

## CPC/SPINZIA 9/13/23 MEETING SUMMARY

In attendance: Elizabeth Spinzia, Matt Johnston, John Clarke, Eleanor Pupko (remote), and Lydia Slaby.

**1. Establish an intermunicipal Affordable Housing Task Force (possibly with other adjacent municipalities) to encourage development of more affordable housing in the Rhinebeck area. Specific projects might include:**

**(a) Establishing a Community Housing Fund (CHF) through a real estate transfer fee.**

**(b) Establishing a Housing Trust funded by the CHF.**

**(c) Hiring a Renters Advocate to address rental assistance, property maintenance, and legal assistance.**

**Discussion:** Elizabeth expressed concerns about establishing an inter-municipal task force, noting that differing zoning laws between municipalities could complicate coordination. She felt focusing efforts within Rhinebeck would be preferable. Rhinebeck already has a workforce housing committee that has explored various options over many years. Coordination happens regularly with Red Hook's housing director, but needs and laws differ between municipalities. Overall the discussion determined concentrating on opportunities within Rhinebeck would be more sensible than a multi-municipal approach.

For discussion point (a) on establishing a Community Housing Fund through a real estate transfer fee, Elizabeth strongly supported this idea. She said Red Hook has implemented a similar 2% transfer tax and has millions of dollars in their fund now. The money could be used to purchase land for conservation and affordable housing. Further discussion is needed on the tax details.

For (b) establishing a Housing Trust funded by the CHF, there was no specific discussion beyond Elizabeth supporting the general idea of a Community Housing Fund.

For (c) hiring a Renters Advocate, Elizabeth felt this was too heavy of a reach for local government and that the infrastructure and resources did not exist to properly support such a role. She saw it more as a county or state issue.

**2. Create an area plan for future development in the northwest quadrant of the Village and adjacent lands in the Town, with mixed-income housing, interconnected streets and walkways, connection to municipal sewer, etc.**

**Discussion:** John Clarke expressed interest in the Comprehensive Plan Committee creating an area plan for future development in the northwest quadrant, including the Locust Hill affordable housing project site. Elizabeth said the town planning board would be best to work on this issue. She wanted to ensure any plans were integrated with the village. John felt an integrated plan with a variety of housing types and connected streets/paths was preferable to isolated projects. Elizabeth supported the idea of communication and planning between relevant committees and boards on development in this area.

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### **3. Establish a Community Preservation Act that would dedicate funds derived from a real estate transfer fee to various mutually beneficial projects, such as farmland and open space conservation, the creation of parks, and the preservation of historic resources.**

**Discussion:** Elizabeth strongly supported establishing a Community Preservation Act with a real estate transfer tax. She noted Red Hook has implemented a similar 2% tax and has millions of dollars now for conservation, affordable housing, and open space projects. Elizabeth saw it as a missed opportunity that some past conservation easements did not allow for affordable housing as well. The general discussion determined the tax revenue could fund a Community Preservation Fund to purchase development rights and land for green space and workforce housing projects. Elizabeth wanted to pursue this further with a new committee in the new year.

### **4. Prepare a comprehensive plan of municipal and public facilities (Village Hall, Fire Department, Library, Courts, Town Hall) to address space issues.**

**Discussion:** Elizabeth expressed that town hall is outgrowing its space and in need of repairs. She would like to consolidate the village and town courts under one roof to save money, as each municipality currently operates at a loss. The former Bulkeley School building was proposed as a potential location to consolidate town/village offices and courts, along with other municipal functions. Elizabeth noted the building could accommodate these uses with room to spare. Further exploration is needed on acquiring the building and determining costs. Overall the discussion focused on the space issues different municipal facilities are facing and interest in consolidation where feasible.

### **5. Create an off-road multi-use path to connect the Village and the shops north of the Village on Route 9, including Tops.**

### **6. Create an off-road multi-use path to connect the Village of Rhinebeck and Rhinecliff train station.**

**Discussion:** Elizabeth expressed support for creating an off-road multi-use path to connect the village to areas north like Tops Market. She mentioned there is already a tentative plan developed with Alta Planning to connect the village sidewalk to the Amtrak station along River Road, but the committee working on it stalled during COVID. Elizabeth felt reviving the relevant committee could help finish developing and implementing the path plan. John Clarke also noted the importance of such a connection. The discussion determined this multi-use path should be a priority and that re-engaging committees could help advance the project.

### **7. Create safe cycling routes to connect with local nature areas and bike trails.**

**Discussion:** Elizabeth expressed general support for creating safe cycling routes but noted it would need to take a backseat for now given other capital priorities. She said the town already operates a van for transporting seniors and that it largely serves village residents. John Clarke did not add any additional comments specifically about cycling routes. The discussion determined

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establishing cycling infrastructure was a goal, but recognized the need to focus efforts on other projects in the short term due to resource constraints. Reviving relevant committees in the future was suggested.

### **8. Establish better public transportation infrastructure, including a senior transportation system, in the Rhinebeck area (in conjunction with neighboring municipalities and Dutchess County).**

**Discussion:** Elizabeth expressed that establishing better public transportation infrastructure would be a significant undertaking beyond the capacity of local government. She noted the Northern Dutchess Alliance and Dutchess County have studied this issue without result. The town currently operates a van for transporting seniors and that it largely serves village residents. While improved transportation is a goal, Elizabeth felt the labor and funding did not exist locally to properly oversee expanded services. Coordination with Dutchess County and neighboring municipalities was seen as needed but challenging to implement given the scale of coordinating regional transportation.

### **9. Continue to develop the Thompson-Mazzarella Park.**

**Discussion:** Elizabeth provided an update on developments at Thompson-Mazzarella Park. She noted the town has already spent \$3 million and fulfilled most of the comprehensive plan goals for the park. However, she felt it was time to take a pause from further expansion for a few years in order to focus on other capital needs like building repairs. Elizabeth wants to prioritize paying town staff thriving wages and sees the need to hire additional maintenance staff as the park grows. Future additions like a skate park and pickleball courts were supported, but larger projects would require outside fundraising. Overall the discussion determined the park has made great progress but a maintenance and funding recalibration is needed going forward.

### **10. Explore a possible TDR project to locate new development in and/or adjacent to the Village.**

**Discussion:** There was no specific discussion focused on exploring a TDR (transfer of development rights) project. Elizabeth briefly mentioned TDR as something the town is limited in due to zoning constraints. The broader discussion around future development centered on the need for architectural compatibility in the historic district, limiting oversized home renovations/teardowns, and coordinating planning between relevant village and town committees for the northwest quadrant near Locust Hill. But a TDR project was not explored in depth.

### **11. Create a joint Town and Village committee to address intermunicipal ideas.**

**Discussion:** Elizabeth expressed openness to creating a joint Town and Village committee to address intermunicipal ideas. Matt Johnston suggested this could be a way for the

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Comprehensive Plan Committee to have productive conversations about emerging areas of intermunicipal collaboration. Elizabeth recommended specific village and town board members like Melodye Moore who would be well-suited to participate. Both Elizabeth and John Clarke felt coordination on future development plans for the northwest quadrant abutting both municipalities would benefit from such a committee.