month but last month there were 15 calls in 2 days. Calls spike with weather emergencies (although the last spike was not weather-related). About 10 or 15 calls a year are mutual aid. The mutual aid calls have gone up since they have the boat as the department is part of the Hudson River response plan. The main reason for the boat is the increase in activities on the Hudson.

Ms. McGuinness asked who can go on the Boat Calls. Mr. Armitage responded only qualified members who have been properly trained. They take a Coast Guard class and the department provides training. Not all volunteers are used for every type of job. The department works with the members to make sure they are trained for the job they are doing and are comfortable with the needs of that particular position. Fifteen members have been trained for working on the boat. They went over safety procedures for the kayaking companies.

Mr. Grisoli asked if the Fire Department received grants. FD gets limited grants from NY State but they need to be for the building not for the equipment. So the finances that would have been used for maintenance of the building are then available to buy equipment. Federal grant programs are limited as overall income of the Village is too high to qualify. FD works with Village on long-term replacement plan for apparatus.

Mr. Moran asked about the oil trains, Mr. Trainor answered they went to Colorado to be trained to work with crude oil but speaking with CSX, crude oil is one of the smallest components of what is on the cars and the cars are safer than thought. They did go on stand-by in New Windsor for that derailment. CSX provides the department with a great deal of information and responds quickly. Key if there is a fire is not to put it out but to keep the other cars near it cool.

## MINUTES

*Mr. Cordisco made a motion to approve 4/23/17 minutes as amended by*

*Ms. Aspin. Motion seconded by Mr. Grisoli and approved 4-0.*

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Moran wanted to reiterate that affordable housing was crucial and asked why there was a moratorium on ADUs. Ms. Aspin responded it was to clarify what they are and the moratorium should only last about six months.

Mr. Moran mentioned there was a transit engineering study of Duncan & Hudson / Academy & Hudson and Bayview and Dock Hill and wondered what had happened with that study. He also mentioned on Economic Development - Sloatsburg got a grant to do bike lockers and there are a lot of bicyclists in Cornwall so that might be something of interest for the Committee.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

A date was discussed for the offsite workshop to review Goals and Objectives - Modifying goals, putting together a vision statement, and looking to lay out how best to write the plan. Since the building inspector cannot make Thursday evenings, it might make sense to have him speak to the committee at the beginning of the workshop. Saturday, June 10 at 9am seemed to be the consensus and they would check with Mr. Klosky for his availability.

Mr. Cordisco suggested the committee go through Section 3 – Goals and Objectives, and Key Elements and note what they would like to change, add, expand, etc.

Ms. Aspin spoke about affordable housing. One option for the future might include seeking support (HUD or State programs) for grants to help maintain the apartment buildings that currently exist in the Village- there are approximately 12 apartment buildings. In return for this type of support, we might expect that one apartment in each building be rented at a subsidized rate. Mr. Cordisco thinks the Plan should have an affordable housing component which would propose a few possible ideas.

R. Grodence asked about what seems like resistance to accessory apartments at zoning and planning board meetings. Ms. Aspin noted that clearer guidelines with zoning would help with that so it does not become neighbor versus neighbor. Rulings aren't clear which is why there is a moratorium on accessory apartments. Mr. Cordisco saw in other areas where the conversion of single family homes into apartments, created many problems including a greater need for parking which changed the nature of the neighborhood to its detriment so it needs to be approached carefully.

**Adjournment**

*Dominic Cordisco made a motion to adjourn meeting at 8:52 PM, seconded by Lorraine McGuinness – approved 4-0.*

Respectfully submitted

Roberta Hastey,  
Recording Secretary



# CORNWALL ON HUDSON FIRE DEPARTMENT

P.O. Box 333  
233 Hudson Street  
Cornwall on Hudson, New York 12520  
Telephone: (845) 534-2841 Fax: (845) 534-3428

*Storm King Fire Engine Company #2  
"100% Volunteer – Serving our Community Since 1868"*

## Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting 5/25/17

The Storm King Fire Engine Company #2 has been serving the Village of Cornwall on Hudson since 1868. Over the years the emergency needs of our community and its residents have changed dramatically. The fire department has been able to adapt to meet these needs and new challenges. What started out in 1868 as a Volunteer Fire Department remains just that today, a Fire Department staffed 100% by Volunteers. Our department is well equipped and well trained to meet the needs of our community. However, the biggest difficulty that our department, as with many volunteer fire departments, face on a daily basis is the recruitment and retention of firefighters.

Currently our department is staffed by twenty-eight (28) active members, which is significantly less than just ten years ago. Our current average response for an incident is nine (9) firefighters per incident. Ten years ago our average response was twelve (12) firefighters per incident. That is a twenty-five percent reduction over the past ten years. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), a nationally recognized association which sets standards for the fire service, recommends a response of at least fifteen firefighters for a single family residential house fire. The good news is that even with a lower turnout of firefighters per incident, our average response time of five minutes and 38 seconds for the arrival of the first fire department unit is well below the seven minute standard set by the NFPA.

Of the twenty-eight active members of the department, only eight (28%) are current property owners in the Village of Cornwall on Hudson. The other twenty (72%) members are either children living at home with their parents, living in rental properties, or live in surrounding communities. Of these twenty-eight members, eight have less than 5 years of service, eight have between 5-10 years, four have between 10-20 years of service, three have 20-30 years, four have 30-40 years, and one has over 40 years of service. Over the past ten years we have had thirty-one new members join the department. Of those 31 members 17 were under the age of eighteen. Of the 31 new members only 15 are still active members today and of the fifteen only three (3) are property owners.

We have brought forth this information to highlight the need for affordable housing in the Village and/or some other means to entice members of our community to join the volunteer fire department. The number one cause of our inability to retain members is the cost of living in our village. The cost of real estate, the high taxes and rental costs are making it impossible for younger members of our department to remain with our department when they move out of their parents' home because they must move to another community to afford housing. On the other hand, those who have decided to live in our community and raise a family are finding it increasingly difficult to volunteer because often times they work two jobs or both spouses work simply to afford the living expenses in our village.

**Dial 9-1-1 in Case of Emergency**  
**"Fire Prevention and Protection Through Education"**



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Over the years the fire department has initiated several different means to recruit and retain our members. This includes creating a junior firefighter position for 16-18 year old, a retirement annuity program and a fire explorer program in conjunction with the Boy Scouts of America. Upon review of these programs we have seen very little effect of the retirement annuity program on our ability to retain our members. The junior firefighter and fire explorer program has had a significant effect on our recruitment of members. These two programs are responsible for recruiting the majority of our firefighters. However, these firefighters cannot be utilized to fight a fire or be placed in harm's way until they reach the age of 18. The benefit of having these programs is that it allows us to train the new members prior to the age of 18 so that once they turn 18 they are full-fledged interior firefighters. The downside is that most often these members go away to college and when they graduate from college they do not return home.

We have also emphasized the low number of property owners that have joined the fire department. Property owners tend to be more invested in the community and are more of a long term solution to the need for volunteer firefighters rather than a short term fix as the younger members are. We are specifically looking for members that can be retained in excess of ten years. Having members join and remain active in excess of ten years is the most cost efficient and reliable way to ensure that the fire emergency needs of our community are met.

In comparison, should the police department need additional staffing, they have the ability to hire and pay for additional staff. If the fire department needs additional staffing we need to rely on our residents to volunteer or request additional help from a neighboring fire department at the time of the emergency.

In closing, there needs to be an emphasis placed on affordable housing for our workforce and our volunteers. We are confident that if you were to canvas the current village employee workforce and volunteers that you would find that an overwhelming majority do not live in the village largely due to cost of living. We encourage you to take this into account when formulating the village's comprehensive plan.

Sincerely,

*Jeff Armitage*  
Fire Chief

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**"Fire Prevention and Protection Through Education"**