

Town Topics

What's in a Comprehensive Plan?

by Dr. Richard Craft, former Supervisor of Wawarsing

In 1969, the town fathers saw the need to create a comprehensive plan. After months of input from citizens from across the town, they pooled that information into what can be described as a cross between a wish list and a reality check of where they were and where they wanted to go. Taking into consideration the assets and needs of the town, they boldly put forth the course they hoped the town would take for the future. They had no crystal ball and could not see the demise of the hotel and bungalow colony industry, or the departure of *Channel Master*, but they tried, to their credit. Agriculture was still a part of the town and Ellenville was still a vibrant retail center. You could buy everything here from an apron to a xylophone. Ours was a self-sufficient community that didn't ask for nor need help from any other community because they were of the same makeup.

Most of that had changed, and not always for the better. Poor roads made trips to Kingston or Middletown, special events, with each trip usually taking an hour. The coming of regional malls destroyed small downtown businesses and sucked the vitality out of hometown spirit. What the town fathers did in 1969 showed their determination to plan for the future and their efforts are to be commended. After a hiatus of over forty years, the effort to refocus has been announced and the town is well into an upgrade.

Every public official should have a vision for his or her community's future. This goes for residents as well. Too often, the impetus is lost due to elections, new faces in government, a lazy board, politics, and a host of other reasons. An upgraded comprehensive plan attempts to circumvent some of the pitfalls and establishes a long-range plan for growth within the town and village.

I look forward to the village of Ellenville and the Town of Wawarsing working toward a common comprehensive plan. This will benefit all our citizens. I commend the town board for taking this undertaking to the far-flung reaches of our town. Hearings have been held in Ellenville, Napanoch, Kerhonkson and Greenfield Park. Still to come are Cragmoor, Ulster Heights and possibly more. Residents are asked their opinions on a myriad of subjects from a consulting firm whose knowledge of the village and town is second to none. Your input is needed, and anytime you wish to make a suggestion, the village and town offices will be glad to hear from you. As a final effort to get a community sense of purpose and direction, a random mailing, with questionnaire, will be sent to 1000 residents. A short version of the survey was printed in the September issue of *Wawarsing.Net*, page 11; it may also be downloaded and printed from the online site at: <http://www.wawarsing.net/22/COPDF/409-11-Survey.pdf> Completed survey forms may be sent, faxed, or dropped off at Town Hall, to the attention of the Supervisor.

The end result of all this work is to answer the question, "What do you want the Town of Wawarsing to look like in 10, 20, 30 years. By that time, I hope a new comprehensive plan is in the making. Please help us in this endeavor. 🌟

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At the September 2nd meeting of the Wawarsing Town Board, a proclamation was passed naming the Kerhonkson Bridge for the late Herb Poppel, long active in Veterans' organizations and activities in the area. A plaque with the proclamation was presented to Herb's family, above. From left, Councilman Arnie Ryan, Steve Poppel, Minnie Poppel, Ira Poppel, Supervisor James V. Dolaway.

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