

Town Topics

Wawarsing Wants More Shopping and "Clean and Green" Environment

The Town of Wawarsing Comprehensive Plan update is moving forward. Results of a community survey completed by some 411 citizens indicate strong desires for more local shopping opportunities and preservation of a "clean and green environment." The survey forms were distributed by mail to a random selection of residents and taxpayers.

Additional copies were made available at a series of public meetings, through the project website at www.fairweatherconsulting.com/Wawarsing and printed in *Wawarsing.Net*.

"We were thrilled with both the quantity and quality of the response," said James Dolaway, Town Supervisor.

The full results of the survey are posted at www.fairweatherconsulting.com/Wawarsing.

Highlights include the following:

Over 43% of respondents had lived in the Town for 40 or more years. Some 35% lived in the Village of Ellenville, 20% came from Napanoch and the remainder from throughout the Town.

Almost 40% thought the Town had changed little or for the better over the years while 51% felt it had become a less desirable place to live. Citizens indicated they like Wawarsing's low costs of services, taxes and housing but were concerned with the lack of shopping opportunities, jobs and cultural activities.

Strong majorities of citizens thought it was important to review impacts on streams, scenery and residential density as new developments are presented to the Town. Other factors of importance were commercial development near homes, site design and landscaping.

Some 37% of respondents either had or hoped to establish a home occupation, and almost 19% expected to be involved with telecommuting.

Services valued most highly included Town and maintenance, special property clean-up days and emergency services. Youth-based recreation also enjoyed support.


Nearly 32% of residents responding came from the New York City metro area. About 3% continue to work there. However, 35% of principal householders found work in the Town of Wawarsing. A relatively high 39% were retired, while 10% were self-employed. Some 11% had household incomes of \$100,000+ while 17% had incomes of less than \$30,000. Individuals employed as executives, managers or professionals represented 31% of principal householders responding to the survey.

Highly rated services included emergency services, utilities and County and Town road maintenance.

Regulations regarding historic preservation, commercial site design, protection of ridgeline character and all-terrain vehicle use received favor with citizens.

When asked to identify elements of their own vision of the Town, residents indicated that more local shopping, a clean and green environment, more small-scale industrial jobs and higher quality development were most important. They also supported improved recreational facilities, historic preservation, agricultural protection and development of the tourism industry.

The majority of respondents (69%) felt taxes were fair and equitable and 48% said Town regulations were also fair and balanced. They generally favored giving the benefit of the doubt on regulations to protection of private property rights over managing impacts of development. Development of the commercial tax base, maintenance of large minimum

lot sizes and creation of good jobs locally were identified as priorities. "These results have already provided some excellent guidance to us in establishing long-term goals," Dolaway stated. "We expect to do another set of public meetings in the near future to review the details and discuss Town priorities." 

USDA 1% Home Repair Loans


Repair loans are available to very-low income homeowners of single family homes in rural areas to improve or modernize homes, remove health and safety hazards, make homes accessible for household members with disabilities, and install connections to public water systems, such as *Napanoch Water District*.

The maximum outstanding balance of a loan is \$20,000. The maximum repayment period is 20 years and the interest rate is permanently fixed at one (1) percent. A loan in the amount for \$7,500 or less is available with no closing costs to qualified homeowners who have sufficient equity in their home. Applicants must have very-low income and own and occupy the single family home in need of repairs. To be income qualified for this type of assistance, a family of two in Ulster County would need to have an adjusted gross income of no more than \$22,600; for a family of four, the maximum eligible income is \$28,250. The market value of the home cannot exceed \$189,680.00 in Ulster County.

Grants are available to very-low income homeowners aged 62 and older who do not show repayment ability for a loan. Grant funds must be used to remove health and safety hazards or for handicap accessibility concessions. The maximum lifetime grant is \$7,500.

"This USDA Rural Development Program is good news for Napanoch residents who have been unable to meet costs related to installing connections to the Napanoch Water District," said James V. Dolaway, Wawarsing Town Supervisor.

Ulster County is served by the USDA Rural Development Middletown Office. For more information about USDA Rural Development's Repair Loan Program or to obtain an application, please visit or contact the office at: **225 Dolson Ave., Suite 104 Middletown, NY 10940, (845) 343-1872 Ext. #4** E-mail: rdmiddletown@ny.usda.gov

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. As a venture capital entity, Rural Development provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information on rural programs is available by visiting your local USDA Service Center, or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ny>. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Washington D.C. 20250-9410, or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). 

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