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## "Comp Plan Comments" for the Town of Washington Board

1 message

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To: M Alex <malex@washingtonny.org>

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The 2015 Comprehensive Plan is widely accepted throughout the town, and there has been very little concern about it until now.

It importantly states as one of its goals:

*"Future planning should focus on maintaining and improving those appropriate land uses in each of the Town's existing zoning areas that work toward supporting contrasts between a rural town and a more urbanized village, and should focus on removing those uses from future consideration which do not."*

The Town Board has not undertaken this task so far. **Please consider this as the first and primary goal of the newly formed Comprehensive Plan Committee.**

Then, and only then, and in accordance with those parameters, should the committee begin to decide if "hospitality," what ever that means, including Air B&Bs is or is not an appropriate land use, desired or needed for the type of town people want for their future.

Regarding the directive to the committee to consider "hospitality" to support our tax base, what if over time the assumptive positive effect on the tax base turns out not to be true? And the long term effect is a decrease in property values. My concern is that infrastructure changes, often made with the best intentions, do not always work out that way. And once made they are permanent in some form or other for all practical purposes.

Some of the suggested "charges" to the comprehensive plan committee involve equating the local tax base with "hospitality" and there by implying "hospitality" equates to financial support for the Village of Millbrook and hamlets in the town, things that have not yet been investigated and factually explored. Even if that was proven accurate, and there is no guarantee it would, there is the distinct possibility that increased hamlet development will ultimately draw business out of not into the center of the village, as has often happened in other places. This is why the 1989 and 2015 comprehensive plans were very specific about limiting new commercial development in

the town to the Hamlet of Mabbettsville, as well as at the same time restricting new commercial development there. By way of clarification, there is only one current hamlet in the town. Washington Hollow has not been one for well over 100 years, and then mainly in present-day Pleasant Valley. Almost all the property there now in our town is some form of residential or open space.

Considering this "charge." If a property contains a unique structure of historic significance, even though that structure might not be on a registry of historic places, should the Comprehensive Plan be amended to support an adaptive reuse of such a structure? If so, what is the best way to do so?" Already implying we should do so. And who locally sets the standard of the day for that. Isn't that the very reason for having certified registries of historical places.

There are two old proverbs that fit well here. "Don't fix what's not broken," and "You never know when you've had enough until you've had too much."

"Hospitality" was never an issue for this community until the Janet's Farm application came along.

The underlying tone as I read the present proposed "charges" to the comprehensive plan committee seems to me to be "hospitality" will solve many of our "problems," find a way to fit it in to our zoning code. This could be a two edge sword over time. Projects sometimes fail and the town is still left dealing with the created infrastructure and changes put in place by them. Witness things like the collapse of the original Cottonwood Inn and Restaurant, Daytop, and the Greer School, to name a few.

**Please consider in the best interest of our community, rather than charging the newly created comprehensive plan committee to find creative ways to work the word "hospitality" into the zoning code, charge them instead to determine where the existing zoning code does not address or reinforce the existing comprehensive plan's already widely accepted goals and vision of remain a rural community with great scenic beauty, a healthy natural environment, and a high quality of life for its residents and to root out those sections of the zoning code which are contrary to that.**

Howard Schuman,  
Town Resident

