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Initial Newsletter

1 Introduction

By Bill Bruce, Planning Board Chairman

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The community of Horicon has spoken and we are responding! The Horicon Newsletter is designed to inform and improve communication between the town government and the residents of Horicon. The need was clearly stated by your responses to the recent Community Survey and participation in the Comprehensive Plan Focus Groups. The objective is to improve communication, encourage citizen support, foster community spirit that brings us together to work collaboratively toward common goals that are important to us.

This first issue focuses primarily on the updates being made to the Town Comprehensive Plan (CMP), and many of its components. Future newsletters will contain topics of common interest to you, and will report on the progress of updating the CMP. This is your newsletter, your “printed voice,” and we encourage your comments that will add vitality and value.

Copies will be available at Town Hall, in the Public Libraries of Brant Lake and Adirondack hamlets; and on-line at our new web site:

www.horiconny.gov.

2 Your Town at Work-The Highway Department

By Paul Smith

As your Town Highway Superintendent, I want to bring you up-to-date on the new garage construction progress. The salt shed, (total capacity-200 tons), has been completed. The first phase is nearing completion on the 11,400 sq. ft. highway garage, with the next phase—the installation of underground utilities and pouring of the concrete slab to be completed in July. Excavation of the site has been done by our local crew, supplemented by five prime contractors. The garage, scheduled for completion in November, will house all our heavy equipment, and will allow us to service the trucks, graders and front loaders more effectively. We have been successful in saving money with new salt spreaders that will channel salt deposits on the road and not in the ditches. We hope to complete the culvert cleaning of overgrowth in the spring. Our goal is to provide more timely service such as: (1) Grade unpaved roads and clear debris where & when it occurs, (2) Open roads & culverts to permit quicker snow melt; (3) Remove tree overgrowth on side of roads to increase sight distance.

From Paul Smith: “We’re moving earth to make a better town garage”



Town Garage Construction Site.



New Website for Horicon

The Town of Horicon has been on-line with a Web site to serve the community with timely updates on issues of importance, such as the Town Comprehensive Plan; information on the various Town government departments, including the Horicon Library; meeting notices and Town Board meeting minutes. Please visit the site at: www.horiconny.gov.

3 Comprehensive Master Plan Update Status

By Harvey Leidy

The Comprehensive Plan establishes a vision for the Town designed to guide its growth in an orderly and productive way. This vision is supported by the issues facing the Town, goals it wishes to accomplish, and a set of prioritized plans necessary to reach these goals. After the goals and plans are established, the Town's land use, zoning and sub-division regulation could be modified to support their attainment. This process takes place over a 12-24 month time frame.

The CMP process was started last fall ('06) when the Town Board charged the Town Planning Board with the responsibility to manage the process. There is an Executive Steering Committee (ESC) whose responsibility is to guide the process; and they have created seven subcommittees to coordinate the key areas of the project. The ESC meets the first Thursday of every month in Town Hall at 7:00PM.

We have hired Dr. Richard F. Lamb, Professor of Environmental Planning at the Center for Earth and Environmental Science, State University at Plattsburg, as a consultant to help us complete this project. Dr. Lamb recently worked with the towns of Johnsburg and Minerva on their Comprehensive Plans, and has an impressive resume working with the towns in the Adirondack Park and with the APA.

The first phase of the process was a Community Survey, which comprised 140 questions; one-page questionnaire mailed in November, 2006 to the Town of Horicon residents and registered voters. This was followed up during the first two weeks in January 2007 by a series of 14 Focus Groups, led by four students of the Upstate Institute, Colgate University.

Tabulation of the questionnaire results has been completed. A total of 485 (out of 1,095 mailed) survey questionnaires were completed for tabulation of the results. An audit was performed to measure data entry accuracy. Comprehensive Plan topics covered in the questionnaire survey were: Housing (32); Education and Recreation (22); Commerce (48); Environment (13); Infrastructure (11) and General including demographics (14). A complete summary of the data from the survey is available in Town Hall and on the website.

For the Focus Group sessions, over 112 invited residents of the Town of Horicon participated to express in more detail their opinions that would not have been captured in the responses to the multiple-choice questions in the questionnaire, or to write-in answers. The first of two reports of the Focus Groups was submitted in March, which covers a thematic summary

From Bill Bruce: "Smart land growth results in the expectation of surrounding neighborhood enhancement."

of transcripts and observation notes. Part Two focuses on a more detailed analysis of the qualitative data. The final Survey Report, incorporating the two Focus Group reports, is anticipated to be available for review to the public in June.

The Survey Report has been made available to the seven subcommittees which have been formed to guide the process in updating the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The seven subcommittees are: Housing and Land Use, Recreation, Commerce, Education, Environment and Natural Resources, Public Services and Population Demographics.

4 Community Development Grant Proposal Status

By Dennis Doyle, Planning Board Member

In September, 2006, we contracted with the Laberge Group, Albany, NY to prepare an application and proposal to secure a Small Cities 2006 Technical Assistance Grant for the development of a Community Development Strategic Plan. The Plan will inventory and analyze resources, establish goals and objectives that will address three areas of concern: economic development, affordable housing and infrastructure. The total cost of the plan is \$42,000, of which \$17,000 or 40% is provided in matching funds by the Town. The Town was awarded a grant of \$25,000.

A Citizen's Advisory Committee will be formed to provide leadership to review and support the Town's community-wide, business-area revitalization process, with the goal to encourage and engage active public participation. The Town of Horicon has identified key areas of interest that will be included in the CMP Update, such as:

- ◆ Economic development-Mill Pond (Main Street, downtown business area revitalization), to include the Adirondack hamlet.
- ◆ Affordable housing: low and moderate income housing.
- ◆ Capitalize on the existing infrastructure to consider expanding sustainable related businesses.

It is anticipated that the final report on all three areas will be available for review by the Town's comprehensive planning consultant, Dr. Richard Lamb, the CMP Steering Committee, corresponding subcommittees, and the public.

The most important benefits to the Town implementation of the Strategic Plan are:

(1) Create local & sustainable employment opportunities; (2) Provide affordable residential housing; (3) Identify types of businesses that have high probability of succeeding while maintaining the essential residential and rural character of the Town; (4) Enhance the community's historic sense of place and quality of life; (5) Encourage tourism related businesses by drawing on the heavy traffic to attractive tourist destination areas such as Lake George and Gore Mountain.

5. From Your Town Supervisor

By Ralph Bentley

Good things are happening in the Town of Horicon. “I was able to get the Warren County Planning Department to apply for and received a grant of \$375,000 to rebuild the General Store. Unfortunately, Val Steinman turned down the grant. Within the past two months there was a meeting with the owners of the old Town Hall property. They are in negotiations with someone interested in opening a general store. At present we have a new variety store on Battle Hill and the owners are working hard to meet the basic needs of the townspeople.

We are fortunate to have beautiful lakes in our Town and they must be protected. Milfoil is one of our biggest threats and the Town is contributing financially to help control and eradicate this problem.

We received two grants totaling \$586,000 to update housing for those in need. With these grants, homes were upgraded. Four new homes were built replacing old trailers. Four families now have new homes. Other homes have been greatly improved. We need more homes, but there are only a limited amount of grants available.

Each year the Town upgrades the park and Little League field in Adirondack; and the Little League field and playground in Brant Lake.

The entire length of Route 8 in Horicon is scheduled to be resurfaced in 2008. This project was added by NYS D.O.T. Five paving projects were completed this year, two by Warren County (6/10 mile on River Rd. and 1 mile on Palisades Rd.), and three by the Town (1.3 miles on Shaw Hill in Adirondack, all of Gibbon Rd. and part of Pease Hill).”

The Town of Horicon newsletter needs volunteer contributors. We welcome comments that address topics concerning the town's Comprehensive Plan Update. Send to: Town of Horicon, PO Box 90, Brant Lake, and NY 12815
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