

Wappingers Falls studies waterfront revitalization

STEFANIE SCHAPPERT • FOR THE POUGHKEEPSIE JOURNAL • JUNE 27, 2010

WAPPINGERS FALLS — Officials are looking for ways to remake the village waterfront, and residents may soon get the chance to have their say on what those changes might include. "Our village is not a typical upstate village. We have many complicated issues," Mayor Matt Alexander said.

He listed six geographical sections that make up the village: "the industrial park, waterfront, Hudson River estuary, Route 9 corridor, historic downtown and Wappinger Lake."

All are up for discussion under the new Waterfront Revitalization Plan, due out this summer.

"I get about 15 e-mails a day with suggestions from residents on what we should do," the mayor said.

Kate Mance, a designer from Elan Planning, Design & Landscape Architecture in Saratoga Springs, has been working on the project since its inception.

Mance says the Project Advisory Committee has been meeting regularly since a Feb. 18 public planning session attended by dozens of residents.

She said the committee has been spending time fleshing out concept details, such as the locations of new streetlights, parking lots and development.

Mance says the committee also studied the village's complete Comprehensive Plan from 2001 and will try to incorporate what is relevant into its draft.

A revised draft will be unveiled to residents at another public session in July, she said. The revised draft will consist of a vision statement, concept drawings and a list of ideas.

Mance said it's a way to check in with the public and ask, "This is what we heard, did we get it right?"

Residents will have one last chance to give their feedback before a full draft concept is presented to the village board in August.

If adopted, the plan would be submitted to the state Division of Coastal Resources, and the village would become eligible to apply for funding to implement the plan.

The state awarded a partial grant to the village so it could write the revitalization plan.

Comparing Wappingers Falls to other small villages her firm has worked with, Mance said, "All have their challenges."

But she sees the village's combination of industrial history, waterfront and the busy Route 9 "as a unique and exciting opportunity to create something great."

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