

## Chester Townwide Recreation Plan

### Meeting Summary for July 30, 2014 Public Open House

Submitted By: Tracey M. Clothier

Introductions: Supervisor Monroe introduced Committee Members and Consultants.

Meeting Process: Tracey Clothier described to attendees as follows:

Following the presentation, attendees are invited to visit the posters and maps that are displayed around the room including: Inventory Map; Future Trails Map; Opportunities Map; Concept maps (3); Sign Strategy (MJP); Concepts for Dynamite Hill, Town Hall, Interconnected Trail System. The regional perspective was conveyed through: North Country National Scenic Trail Map; First Wilderness Heritage Corridor Map; Scenic Byway Map; Warren County Safe Quality Bicycle Organization Map. A session will then be devoted to a questions, answers and comments.

Presentation: Tracey Clothier described the project as follows:

The LA Group is assisting the Town of Chester in preparing a townwide recreation plan to develop a comprehensive network of interconnected trails and recreational facilities. The Plan is an economic development initiative designed to increase the public's awareness of the remarkable variety and quality of the recreation trails and facilities in the town and region. Optimizing the Town's recreational assets will help improve the quality of life for residents and expand visitor opportunities. There is a need to stabilize population since the following trends are noted:

- North Warren School District – 10 year loss of 91 (14.4%) (633-542). Equates to average loss 10 kids or 5+ families per year
- Town of Chester population – 10 year loss of 259 (-7.2%) (2010=3355); follows 20 year 709 gain in people (1980-2000: 2909-3614)
- Tourism – Highly variable since 2008

The Recreation Plan builds on the *First Wilderness Heritage Corridor*, a regional recreation and heritage tourism revitalization strategy for the nine communities along the Upper Hudson River corridor and adjacent Delaware & Hudson rail line in Saratoga and Warren counties. The focus of *First Wilderness* is to have Adirondack Park communities complement rather than compete with each other and to use the unifying elements of the Hudson River and railroad to tie their future's together.

An Advisory Committee, made up of a cross-section of members of the community, is guiding the planning process. The Committee is seeking public input through a variety of venues designed to reach, inform and receive feedback from as many residents and visitors as possible. Public Outreach has been extended in the following ways:



- Committee meetings with good representation from community
- Map with poster/comments at Town Hall and NWCOC/Farmers Markets
- Conduct interviews with community partners
- 2 public meetings
- Maps, drafts for comment, meeting notices, and newsletters are continually posted on social media outlets including the Town's website:  
[www.townofchesterny.org/chester-townwide-recreation-plan](http://www.townofchesterny.org/chester-townwide-recreation-plan), and the project's Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/ChesterTownwideRecreationPlan](https://www.facebook.com/ChesterTownwideRecreationPlan).

The project is being funded by the New York State Department of State through the Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. Matching funds are being provided by the Town of Chester and Warren County Planning Department, which is overseeing the project.

Kathy Varney from Glens Falls Hospital was introduced to explain how *Creating Healthy Places 2 Live, Work and Play (CHP2LWP) Healthy Community Mapping Project* focuses on increasing opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating only in Chestertown. CHP2LWP mapping project identifies healthy community assets that already exist: recreation, complete streets, and access to food. A report based on these findings: maps, assessments, stake-holder interviews, and recommendations will be provided to the town and school boards in October. This report will be used to help create a plan that will expand the current network of assets to build a community that supports healthy behaviors. The Chester Recreation Plan may also help in supporting these recommendations in Chestertown. Chestertown and the North Warren School District will receive a total of \$25,000 in funding to create a model healthy community for its residents. Some examples of the items that could be purchase to make these improvements are new bike racks, benches, playground equipment, and exercise equipment for adults, landscaping and improving access to healthy food in targeted locations within Chestertown.

An inventory and assessment of all recreational resources was conducted throughout the town. A review and assessment of the condition of these resources was made and the need for and type of additional recreational facilities needed was identified. The Town was segmented into four planning areas where resources were clustered:

Chestertown Planning Area: Town Administration Building area; Dynamite Hill Recreation Area; North Warren School; Panther Mountain; Sullivan Pond;

Schroon River Planning Area: Starbuckville Dam; Pottersville Town Park; Gambles Beach; Hike-Bike Paths (grant filed); Snowmobile Trails;

Hudson River Planning Area: Ice meadow Parcel; Loon Lake; Friends Lake; The Glen;

Northwest Planning Area: North Country National Scenic Trail; Snowmobile Trails.

Townwide Projects include: Trail Connections; On-Road Bike improvements; and a Comprehensive Recreational Signage Plan to tie it all together.

Mary Jean Packer explained the components of a townwide signage plan and gave some examples of directional, wayfinding, and interpretive signage found in places with similar landscapes. This plan will recommend the framework and components for the sign plan.

#### Comments Received at Public Meeting

The main outcome of opinion is to concentrate recreation/trail efforts on the Chestertown Planning Area including the following sites and connections between those sites: Town Hall; Dynamite Hill; North Warren School; Panther Mountain; and Starbuckville. Initially we should focus implementation on several projects that can move forward immediately with volunteer assistance and little to no money.

The following projects were identified as meeting these criteria:

- Establishing a public trail up Panther Mountain is a priority and possible with landowners permission. Create trail head and path up at end of Panther Mountain Road and loop trail back down to Spring Street or existing lot at Theriot Ave. intersection. Establish handicap access to view through cell tower road.
- The Chestertown Nature Trail behind the Town Administration Building could be established with minimal effort and utilizing benches and other furniture from the Healthy NY program that is already underway in Chestertown.
- Establishing the Starbuckville Dam area as a public park and central meeting place for biking could also be accomplished with minimal effort.
- Feasibility study for off road/shared road bike trail from Route 9/Route 8 intersection north to Scaroon Manor (grant applied for- should hear in mid-September).

Other comments were:

- Establish location for bocce ball, horseshoes, and other passive sports.
- Establish an indoor walking program in the school or town administrative building.
- Develop snowmobile trail connection to Minerva trails and into Essex Chain. Snowmobile traffic weak without this connection.
- Establish official horseback riding trails.
- Like the clustered concept with connections between.
- Name the trail network something catchy like "Saranac 6" and "Round the Lake" (LGLC). Develop a patch or passport for climbing the trails.
- Like the idea of establishing Starbuckville Dam as a mini park and central area for biking groups. Also a biking center could be established at Crossroads similar to the Hub in Brant Lake.

- Establish tri-rail network up Vetter Mountain, Round Top Mountain and Beckman Mountain.
- Establish tri- trail network up Remington, Tower, and Panther Mountains.
- Establish trail up Stewarts Mountain.
- Establish tri-rail network on the horseshoe rim of Henderson, Bibby and Ethan mountains.
- Establish a trail on Huckleberry Mountain.

Additional comments received Poster Displays at Chester Town Hall and North Warren Chamber:

- Public hiking trail up Kipp Mountain.
- Public access and parking to former Finch Lands along Hudson River, through Epworth League (northern end).
- Public trail up small mountains on state land at end of Old Schroon River Rd (Pottersville end).
- Re-open old military road (1812) from Chestertown northwards, for mountain biking and hiking
- Bike lanes on Schroon River Rd.
- Signs on lands that are open for public use/hunting that say Hunting Allowed (similar to DEC signage on Pack Forest). Too much confusion amongst hikers who don't think hunting is allowed on those lands when it is.
- More bike lanes.
- Playground for smaller children that could be used all day- also, equipment that is suitable for them (school as great climbing stuff for bigger kids).
- Manage roads so that walking is safer.
- Bocce court in back of Town Hall with picnic tables in a shaded area.
- Playground and picnic area at northern end of NWCS field behind town hall, under trees near basketball court. Maintain tennis courts, or turn them into basketball/skateboard area, and use basketball court for playground.
- Dynamite Hill- lighted x-country loop, starting at Warming Hut. Obtain easements onto neighboring properties for additional trails.
- Mark easement to Nature Conservancy property off Potter Brook Rd. (Parcel 152-1-41) for public access.
- Make easy nature trail around town property behind Town Hall. Obtain easement to make public trail up Panther Mountain from Panther Mountain Extension, a challenging hike with parking at Town Hall.
- Re-open access along old road to Palmer Pond from Friends Lake Rd, near Hill Park Rd.
- Hiking trail up to Remington Mountain views (off of Stock Farm Rd).
- Hiking trail to Kipp Mountain views, north of Loon Lake.
- Hiking loop around mountains surrounding Hidden Lake.
- More bike lanes.

- A playground on town property next to Health Center- easy and safe for kids to access via foot and bike. Also next to HC would promote healthy lifestyle.
- Hiking trail up mountain off Davis Rd. near Pottersville.
- Snowmobile crossing for Hudson River.
- Snow trails for mountain bike trail northward.
- Youth center.
- Senior center.
- Indoor swimming pool.
- Country club.
- Bike lane to Loon Lake beach.
- Mountain access to Starbuck Hill Cemetery.
- Winter parking Palmer Rd.

### Next Steps

- Incorporate Public Comments into Draft Townwide Recreation Plan
- Draft Townwide Recreation Plan released for DOS & Public Review
- Presentation to Town Board and Public - September 9, 2014
- Final Townwide Recreation Plan – October 2014

### List of Public Meeting Attendees

Name	Phone	Email
Kathy Varney	926-5906	Kvarney@glensfallhosp.org
David Herrington	494-3677	Drmrby8334@aol.com
Eleanor Tolomeo	494-5318	Elliet1@frontiernet.net
Albert Tolomeo	494-5318	Alto406@frontiernet.net
Al Muench	494-4898	Al.muench@gaill.com
Linda Muench	494-4898	lindaink@gmail.com
Bernie McCann	494-2325	Bmccann43@gmail.com
John Asiello	785-4828	asiellocj@aol.com
Julie Williams	494-2618	juliewilli@gmail.com
Keith Ellis	494-2314	bjellis@aol.com
Daniel J. Smith	494-2129	Dan4eternity1958@yahoo.com
Matthew J. Simpson	494-3647	supervisor@horiconny.gov
Mike Paken	494-3943	
Margaret Curtis	494-0102	pacurtis@roadrunner.com
Greg Beckler	494-7190	info@stonebridgeandcaves.com
Mr & Mrs Craig Leggett	494-2324	craigleggett@gmail.com
Mark Walp	494-4652	
Mindy Conway	526-5433	youth@townofchesterny.org
Fred Monroe	(518) 494-2711	fmonroe2@gmail.com
Mary Jean Packer		
Tracey Clothier	587-8100	tclothier@thelagroup.com