

TOWN OF COPEN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES: July 6, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee was held on July 6, 2026 at Copake Town Hall. It began at 5:01PM and was presided over by Stephanie Rabin, Chairperson, with Amelia Harnish as Secretary.

Members Attending In Person

- *Stephanie Rabin, Chair*
- *Amelia Harnish, Secretary*
- *Margaret Irwin, Consultant*
- *Edgar Masters*
- *Todd Proper*
- *Ben Gedaminski*
- *Brian Bloom*
- *Roberta Roll*
- *Richard Wolfe, Town supervisor*

Members Attending Online:

- *None*

Guests:

Members not in attendance: Terry Sullivan,

ATTENDANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Meeting minutes will be approved at the next meeting due to a technical issue (unable to open pages). Amelia will make and send PDFs

GENERAL MATTERS UP FOR DISCUSSION

- Draft action plans passed out to attending members and shared over email prior to meeting
- Action plans compiled by Margaret Irwin and her colleagues to encompass ALL feedback from community surveys, workshops, etc.
- Committee members agreed to reviewing for completeness and to review for streamlining and cuts down to a doable action plan for each goal.
- Committee members reviewed goals 1-5, discussing cuts, additions, and combinations

NEXT STEPS

Actions to be taken

- Committee will individually review the rest of the goals and return feedback over email to Margaret and Stephanie.
- Small groups will convene over email in the next few weeks.

Adjournment 6:46 PM.

NEXT MEETING

August 3, 2026, Copake Town Hall

**TOWN OF COPAKE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES: June 10, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee was held on June 10, 2026 at Copake Town Hall. It began at 5:05PM and was presided over by Stephanie Rabin, Chairperson, with Amelia Harnish as Secretary.

Members Attending In Person

- *Stephanie Rabin, Chair*
- *Amelia Harnish, Secretary*
- *Margaret Irwin, Consultant*
- *Brian Boom*
- *Roberta Roll*
- *David Gurin*
- *Edgar Masters*
- *Alden Warner*

Members Attending Online:

- *Catherine Mikic*

Guests:

Lesley, Dept of State rep (on zoom)
Jennifer Redmond, resident and housing advocate

Members not in attendance: Terry Sullivan, Todd Proper

ATTENDANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

We did not have minutes to approve this month.

GENERAL MATTERS UP FOR DISCUSSION

- **Margaret Irwin presented a slideshow 41 slides that encapsulated all the feedback from the community workshop, the surveys, and the focus groups.**

NEXT STEPS

Actions to be taken

- Margaret and her team will draft actions wording for inclusion on plan in June; committee will react.
- We plan to have a complete draft of the comp plan by end of June or July; a simple word doc just text for review by committee ahead of county and other required reviews.
- June focus for committee will be reviewing and finalizing the action items ahead of next meeting

Adjournment 6:39 PM.

NEXT MEETING

July 6, 2026, Copake Town Hall

**TOWN OF COPAKE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES: May 4, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee was held on May 4, 2026 at Copake Town Hall. It began at 5:02PM and was presided over by Stephanie Rabin, Chairperson, with Amelia Harnish as Secretary.

Members Attending In Person

- ***Stephanie Rabin, Chair***
- ***Ben Gedaminski***
- ***Todd Proper***
- ***Alden Warner***
- ***Terry Sullivan***
- ***Catherine Mikic***
- ***Brian Boom***
- ***Richard Wolfe, Town supervisor***

Members not in attendance:

Members Attending Online:

- ***Amelia Harnish***

Guests - none

ATTENDANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

We did not have minutes to approve this month.

GENERAL MATTERS UP FOR DISCUSSION

- **Upcoming schedule:** Margaret Irwin was out sick, which impact original plans for this meeting to go over action items. We discussed adding some adhoc meetings for 5/7 at 3:30 and 5/13 at 5:30 if Margaret is feeling better.
- The planned community meeting 5/16 will proceed as planned, as it has already been publicized via email and town newsletter
- Lawn signs, post cards and posters publicizing 5/16 meeting will be ready for pickup Tuesday. Committee members signed up to pick up and place publicity materials at various sites.
- Committee members asked general questions about smart growth principles and how we will make these more accessible for community members. Margaret is here to help us— as soon as she's feeling better!
- Terry proposed another action item: There's a need for childcare in the community. Would it be a possibility to develop a daycare/ childcare program on the grounds of camphill village? At one point they were looking to mix senior and kids together- they have multiple licenses and expanding. It would have to be a separate entity. Profitable for them; affordable for parents.

NEXT STEPS

Actions to be taken

- Stephanie will send an email to committee members with detailed survey responses so we can review ahead.
- Two meetings scheduled for 5/7 and 5/13 for further discussions.
- Committee members will need to provide comments ahead of the May 16th meeting

Adjournment 5:55 PM.

NEXT MEETING

May 7, 2026, 3:30PM virtual meeting tentative, pending Margaret's recovery

TOWN OF COPEN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES: April 9, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee was held on April 9, 2025 at Copake Connect. It began at 5:02PM and was presided over by Stephanie Rabin, Chairperson, with Amelia Harnish as Secretary.

ATTENDANCE

Members Attending In Person

- *Stephanie Rabin, Chair*
- *Margaret Irwin, Consultant*
- *Ben Gedaminski*
- *Roberta Roll*
- *Edgar Masters*

Members not in attendance:

- *Alden Warner*
- *Todd Proper*
- *Brian Boom*

Members Attending Online:

- *Amelia Harnish*
- *Peter Doty*
- *Terry Sullivan*
- *Catherine Mikic*
- *David Gurin*
- *Richard Wolf, Town Supervisor*

Guests - none

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

An amendment to the March 2, 2026 minutes was made to add Peter Doty to attendees. A motion to approve the minutes of the previous March 2, 2026 meeting was made by Stephanie Rabin, seconded and approved unanimously by committee members.

GENERAL MATTERS UP FOR DISCUSSION

- **Upcoming schedule:** Chair Stephanie Rabin stated our next meeting will be May 16th - a community action planning meeting at Town hall.
- The goal for the April 9th meeting is to identify actions across all categories for the 2026 plan, aligned to the survey and focus groups.
- We discussed the difficulty of filling out the pre-meeting online survey due to the competing categories with similar solutions. This discussion helped frame the conversation for action items around the phrase "walkable, livable functioning small towns."
- Given the amount of zoning ideas that came up in discussion of action items, Margaret made the point that it would be ideal for members of the planning committee to continue on the zoning committee
- Need to focus on action items the town can control.

ACTION PLAN IDEAS

HOUSING COSTS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Create a housing fund with a rehab focus that could help property owners rehab / update properties to be affordable units
- Work with the habitat for humanity to develop 6-12 units at 80% of median income
- Roe Jan Area Housing group had the idea to work with a developer to develop 4-5 separate sites for multiple houses, in the absence of ability to develop 1 site with multiple units.
- More flexibility in zoning code for variances

WATER AND SEPTIC

- The town has done 3 studies over the years. Given that the expense and risk of developing downtown with water and septic is so high, will in town to bond and pay for that project (even with state support) is very low.
- In light of above, town could update zoning such that an existing seller in town must update septic system to sell any property in town, similar to Mass laws and regulations. Would address septic issues incrementally.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Build a walking path that connects downtown to the Copake Memorial Park
- Develop the Fire Pond Park with seating, picnic tables, signage
- Built environment cues, including signage, pedestrian crosswalks, speed bumps, to encourage slower traffic on Mountain View road, and cyclist friendly behavior.
- Updating playground equipment at Copake Memorial Park
- Create destination rides along popular biking routes e.g. center hill road
- All 5 Copake Hamlets are historically built around town squares- revive and revitalize each.

- Streetscaping and landscaping in the center of town.

AGRICULTURE

- Facilitate growth of small farming operations
- Succession planning - how can we support the major farming operations in town in planning the next generation for their farms?
- Unclear if we need agriculture as its own section in the comp plan versus the ag plan.
- Zoning updates to improve support for farmers- zoning is currently relaxed for farmers but may be too relaxed this could be sharpened.
- Work with local schools and FFA to recruit interns for farmers

LAND USE AND ZONING

- Re-use Copake 2011 plan items:
 - Develop a plan for Copake Hamlet
 - Encourage thoughtful development in already settled areas
 - Protect agriculture from zoning issues

HEALTH AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Keep the 2011 plan ideas for action
- Protecting Wetlands: We discussed the challenges of protecting wetlands that takes away land for housing.

NEXT STEPS

Actions to be taken

- Margaret will draft something that will take our ideas and look like the 2011 matrix we used in discussion
- Committee members will need to provide comments ahead of the May 16th meeting
- We will meet 1st Monday of May ahead of the community meeting to have a last look at the documents to be presented at community meeting.

Adjournment 7:06PM.

NEXT MEETING

Monday May 4, 2025, 5PM at Town Hall

TOWN OF COPEN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES: January 5, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (CPRC) was held on January 5, 2026 at Copake Town Hall. It began at 5:00 pm and was presided over by Stephanie Rabin, Chairperson, with Catherine Mikic, as Secretary.

ATTENDANCE

Members Attending In Person:

- ***Stephanie Rabin, Chair***
- ***Todd Proper***
- ***Brian Boom***
- ***Ben Gedaminski***
- ***Amelia Harnish***
- ***Edgar Masters***
- ***Catherine Mikic***
- ***Roberta Roll***
- ***Terry Sullivan***
- ***Alden Warner***
- ***Richard Wolf, Town Supervisor***

Members Attending On-line:

- ***David Gurin***
- ***Margaret Irwin, Consultant***

Members Not in Attendance:

- ***Peter Doty***

WELCOME

The new Chair, Stephanie Rabin, called the meeting to order. Committee members were joined by Margaret Irwin and Supervisor Wolf to congratulate Stephanie and welcome her to her first meeting as Chair of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (CPRC).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Chair requested a motion to approve the December 1, 2025 draft Meeting Minutes. David made a motion, seconded by Amelia, and it was approved unanimously subject to Catherine's correction of typographical errors.

Note: Approval of the November 3, 2025 Minutes are still pending completion. The Minutes shall be completed and taken up for approval in a future meeting.

CHANGE OF SECRETARY POSITION

Chair Stephanie Rabin announced that Secretary Catherine Mikic will be stepping down in March from the CPRC. Catherine explained that she will be moving to Great Barrington and her last meeting will be March 2nd. Stephanie announced that Amelia Harnish will assume the Secretary position effective April 1st. Members thanked Catherine for her service and congratulated Amelia.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF SURVEY RESULTS

Based upon a review of the Community Survey results, Stephanie was focused on low representation among young people and families. More insights are needed to fill the gaps before we enter the action planning sequence.

Demographic Trends. Margaret Irwin stated that the survey accurately reflects Copake's growing aged population. In 2025, more than 90% of residents own their homes and 66% of those are their primary residence – a 12% increase over 2011. People retire here and bring with them more disposable income. Most respondents did not move after the start of the pandemic in 2020. Between 2020 and 2025, 19% of respondents moved including the 14% who moved to a second home that was already owned. Margaret will check if the 14% is a subset of the 19%.

Need More Input from Younger Demographics. Stephanie suggested the Committee focus on gathering more information to fill information gaps. Action Steps-

- Stephanie said another Focus Group targeting younger people was likely needed. Amelia suggested that we meet parents 'where they are' such as the Taconic School's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings, and the popular Story Time events at the Roe Jan Community Library which also attracts homeschooled students. Other ideas including sporting events, playdates at the Park Building; the Scouts; and Little League.
- Margaret suggested undertaking a short survey to collect information from parents of summer campers, as well as at local employers, and part of school staff.
- Consider involving Will Morningstar with the Comp Plan Committee to hold a session with the farming community.

Need for Affordable Housing vs. Fear of Development. Survey respondents recognize a need for more housing, yet juxtaposed with a fear of housing development and the desire to keep Copake rural. Stephanie questioned if there was a difference in attitude among homeowners, renters, older and younger groups. Action steps -

- Hone-in on survey answers from those under 40 years old versus older groups.
- Understand attitudes residents that own versus rent their homes.
- Understand what defines 'affordable housing' for those 40-years old and younger.
- Determine if the term 'compact housing' might have a negative connotation to respondents.

Preferences for Future Development. Highlights of respondents' answers are listed below:

- Most disagree with cannabis related business in Copake.
- Most want to see more health and wellness services, and a grocery store.
- Most favor funding for the Harlem Valley Rail Trail spur into Copake.
- Nearly half support development of the fire pond for recreation uses.
- There is overwhelming support for the *Community Preservation Plan* – which was largely opposed back in 2011.
- Strong overall support for Historic Preservation.
- Support for Town Youth Services.

ACTION PLANNING & TIMELINE

Timeline: Stephanie touched on next steps and invited input from others.

- February. Stephanie said the next regular February meeting will be an action planning meeting
- March-April. Follow-up meetings will present additional survey results and actions identified.
- May on, gather all information, identify learnings and start the process of action planning

Use of AI. The group had a brief discussion about the potential use of AI in data analysis. Richard objected to its use to maintain anonymity of the Town and individuals. Margaret agreed and said she has a process that is accurate and relies on comparisons with NYS documents and comparable communities.

ADJOURNMENT - NEXT MEETING

Monday, February 2nd, 2026 at Town Hall scheduled for 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Mikic, Secretary

TOWN OF COPEN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES: December 1, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (CPRC) was held on December 1st, 2025 at Copake Town Hall. It began at 4:00 pm and was presided over by Jeanne Mettler, Chairperson, with Catherine Mikic, as Secretary.

ATTENDANCE

Members Attending In Person:

- *Jeanne Mettler, Chair*
- *Todd Proper*
- *Brian Boom*
- *Peter Doty*
- *Ben Gedaminski*
- *David Gurin*
- *Amelia Harnish*
- *Edgar Masters*
- *Catherine Mikic*
- *Stephanie Rabin*
- *Richard Wolf, Town Supervisor*
- *Margaret Irwin, Consultant*

Members Attending On-line:

- *Alden Warner*

Members Not in Attendance:

- *Roberta Roll*

Guests:

- *Lesley Zlatev, Revitalization Specialist, NYSDOS*
- *Chris Brown, Housing Development Coordinator, Columbia Economic Development Corporation*
- *Meredith Kane, Copake Housing Committee*
- *Linda Gabaccia, Town Board Member*

WELCOME

Chair Jeanne Mettler welcomed committee members and guests.

PRELIMINARY REVIEW of SURVEY RESULTS

Margaret Irwin led the discussion. The Committee received a total of 375 completed survey responses. Respondents match up with the census data and are representative of the current older population. Like in 2011, residents continue to appreciate Copake's rural character. Among the biggest challenges identified were the lack of affordable housing and transportation as an alternative to automobiles, and housing for young families and childcare. The Roe Jan Central School District is a likely partner for bringing childcare to the area. Respondents also identified the Former Roeliff Jansen School as a possible site for rehabilitated and new housing development.

Stephanie Rabin mentioned that a weakness of the survey results is the lack of representation from young families, with childcare not mentioned. To better understand the challenges the town faces in attracting young people, a major takeaway is that we need insights from the people that don't live here, but those we hope to attract. Todd Proper suggested that we compare the demographic of survey respondents to the census. We must identify a way to collect more input from a younger demographic of people. Margaret suggested the committee undertake a one-page survey to collect more information from parents of summer campers, local employers, and local school staff and parents. More information is needed for the Comprehensive Plan to outline action steps.

Community Survey result highlights:

- Support for most Smart Growth Principles, especially referring to preservation of agriculture and rural character
- Support for the new formation of a Community Preservation Plan
- Insufficient support for affordable housing development and against concentration of low-income housing
- Larger challenges faced by rural hospitals, providers, and residents including need for a local pharmacy
- As noted by Roberta via written comments, a high percentage disagree with climate solutions through nature-based solutions. It is possible that the opposition to 'climate solutions' may reflect people's opposition to the proposed Hecate solar project rather than a sincere opposition to climate change solutions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Chair requested a motion to approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting held on October 27, 2025. Ben made a motion, seconded by Edgar, and the Minutes were approved by the full Committee. Approval of the November 3, 2025 Minutes will be tabled until the January 2026 meeting.

CHANGE IN CHAIR POSITION

Chair Jeanne Mettler notified the committee that she was elected in November to serve as a Judge in Copake. She will take office on January 1, 2026 and can no longer serve as CPRC Chair. The Town Board has selected Stephanie Rabin to take over for Jeanne, anticipating that Stephanie will be appointed by the Board at its organizational meeting on January 2nd, 2026.

Jeanne plans to send out a memo that sets forth her thoughts about what town government should look like going forward to increase participation such as: a) new ideas for park superintendent and maintenance of park space; and b) prioritize rehabilitation of the Former Roe Jan School. Jeanne offered special thanks to Margaret Irwin for being invaluable to the process.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT

Margaret reported that she with the town submitted last week a \$60,000 Technical Assistance funding request to the NYS DOS Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program, part of NYS's Homes and Community Renewal Program. The project would conduct a needs assessment and market study to guide the planned rehabilitation of the former Roe Jan School building and site for housing and mixed-use development.

HOUSING NEEDS IN COPAKE AND COLUMBIA COUNTY – 5:00 pm

Jeanne introduced invited guests Meredith Kane, Esq. member of the Copake Housing Committee and Chris Brown, Housing Development Coordinator, Columbia County Economic Development Corporation (CEDC). Chris said that CEDC's Columbia County Land Bank was formed in 2023 with housing affordability as its mission to combat building vacancy and abandonment, addressing disinvestment which has led to the problem of affordability. Chris distributed three handouts on the issue of housing insufficiency. Meredith is a Copake resident and retired attorney who early on recognized the need for laws that support local affordable housing. She is a member of the Copake Housing Coalition and the Columbia County Housing Task Force.

What is a Pro-Housing Community? Chris stated that Columbia County is the first county in New York State to have every municipality designated as a Pro-Housing Community. It is a state designation recognizing commitment to housing growth through streamlined approvals (like Accessory Dwelling Units or ADUs), unlocking state funding, and tackling housing affordability for its workforce and residents. The Copake rental market is essentially non-existent. Owner-occupied units in the Town of Copake make up 87% of all occupied units. In 2023, Copake passed zoning amendments to encourage new housing development. But sites did not allow enough density to interest developers. A successful model is in Pine Plains where the town purchased land and RUPCO was brought on to develop affordable housing.

What about Floating Districts in Copake? There are no floating districts in Copake. These are essentially a 'planned development' with secured local planning approval waiting for a developer and a site. It provides a boost to housing growth by addressing time and uncertainty for developers. Meredith mentioned that zoning makes development possible but not financially feasible. The town must attract subsidy money to close the funding gap. The challenge with cluster housing is the high cost of infrastructure especially water and septic systems.

Meredith stated that Copake has explored ways to address a range of housing issues by creating more supply and to make the process simpler. Zoning permits any existing building to be converted to up to six dwelling units, although this has not been used. Parcels of open farmland appeal to developers but the problem according to Supervisor Wolf is that developers are unrealistic about the land's worth. Getting tax breaks to landowners might help lower acquisition costs. Also, funding from Copake's future *Community Preservation Fund* could be used toward this.

What about Use of the Former Roeliff Jansen School building and site? Meredith spoke about the former school site as a potential site for redevelopment. Purchase barriers include the large 39-acre site, a 90,000 square foot building, and high

upfront \$2.9 million purchase price. It is too big a project for most to undertake and there is lack of clarity about the best market use. Her approach would be for the town to buy the entire site, give it to a land bank, and prepare for the development of two phased projects: a) Mixed-Use New Development: bring on a nonprofit to develop the land that surrounds the school with new construction of mixed owned and rental housing; and b) School Building Rehabilitation: rehabilitate the historic school building as a discreet project for low-income housing and community spaces using tax credits.

Meredith's recommendation is for the town to first figure out a market use and establish a budget to cover acquisition and upfront work. It would develop a plan and cobble together sources of public and private funds. The key is assembling a pot of money upfront with public subsidies to help defray the land cost. The Town's request for State Technical Assistance funding will establish market use and an estimated number and profile of potential residential units.

NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HIGH-QUALITY CHILDCARE

Margaret Irwin said that New York State is making funds available for childcare development. Plans for an on-site childcare center on the Taconic Hills Central School District (THCSD) campus will serve up to 50 children of employees and local families. Because the school serves many towns, Copake needs to talk to THCSD more about numbers served.

The THCSD's multi-town reach and need may require a regional solution. In the Comprehensive Plan, one of the goals or catalysts would be to support the district's plans to offer a needed service that will help attract young families to Copake.

FOCUS GROUP

FIRST RESPONDERS AND HEALTH CARE FOCUS GROUP- 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Chair Jeanne Mettler welcomed guests to the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (CPRC). They are charged with updating the 2011 Comprehensive Plan based on new information gathered through surveys, focus groups, and public meetings, to guide Copake's future. The participants here today are on the community's front lines providing emergency services. We want to understand from them challenges in the field and recommendations for the updated Plan.

The Focus Group was led by CPRC members Ben Gedaminski (a volunteer firefighter with Copake Fire Company No. 1), Peter Doty (Operations Supervisor, Community Rescue Squad) and Terry Sullivan (Speech Pathologist at Fairview Hospital). Those present included Randy Shadic, Assistant Fire Chief of Copake Fire Company No. 1 and 50 year member, John DeRocha, Chief of Copake Fire Company No. 1; Wayne Miller, resident; William Baker, past Chief of Craryville Fire Company; John Piser, Chief of Craryville Fire Company; Chris Rickard, a Captain on Copake Fire Company No. 1; Rus Davis, a current Commissioner of the Copake Fire District and Chair of the Community Rescue Squad Board; and Mike Weisberg, M.D., Emergency Medical Physician and Director of Copake Rapid Care.

Discussion summary:

Distinction between Fire District and Fire Company. Randy Shadic informed us that the Copake Fire District is a political subdivision that collects taxes to financially support emergency fire services. The Fire Company is a private, nonprofit organization of people that provides emergency fire services and staffing to the fire district. The Fire District owns the infrastructure and equipment, while the Fire Company provides staffing, and in the case of Craryville owns their own building.

Firefighting Staffing. Copake Fire District has 35 active members with only 14 Firefighter One Certified. Randy explained that other members serve as fire police or apparatus drivers, with fire police trained as peace officers.

Rescue Squad Structure and Funding. It began in 1946 as all-volunteer but has since transitioned to paid staff due to the decline in volunteerism. The Squad now operates with paid staff 24/7/365. They provide advanced life support (ALS) services and currently employ about 30 active part-time or full-time members. The funding model relies on billing insurance carriers with the differential covered by the six towns they serve: Ancram, Copake, Hillsdale, Taconic, Gallatin, and parts of Claverack. Copake contributes about 48% of the funding based on the calls originating from the town.

Rapid Care Copake Operations and Sustainability. Shuttered back in 2016 due to low reimbursement rates, Dr. Weisberg said that Rapid Care was re-opened in 2024 as part of the Albany Medical Health System (AMHS) with a planned name change to AMHS Urgent Care Copake. The facility treats non-life-threatening emergencies. It is open four days per week and has seen a successful increase in patient numbers to operate at a break-even point.

Community Safety Concerns with Proposed Solar Facility. Expressed were serious safety concerns about the proposed solar facility coming into the area, believing it presents a catastrophic risk to volunteers, paid staff, and the entire community. They asked the town for medical support in fighting this at the state level.

Columbia Memorial Hospital's (CMH) Strategic Changes. Dr. Weisberg assured us that CMH is not closing and is in the process of changing its designation to a critical access hospital to increase reimbursement rates from Medicare and Medicaid to be financially sustainable. A new three-tier plan will expand mental health services with a new 12 bed geriatric psychiatric unit and the planned rebuilding of the Green Medical Arts building to house out-patient surgery.

Pharmacy Shortage and Medical Desert. The lack of a local pharmacy is a problem raised by local and non-local residents. Independent pharmacies don't exist because of the unsustainable payment structure. The area is becoming what Rus Davis called a "medical desert" partly due to declining population and insufficient bodies to support the medical industrial complex.

Challenges: Staffing and Housing Affordability

- Decline in volunteers results in a major staffing shortage due to increasing median age in Copake and lack of opportunity for heads of households to secure affordable housing and careers in the area.
- High cost of living and holding more than one job contributes to time pressure on volunteers.
- Federal government and OSHA requirements demand training for emergency service providers.
- A mutual aid plan is legally mandated in New York State to ensure fire coverage. But due to staffing shortages, this means multiple departments respond to a call previously handled by one, leading to financial risk.

Looking Ahead: Shift from Volunteer to Career Staffing

- Decline in volunteers will require a combination of career and volunteer staffing in the next five years.
- Randy Shadic described the combination of paid/volunteer model as a "management nightmare".
- Establishing a fully career staffing model is financially taxing with the costs incurred by small towns.

For future meeting notifications, the Craryville Fire Department said the best way to contact them is by phone rather than email. They also recommended sending official communications to the firehouse or a personal address.

The Focus Group ended at 7:09 pm.

ADJOURNMENT - NEXT MEETING

Monday, January 5, 2026 at Town Hall scheduled for 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Mikic, Secretary

Copake Comprehensive Plan Review Committee Meeting – Non-Profits Focus Group

November 3, 2025

Meeting Overview and Purpose– Committee Chair Jeanne Mettler introduced focus group participants to the comprehensive planning process including the purpose of a comp plan to set the legal vision for the town's direction over the next decade and ensure that zoning is consistent with goals. The current plan was adopted in 2011, and the appointed committee is tasked with reviewing it and recommending changes to the Town Board. Comprehensive Planning Committee Review members were introduced alongside the Town's consultant, Margaret Irwin of River Street Planning, who also assisted with the 2011 plan. Catherine Mikic, Roberta Roll, and Amelia Harnish functioned as focus group leaders. The intent of the focus group was to provide prompts for conversation, gathering insights into the work, mission, and challenges of various community organizations. Representatives from participating community organizations provided an overview of their organizations:

- **Copake Lake Conservation Society** – Founded in the 1970s, this all-volunteer organization's mission is to protect the quality of Copake Lake, its watershed, preserve ecological balance, and promote safe recreational use. Steve Black (CLCS board member) noted that a significant challenge is recruiting volunteers, as many constituents around the lake are focused on relaxing. Society is interested in grant-writing assistance.
- **Roeliff Jansen Historical Society (RJHS)** – Founded in 1974, the RJHS represents the Towns of Copake, Ancram, Gallatin, Hillsdale, and Taconic in the mission to preserve and present the history and cultural traditions of the Roeliff Jansen community. The all-volunteer board of around 8 people is led by President Leslie Doyle.
- **Friends of Hope Grange** – Founded in 2019, this group is a 501c3 fundraising arm for the fraternal Grange organization to allow for grant applications and fundraising. Their goals include supporting Copake Grange in maintaining its historic and social importance and organizing community events like the Copake Cupcake Event and square dances.
- **West Copake Reform Church** – Drew Ary and Kathy Wheeler, representing the West Copake Reform Church, stated their mission is "to know Christ and to make him known" through serving the Roeliff Jansen community and beyond. They organize the Thanksgiving dinner at the community center and have active mission programs both worldwide and locally within Columbia County.
- **Our Lady of Hope Church** – Bruce Herskott, Parish Life Director, noted their small staff is complemented by active parishioners, including many seniors and a younger Latino congregation. The church has expanded its community outreach to include a coffee hour, a monthly food pantry, and a blessing box and refrigerator.
- **Friends of Taconic State Park** – Edgar Masters, board member, detailed that their group, formed around 2009-2010, chose to focus on preserving the decrepit Copake Iron Works as a way to support the State Park.
- **The Knit Club of the Hudson Valley** – Susan Maserell, along with Gloria Curry and Jane Holdridge, represented the club, which started in late 2007 to teach children knitting. Twenty club members knit, crochet, and engage in other handicrafts every Thursday at the park. They have raised \$67,000 over eight years for local charities, including the backpack program and food pantry, and also support organizations like World Central Kitchen and local emergencies. The Knit Club also offers social support and companionship.
- **Copake Rescue Squad** – Founded in 1946, the rescue squad has provided continuous 24/7 care to local residents. They receive reimbursement and compensation from towns but must still fundraise for increasingly expensive equipment. The rescue squad faces challenges with staffing and volunteers, relying mainly on paid staff to run ambulances, and they seek community assistance with grant writing and public relations.

- **Camphill Village** – Ted Sanders, the newly appointed Executive Director of Camphill Village, described it as a large, complex 501c3 organization founded in 1962, with about 270 constituents, including 100 people with special needs, 100 on-site volunteers, and 50 employees. Camphill Village is responsible for the Camphill in Chatham and is one of the few intentional communities that has survived the death of its founder.
- **Copake Hillsdale Farmers Market** – Carrie Green; Nicole Friedrich, Market Manager and board member; and Ron Bixby, President, represented the Copake Hillsdale Farmers Market, which became a nonprofit two years ago and operates from May to November. The market, celebrating its 20th anniversary, started in Hillsdale and later merged with the Copake market at the Roeliff Jansen Park to create a consolidated regional market, supporting local agriculture, promoting healthy food, and serving as a community hub. Bixby noted the market has grown dramatically, attracting over 20,000 customers yearly, which presents challenges for sustainability.
- **Copake Grange** – Roberta Roll spoke briefly about the Grange, chartered in 1902 with a mission to support agriculture best practices and engage the community in service through programs like working with the food pantry, providing resources for students, and offering programs on music, theater, and mental health.
- **Copake Fire Department** – Ben Gaminski, a planning committee member and fire department member, reported that the fire department is all-volunteer, responding to 100 to 150 calls annually, including auto accidents and supporting the rescue squad. They are trained in specialized areas like high-angle rescue, ice rescue, and water rescue. He shared struggles with staff, aging members, and attracted new volunteers, anticipating challenges to sustain their current level of service in the next five years.
- **St. John in the Wilderness** – John Thompson, Pastor, described the site as a beautiful historic, cultural, and natural site, and an active Christian congregation that serves as a hub for community events like live music. Wendy Lango was also introduced as the junior warden at St. John in the Wilderness.
- **Community Challenges** – Discussion shifted to community challenges, needs, and growing issues like food insecurity or daycare. Concerns included:
- **Transportation for older people** who stop driving. Community helpers are also aging, making it harder for some to get places in the rural county. One solution noted would entail a **local circulator system** using minibuses, with Town coordination with the County's public systems necessary for implementation.
- Median age in Copake is almost 60, and **lack of housing** contributes to the **absence of younger people**.
- **Volunteers** are aging and organizations face difficulty finding younger people to step into these positions.
- The Knit Club faces a storage challenge for donated yarn.

Next Steps

Comprehensive Plan 2026 will:

- Work with the business officials.
- Distributed at the library to make sure flyers are distributed.
- Invite all businesses to a meeting where they can explain what they are looking for and see if businesses, including farms, can offer children summer internships.
- Gather specific data on the number of families that decided to re-enroll their elementary school students this year.
- Review the pre-pandemic number of homeschooled students and get details regarding the percentage of graduating seniors who went to college, community college, or FOYA.
- Put out another survey with Taconic Hills faculty and staff regarding the need for childcare. Amelia Harnish, Margaret Irwin, and Comprehensive Plan 2026 will talk to each other in December to focus on the question of childcare.

TOWN OF COPAKE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES: October 27, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (CPRC) was hosted on October 27, 2025 at Copake Connect, as a Business Forum and joint meeting with the Copake Economic Development Committee (CEDAC). It began at 5:30 pm with opening remarks by Jeanne Mettler, with Catherine Mikic as Secretary.

ATTENDANCE

Members Attending In-Person

- ***Jeanne Mettler, Chair***
- ***Brian Boom***
- ***Ben Gedaminski***
- ***David Gurin***
- ***Amelia Harnish***
- ***Edgar Masters***
- ***Catherine Mikic***
- ***Todd Proper***
- ***Stephanie Rabin***
- ***Margaret Irwin, Consultant***

Members/ Officials not in attendance:

- ***Peter Doty***
- ***Roberta Roll***
- ***Terry Sullivan***
- ***Alden Warner***
- ***Richard Wolf, Town Supervisor***

Guests:

- ***Meredith Kane, Copake Housing Committee***
- ***Linda Gabaccia, Town Board Member***

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the October 6, 2025 minutes will be taken up at the next regularly scheduled meeting on November 3, 2025.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Jeanne Mettler welcomed guests and extended the good wishes of Town Supervisor Richard Wolf and CEDAC Chair, Tom Goldsworthy who regretfully were unable to attend. CPRC focus group facilitators, Todd Proper and Stephanie Rabin, are also members of the Copake Economic Development Advisory Committee (CEDAC).

FOCUS GROUP

BUSINESS FORUM FOCUS GROUP- 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm

Jeanne opened the meeting by providing background, that the current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2011 and in 2024 the Town Board appointed this Comp Plan committee to review and update the plan. A Comp Plan is a Town's visions for what it wants to look like in ten years. It is roadmap and expresses the values of goals of the Town. However, it is not simply aspirational. It has legal consequences since the zoning and code of the Town must comply with the Board approved Comprehensive Plan. To learn what this town wants for the future, we have been holding focus groups and tonight we want to hear from you, the major employers in Copake.

Jeanne asked that members of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee introduce themselves as well as Town Board member, Linda Gabaccia. The meeting was turned over to facilitators: Stephanie Rabin and Todd Proper.

Business Forum participants: 1) Abigail Leo, Manager, Taconic State Park; 2) Bruce Olsen, Engineer, High Voltage; 3) Dan Kneller, Kneller Insurance; 4) Martyn Moore-Bridger, Moore-Bridge Tree Service; 5) Mark Smith, General Manager, Catamount Ski Resort; 6) Scott Lacasse, Catamount (Real Estate Development side); 7) Paige Martin, Bank Manager, Key Bank; 8) Austin Urban, Copake Country Club; and 9) Kimberly and Richard Puricelli, Waubeeka Family Campground.

Conversation prompts were taken up in sequence by participants.

1. "What Challenges do you face"?

- Abigail Leo, Taconic State Park (TSP). The biggest issue is accessing a younger talent pool to fill summer jobs. We work with the local Taconic Hills School and Bard College. TSP offers more competitive pay than others but requires a higher level of credentials. Jobs require a commitment. TSP offers in-house training as needed.
- Bruce Olsen, High Voltage. As a manufacturer of high-voltage equipment with 35 employees, finding and keeping employees is their challenge. Finding employees - especially trained engineers - is a challenge. The shortage of affordable housing is an issue in attracting employees.
- Meredith Kane. She is local resident and attorney, involved with the Town on issues of affordable housing.

- Dan Kneller, Kneller Insurance. Hiring new employees is an industry issues, not just an area issue. Lack of affordable housing is an issue in attracting people to the area. Recommends that the town do more to create a thriving community and thriving businesses by sponsoring community days like Octoberfest and winter walks.
- Martyn Moore-Bridger, Moore-Bridger Tree Service. It is hard to find and keep employees. They pay well and offer decent benefits. Cost of owning and operating a business, and insurance costs have dramatically gone up. He works to keep prices competitive. There is a high turnover and backlog of work. Employees are not highly educated, two are over age 50 with one key employee that he relies on. Running a business solo would be easier.
- Mark Smith, Catamount. The resort has 50 summer and 300 winter season employees. The biggest challenge is employee retention and housing. Some employees are housed on site but not enough. There is a dearth of local rental or affordable housing for seasonal employees. Winter season is dependent on cold weather, so the timing is another factor. Meredith Kane asked if affordable rental housing was available, would that help to which Mark replied that seasonal housing is best.
- Scott Lacasse, Catamount. Scott works on the real estate development side with Mark. Local housing shortage is a big issue, and Short-Term Rentals contribute to the shortage. They are working on a few projects that will help fill that void. Biggest need is November through March. They could commit to a four-month lease. More STR stock is needed. He sees an opportunity through multiple dwelling rehabilitation of existing buildings. Meredith asked if Catamount is willing to be a tenant and sublease to their employees, and are hostels a solution.
- Paige Martin, Key Bank. The challenge they face is recruitment of new talent. The Copake office has fewer applicants than other area branches. Employees often commute. Key Bank has a recruiting team that finds applicants for local offices. The entry level demographic is someone out of high school or college with no financial degree required. The bank offers competitive pay and training.
- Austin Urban, Copake Country Club. Austin is a business partner at Copake Country Club which includes the Greens Restaurant and Mikey's Marina. Challenges are associated with seasonality including staff retention and lack of housing. The Golf Course rehires every spring with 50 at peak season including five management positions with only one living in Columbia County. The STR market is certainly affecting housing availability. Management staff is recruited by word of mouth or from local colleges and high schools.
- Kimberly and Richard Puricelli, Waubeeka Campground. Waubeeka is part of a network of campgrounds. It is a six-month business closed during off-season which brings the same seasonal problems that other businesses face like fewer qualified applicants and employees, and high cost of housing. I have a grim outlook and it seems that the business model will have to change to be profitable. Not sure that housing availability will solve the problem with quality of employees. Of the recent season's 36 employees, ten were expendable; only two were under forty years old and some as old as 70. The largest number of applicants were ages 13-14 but NYS employment laws limit what they can do. Prospective employees aren't there. Faced with challenges in finding reliable employees, his thought is to run the camp with minimal staff and to make as efficient as possible. We're all up against the same challenges. How to make young men more resilient? Copake can't help us. Maybe petition local and state lawmakers to allow willing 18-year-olds to do the work. Maybe there are just fewer prospective workers out there.

Jeanne ended by providing context to the discussions: For the third time in 100 years Copake has lost population, the last time was the War. We are seeing many demographic changes. The median age is now 60. There are many newcomers and higher incomes. Fewer families, kids, and lower school enrollment. These are not factors in our control. These numbers help to explain the experiences you are having. A comment from among the participants was that businesses are on shaky ground, and that creating affordable housing can create more problems in a community. Jeanne acknowledged that attitudes about housing have changed and that there is a housing shortage at all levels.

The Focus Group ended at 7:00 pm. Jeanne, Todd and Stephanie thanked the participants and urged them to fill out the Community Survey.

UPCOMING FOCUS GROUPS

Jeanne reminded members that the next focus group is scheduled for Monday, November 3rd for Nonprofit & Community Organizations, led by Catherine Mikic, Roberta Roll and Amelia Harnish.

ADJOURNMENT - NEXT MEETING

Monday, November 3, 2025 at 5:00 – 7:00pm at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted, Catherine Mikic

TOWN OF COPAKE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES: October 6, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (CPRC) was held on October 6, 2025 at Copake Town Hall. It began at 6:00pm and was presided over by Jeanne Mettler, Chairperson, with Catherine Mikic, as Secretary.

ATTENDANCE

Members Attending In Person

- ***Jeanne Mettler, Chair***
- ***Brian Boom***
- ***Ben Gedaminski***
- ***Amelia Harnish***
- ***Catherine Mikic***
- ***Terry Sullivan***
- ***Alden Warner***
- ***Richard Wolf, Town Supervisor***
- ***Margaret Irwin, Consultant***

Members Attending Online: none

Guests: none

Members not in attendance:

- ***Peter Doty***
- ***David Gurin***
- ***Edgar Masters***
- ***Todd Proper***
- ***Stephanie Rabin***
- ***Roberta Roll***

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Chair requested a motion to approve the Minutes of September 2, 2025. Alden Warner noted that the Community Profile summary did not record the conversation about Copake's high median income which is likely skewed and limits town access to government funding. Chair Mettler suggested that the Minutes be approved with the above amendment to be written by Alden Warner and amended by the Secretary. A motion was made by Brian Boom, seconded by Alden Warner, and unanimously approved by the Committee members.

INTRODUCTION TO NEW MEMBERS

Jeanne Mettler informed the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (CPRC) that the Town Board approved three new members at the September meeting:

- **Amelia Harnish.** She lives in the hamlet with her family since 2022. Copake offers her family the space to live and work. She works remotely. She hopes to bring new issues to the table including childcare and walkability.
- **Roberta Roll.** She was unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict.
- **David Gurin.** He was unable to attend due to a pre-arranged travel schedule.

TACONIC HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL

Unable to attend as scheduled was Taconic Hills Central School (THCS) Superintendent, Lynette Brunger, and BOE President, Bonnie Torchia. Jeanne distributed a written statement from Superintendent Brunger about 1) Taconic Hills' Students, Community, and Opportunities and 2) Opportunities for Employment, Service and Growth. A summary:

- **Students, Community and Opportunities**- Student population is about 1,100. Local lack of affordable housing is the biggest hurdle, affecting student enrollment and staff recruitment and retention. Aging population is a contributing factor. THCS has experienced a 40% enrollment drop in the past ten years. Younger families are poorer and 2/3 are economically disadvantaged.
- **Opportunities for Employment, Service and Growth** – a) Reliable school transportation is critical in our rural setting; b) Food service workers ensure that students are fed; c) Substitutes and classroom support help maintain continuity; d) The school encourages parent and community volunteers.

As a follow-up conversation, Margaret stated that lack of understanding of the housing crisis is contributing to the local housing challenge. Opportunities for community renewal depends on better understanding of housing issues and breaking down resistance to affordable housing and clusters. Margaret explained that there is a lack of housing at every level, causing a stagnation in the housing market. Regarding the old Roe Jan School, the town should investigate a specific redevelopment plan, get an update to cost, and create a basis for an RFP to tee up projects. Other comments:

- Terry mentioned that The Gables [in Poughkeepsie] is a model for development of single-family residences built around a community hub.
- Another way to address the affordable housing crisis is through use of land banks. A large track of land on Empire Farm was subdivided ten years ago and has not been developed.
- Jeanne mentioned the possibility of inviting Meredith Kane, a retired land use attorney, to speak about the local housing law which she assisted in writing, to be joined by her Columbia County counterpart in charge of housing.
- Jeanne will extend an invite to Supervisor Brunger to attend the special October 27th Business Forum to discuss demographics and housing, and as one of Copake's largest employers.

FOCUS GROUPS

Jeanne Mettler reviewed the updated 2025 Focus Group schedule:

- October 27th – a special Business Forum co-hosted with Copake Economic Development Advisory Committee (CEDAC) and held at Copake Connection, led by Todd Proper and Jeanne Mettler
- November 3rd – Nonprofit & Community Organizations, led by Catherine Mikic, Roberta Roll and Amelia Harnish
- December 1st – First Responders & Healthcare, led by Terry Sullivan and Peter Doty

UPDATE ON SURVEY RESPONSES

Margaret Irwin reported receiving more than 350 survey responses to date, still short of the 400 achieved in 2011. The Community Survey deadline has been extended to October 17, 2025. CPRC members were asked to encourage people to complete the survey. Respondents are not required to answer all questions.

COMMUNITY PROFILE: HISTORY

Margaret Irwin asked Catherine Mikic to discuss the Profile edits. Catherine's intention was to reframe history and historic preservation within a broader historic and cultural context including indigenous history and with the hamlets as part of a townwide heritage ecosystem. This approach aligns with the State Historic Preservation Office's (SHPO) current priority of designating rural historic districts rather than individual buildings.

FOCUS GROUP

CRARYVILLE FOCUS GROUP- 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Jeanne Mettler and Alden Warner welcomed guests. Jeanne began by talking about the purpose of the town Comprehensive Plan. Jeanne recognized the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee followed by members introducing themselves. The Comprehensive Plan is a plan that envisions what the town wants to become over the next ten years, and community input is vital to the process.

The Craryville Focus Group was led by Alden Warner with Jeanne Mettler. In attendance from the community was Amy Lawton, owner Zinnia's Dinette; Bradley Pitts, resident; Karl Skuggevig, owner of the historic Craryville Depot; Tim and Judy Blumer, residents; Drew Blanchard, resident; Lindsay LeBrecht, owner of Copake Lake Realty; Barbara Walton, fourth generation Copake Lake summer resident; and Linda Gabaccia, Town Board member.

Below are the questions asked and a summary of responses:

1. *What do you like about Craryville?*

- Karl – Its good people, the rural community, and the historic Train Depot that he stewards.
- Judy – Rural quality without a specific identity, offers recreation, picturesqueness with proximity to trains, as well as Great Barrington, MA and Hudson, NY.
- Bradley – Craryville's business hub and diversity of clientele. The watersheds, local Audubon, hilltops, agriculture all nestled in a valley creates a sense of place.
- Lindsay – Craryville stretches up to Copake Lake and includes a sense of a community getting together to steward the lake. Welcomes the opening of Parker House as a new business.
- Amy – Craryville feels like a special place, a destination far from nearby rural cities. Her regular clientele come from as far as Kingston, Albany, Great Barrington, and Red Hook. Zinnia's also attracts visitors and passers-by.
- Barbara – Appreciates the local post office, Zinnia's, Cumberland Farms, Parker House, gas station. Enjoys the picturesque Rasweiler farm and is happy to live here.

2. *What do you dislike about Craryville? What risks do you see on the horizon?*

- Bradley – Craryville's multiple town zip codes fragment the sense of community. He would like to see something done to define each hamlet as a distinct community.
- Lindsay – The local school brings people together. She swims there. The school was built to contribute to community resources which includes a well-equipped theater available to outside groups.
- Bradley – The school is a little-known resource. It was noted that use as a community hub is restricted by limited hours and recent closure this past summer.
- How do we link Craryville together when its physical center is sited at a busy intersection with speeding traffic Without data about accidents, the State is unwilling to help.
- Barbara – The eyesore property across from Cumberland Farms sits at the gateway into Craryville. Supervisor Wolf explained that there is little for the town to do without someone disturbing the peace or violating the law.
- Bradley – He sees that some of the local variation is okay as a part of hamlet life.
- Amy - We live in an area that is distinctly rich and poor with significant food insecurity. About 120 people a day seek free food from Zinnia's shed pantry. The trailer park on Route 23 is part of Copake.
- Bradley – County Route 7 is prone to flooding notably south of Sir William Farm at the stream crossing.
- Overpopulation is a risk to Copake losing its rural charm. Jeanne responded that Copake's population is in fact in decline and has a high median age of 60 compared to 37 in the Capitol Region.

3. *What improvements would you like to see in Craryville?*

- The potential that comes from focusing on local history and historical significance.
- Barbara – Enhancements, infrastructure like more sidewalks. Walking and bike trails to connect. Historic markers to learn about the history of the town. Wayfinding maps.
- Amy – State Route 23 and its shoulders are already regularly used by local pedestrians and bicyclists.

4. *What is your vision for Craryville?*

- Expansion of the Harlem Valley Rail Trail (HVRT) is a vision based in history that could connect residents townwide including a bike trail to the local Taconic Hills school. Jeanne added that the HVRT has about 20 miles to go to connect with Hillsdale and Chatham in the foreseeable future. The bridge across Route 22 should be completed in late 2026.
- Preserve rural farmland. There was once a vision to make the Langdon Farm into a Sturbridge Village.
- Bradley – The Town should hold easements that encourage sustainable development rather than no development.

5. *Jeanne asked the audience how much they knew about Craryville's history and historic sites?*

Most present knew little. Jeanne invited Catherine Mikic to speak about local history and Craryville's National Register-eligible sites. Key points:

- Craryville was formed as a crossroads town, along the historic Columbia Turnpike (today's Route 23) that facilitated the transport of products westward from the Iron Works and farmers to ports along the Hudson River.
- Craryville became a railroad stop in the 1850's and eventually led to development of Copake Lake as a popular recreation destination for city residents.
- The State Historic Preservation Office has recently identified five National Register-eligible properties in the hamlet of Craryville: 1) Craryville Train Depot Complex; 2) Sir William Farm; 3) Niver Farmhouse (site of the 1859 Mohican occupation); 4) North Copake Cemetery (aka Niver Cemetery); and 5) Vernacular Farmhouse on Rte. 7.

The Focus Group ended at 7:00 pm. Jeanne and Alden thanked the audience for their participation and urged them to fill out the Community Survey.

ADJOURNMENT - NEXT MEETING

Monday, November 3, 2025 at Town Hall. Committee meeting at 5:00 pm; Focus Group – Nonprofit, Churches and Community Organizations at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Mikic

TOWN OF COPENNY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES: September 2, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (CPRC) was held on September 2, 2025 at Copake Town Hall. It began at 6:00pm and was presided over by Jeanne Mettler, Chairperson, with Catherine Mikic, as Secretary.

ATTENDANCE

Members Attending In Person

- ***Jeanne Mettler, Chair***
- ***Todd Proper***
- ***Brian Boom***
- ***Ben Gedaminski***
- ***Edgar Masters***
- ***Catherine Mikic***
- ***Stephanie Rabin***
- ***Alden Warner***
- ***Richard Wolf, Town Supervisor***
- ***Margaret Irwin, Consultant***

Guests

- ***Lesley Zlatev, Revitalization Specialist, NYSDOS***

Members not in attendance

- ***Peter Doty***

Members Attending Online

- ***Terry Sullivan***

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the Minutes of July 7 and August 4, 2025, was made by Alden Warner, seconded by Stephanie Rabin, and unanimously approved by the Committee members.

FOCUS GROUPS

Brendan Cranna has resigned from the CPRC and Alden Warner will replace Brendan in leading the upcoming Craryville Focus Group scheduled for October 6th. The Not-for-Profit/Churches/Organizations Focus Group will take place on November 3rd led by Catherine Mikic. The First Responder and Health Care Focus Group is scheduled for December 1st led by Terry Sullivan and Peter Doty.

VACANCY ON COMMITTEE

Brendan Cranna resigned from the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee because he and his family have moved out of town to Connecticut. It's a loss because he represents an important demographic of a young professional with a family.

CPRC members will nominate a replacement for Brendan. The Town advertised the vacancy. We have vacancies created previously by Tom Goldsworth, Erin Dougherty, and Brendan Cranna. Interviews are scheduled for next week, Monday September 8th. Committee and Board members are invited to attend. Recommendations for new members will be sent to the Town Board for approval at its September 11th meeting.

UPDATE ON SURVEY RESPONSES

Margaret Irwin reported that we have received 250 returned surveys to date, compared to 400 in 2022. We need to get more responses for the survey to be credible and reliable. The survey will have bias as some demographics are not answering. There is a need to evaluate where survey respondent demographics are weak or overweighted.

Committee members are asked to reach out to friends to inform them that spouses and all members of their household may complete the survey. The Survey deadline has been extended to October 15, 2025. Flyers with QR codes will be posted. A targeted letter will be sent to those on the town's mailing list of interested citizens.

COMMUNITY PROFILE: Population, Housing and Economic Characteristics

Presentation by Margaret Irwin.

- **High Median Age:** Long-term residents are aging, and the median age is 60 years, creating a need for access to housing, healthcare and pharmacies. At the same time young family populations are in decline, with a significant 44% decrease in school enrollment in ten years, and a high teacher turnover rate.
- **High Median Income:** Copake's median household income has spiked considerably, from \$75,521 in 2018 to \$111,210 in the most recent year. There was discussion about (i) whether the current high number is skewed by the increase in relatively wealthy retirees (evidenced by the town's high median age) and/or by remote workers relocating permanently during the pandemic, and (ii) if the high number has any adverse effect on access to state food, education, or other programs. Margaret Irwin agreed to see what data might be available on comparable communities' trends for the Committee to consider.
- **Residents:** The 2020 Census leaves us grappling with the count of full-time, weekend, and seasonal residents, with a margin of error as high as 50%. It would be useful to compare Copake demographics with similar town profiles.
- **Housing:** Housing will be the critical issue for the next decade to maintain a stable population. This is due lack of housing and affordability, housing displacement, and a growing need for senior housing. Copake leads Columbia County in Short Term Rentals. Without housing people don't become part of the community.

FOCUS GROUP

BUSINESSES/EMPLOYERS FOCUS GROUP- 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Prior to the commencement of the Focus Group, Jeanne Mettler introduced the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee, charged with updating the 2011 Comprehensive Plan to reflect current ambitions with data gathered through surveys, focus groups, and public meetings. She invited the Members of the committee to introduce themselves and introduced the leaders of the discussion: Todd Proper and Ben Gedaminski.

Todd began by talking about the purpose of a Comprehensive Plan. Jeanne mentioned the challenges of striking a balance between the everyday full-time residents vs. weekend and seasonal residents. Todd posed questions and led the discussion to the several people in attendance: Linda Gabaccia, Depot Deli; Seung Suh, Copake General Store; Christy Frank, Copake Wine Works; Tessa Williams, Farm On! Foundation; Roberta Roll, and Amelia Harnish.

Summary: Key discussions included the challenges faced by small businesses, such as the "us vs. them" divide the town's demographic shifts and rising housing costs. Concern was voiced about the eyesore of the historic inn at the center of town, and upcoming impact of roadway rehabilitation on businesses. Support was voiced for encouraging small business organization and meetings, promoting local products and 'Hudson Valley Fresh', amplifying the agricultural community, and integrating local events and agritourism to attract more people. Participants said they could be supported by town business listings shared by owners to guests of the Short-Term Rentals.

The following is a review of what was said by the participants:

1. *What do we want to do in the town for the next decade?*
 - Seung Suh – There is not a real difference of what residents want in terms of food and convenience goods. There is a messaging and perception problems among residents that her prices are higher than other markets. With limited store space, she tries to avoid product, and services overlap with Gary at the gas station.
 - Christy Frank. She is planning to open a tasting room in addition to the wine shop. Its is a small specialty store open 6 days per week, not driven by profit but rather to serve the community. Being within the hamlet does not offer economy of scale due to small town convenience, and it is not far from Hudson and Great Barrington which serve bigger markets. Owning her building is a big advantage to staying in business here over the past ten years.
 - Seung Suh. She took on the challenge of opening a first-time store because she did not have to buy a building. Reasonable rents let people take it on. Seasoned operators may want to own a building which [favorably] changes the business financials.
 - Tessa Williams. She expressed concern about the 'us vs. them' divide in town – 'us' being the local people and homeowners. Her farm store business has suffered, and no one comes to her historic building at Empire Farm. She has responded to unfair perceptions by modifying her business plan. While the Farm On! Foundation continues to train young farmers and is SUNY accredited; she has secured a development license for cannabis. She supports town messaging with an emphasis on 'Hudson Valley Fresh'.

- Jeanne Mettler. She responded to the question about the purpose of this focus group and the Comp Plan. She responded that they are charged with advising the Town Board and creating a plan that reflects the ambitions and aspirations of the towns people. Town can offer Marketing and Promotion support for local businesses. The Committee aims to address Copake's declining population, an increasingly aged population (now median age 60 years) and the impact on future availability of services, rising cost of housing, economics. Points of commerce are Copake Center, Craryville, Copake Lake, Copake Falls, and West Copake.
- Seung Suh. She remarked that several businesses are not represented here today: Dad's Diner, Church Street Deli, Kneller Insurance, Clocktower Pub, reflecting a lack of community among businesses.
- Tessa Williams. The historic inn at the center of town is an eyesore. She expressed interest in its sale and she and Supervisor Wolf will connect separately to discuss it.
- Seung Suh. She expressed concern about the looming roadway reconstruction project in the center of town.
- General. Kids from the nearby summer camps and campgrounds do not spend money except at the Deli. Food costs will continue to rise.
- Seung Suh. Egg prices are catching up to farm egg prices which offer better quality and value.

The Focus Group ended at 7:00 pm. Todd, Ben and Jeanne thanked the audience for their participation and urged them to fill out the Community Survey.

ADJOURNMENT - NEXT MEETING

Monday, October 6, 2025 at Town Hall. Committee meeting at 5:00 pm; Focus Group - Craryville at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Mikic

TOWN OF COPAKE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES: August 4, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee was held on August 4, 2025 at Copake Town Hall. It began at 6:00pm and was presided over by Jeanne Mettler, Chairperson. (Jeanne took Minutes in the absence of Catherine Mikic, Secretary.)

ATTENDANCE

Members Attending In Person

- ***Jeanne Mettler, Chair***
- ***Todd Proper***
- ***Brendan Cranna***
- ***Brian Boom***
- ***Terry Sullivan***
- ***Ben Gedaminski***
- ***Stephanie Rabin***
- ***Alden Warner***
- ***Richard Wolf, Town Supervisor***

Members Attending Online

- ***None***

Guests

- ***None***

Members not in attendance

- ***Catherine Mikic***
- ***Peter Doty***
- ***Edgar Masters***

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The approval of Minutes was tabled.

AGENDA ITEMS

- **Short Term Rentals (STR)**

Supervisor Richard Wolf gave the committee an overview of the Town of Copake Short Term Rental Law. The law was passed in late 2023. There are a significant number of short-term rentals in Copake- in fact Copake has the highest number of short-term rental units of any town in the county. The Town recognized the need for regulation to limit interference with neighbors. The Town also recognized that STRs reduces the amount of affordable housing in the Town.

The Town works with a host company. Twice a month the company scours all the sites where STRs are advertised. They verify if there are properties which are advertising but not registered with the Town. Ninety homeowners have signed up pursuant to the Copake law. The Code Enforcement office works closely with the host company.

A one-year permit costs \$150 a year. (The Town set the fee so that it would cover the costs of the program. Supervisor Wolf pointed out that all the other taxpayers should not have to pay to support this program which only a certain number use.)

The Code Enforcement Office does not do property inspections. The landlord must attest that they have complied with state fire and building codes. Owner must give notice to adjacent neighbors that they are conducting short term rentals.

A short-term rental is less than 30 days. A permit is good for up to 120 days per year. If an owner wishes to rent year-round he or she must apply for an "Enhanced short term rental permit". In order to obtain an "Enhanced" permit the landlord must go to the zoning board and or planning board to secure a special use permit and site plan approval.

Recently the state began to impose 8% tax on all short-term rentals. The County imposes a 4% tax. 30% is paid back to the Town.

- **Update on Survey** – Margaret Irwin reported that we have received 148 returned surveys. We need to keep pushing this to get a better response.

- **Introduction to Community Profile**- Margaret Irwin has distributed a first draft. Going forward we will discuss one certain pages every month. Margaret will assign the pages in advance.

FOCUS GROUP

COPAKE LAKE/WEST COPAKE FOCUS GROUP- 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm

Prior to the commencement of the Focus Group, Jeanne Mettler announced that beginning this month all Focus Groups will be recorded and published. She invited the Members of the committee to introduce themselves and introduced the leaders of the discussion: Stephanie Rabin and Brendan Cranna.

Stephanie began by talking about the purpose of a Comprehensive Plan. She and Brendan then led the discussion by posing questions to the audience. There were close to 30 people in attendance. The following is a review of what was said by the participants:

1. *What do you LIKE about Copake Lake / West Copake?*

Denise Chickery- I like the community, the Greens and the Marina.

Roberta Roll – For the first time I was actually out on the lake last weekend. I was on a pontoon boat. It is so beautiful. The Marina was hopping. It was so lively.

Joyce Crow- As a child, we spent every summer on Lower Rhoda. A campground where we played games. I love West Copake.

Jed Luchow, He has been coming to Copake Lake since 1962. He is delighted that Copake has “come back”. He uses the Grange as an example. He comments that he surprised that so little is known about the hotel. It is so good to see revitalization.

Paulette Bonnano- She loves the low density, the fact that it is serene and quiet.

Linda Senk. Her aunt and uncle met at that hotel! I really love Copake Lake. I hope that people who live there will support it. It takes a lot of money. They need to support our lake.

Jed Luchow It should be noted the residents appreciate the Town of Copake’s support.

Marcia Becker. I appreciate the lake but I would like to understand who has jurisdiction over the lake: DEC? the Army Corps of Engineers?

Roberta Roll – As for West Copake we should not forget Camphill. (Jeanne explained that Camphill will be invited to a later Focus Group.)

2. *What ONE thing would you change or improve about Copake Lake / West Copake?*

Denise Chickery – Town should put a speed limit on Lakeview.

Rita Jakubowski – There is no clarity as to signs. (detour).

Sharon Luchow - Concerned about the high wakes from watercraft. There should be more supervision. Wake boats create huge wakes. Can the Town change the speed limits?

Hilary Thomas- Speed signs will not help unless there is enforcement.... We are at the behest of the County. Ancram pays for extra patrols. Unless the signs take a photo, they do not help.

Peter Reed – I love the fact that it is open year-round. But I can hear the noise from the lake. I am seeing some awful development. I would urge that we do pay attention to viewsheds and timber lines.

Sonia Pilcer. I swim long distance. Boats come too close.

Jed Luchow- Boat and Ski parking is a problem. Farm Market at the corner but there is very little parking. Wonderful to see them growing but there is a problem with parking.

Scott Altman-The Golf course was developed to stop the development. The elephant in the room- the solar. Copake Lake is great. One concern, there is no boat washing station.

David Crow- Can we get technology to issue tickets?

Signe Adam- There are marinas- “Boat and Ski” and “Mickey’s”. Why not do a Boat washing station?

Denise Chickery- Boat owners do not want to pay.

Lindsay LeBrecht- We are too small of a lake for NYS to require a boat washing station

Jed Luchow- Copake Lake is too small for stewards’ program

3. *What should Copake look like in 5-10 years?*

Paulette Bonanno- What is the Plan for downtown Copake? Supervisor Wolf responded that the construction will not start until 2027. It will be paid for with federal, state and county funds. The Town does not have control over the whole programs... It is still a matter of getting final approval.

Denise Chickery- Signage in the Hamlet is not clear. It is very confusing around the clock.

Peter Reed. I love a Village. I saw the pictures of what it used to be. What would it take to dial it up just a little? How do you bring it back?

Amelia Harnish- Walkability is important.

Dave Crow- Wants the clock to be the focus of the town. Will the changes still have the clock as a focus? (Supervisor Wolf says yes.)

Lindsay LeBrecht - Alex is trying his best (Mickey's) Will we run out of water if we keep building?

Jed Luchow- The businesses which were the most popular in years gone by, the video store and drug store. What will the popular business of the future?

Signe Adams- what if we had a pop-up shop?

Marcia Becker- Water and Sewer are big concerns

(Unidentified) - What about the Spur? RTW answers that DOT has committed to going under Route 22

Lindsay LeBrecht - All the utility lines could be buried.

4. *What kind of businesses would you like to see?*

(Unidentified) - Bakeries and bread

Denise Chickery - You need sidewalks

Rita Jakubowski - You need year-round stores

Joyce Crow -Attract more people to stay in the winter.

RJ Rabin - A swimming pool (to swim all year)

Amelia Harnish- Child care. A Pharmacy

Sonia Pilcer- A movie theater/ we need

Barry Ross - "Safe at home" program in Hillsdale is very successful.

Jed Luchow - Library offers a lot of programs.

Linda Senk- The school has a lot of problems.

5. *Let's talk about town events: Who's going to the 100 Year Event for the Copake Fire Department this coming Saturday?*

Show of hands.

Terry Sullivan talked about the Music in the Park- free Music

6. *Any other things we should be thinking about?*

Hilary Thomas- I grew up in a small Town. It has changed. Now the homes are not full-time occupants. Maybe if you know your neighbors things would be better.

The Focus Group ended at 7:00 pm. Stephanie and Jeanne thanked the audience for their participation and urged them to fill out the Survey.

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday September 2, 2025- Committee meeting at 5:00 pm; Focus Group -Businesses and Employers at 6:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne E. Mettler

TOWN OF COPAKE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES: JUNE 2, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee was held on June 2, 2025 at Copake Memorial Park Building. It began at 5:02 PM and was presided over by Jeanne Mettler, Chairperson, with Catherine Mikic as Secretary.

ATTENDANCE

Members Attending In Person

- ***Jeanne Mettler, Chair***
- ***Brian Boom***
- ***Stephanie Rabin***
- ***Alden Warner***
- ***Terry Sullivan***
- ***Ben Gedaminski***
- ***Todd Proper***
- ***Catherine Mikic***
- ***Richard Wolf, Town Supervisor***

Members Attending Online:

- ***Brendan Cranna***

Members not in attendance:

- ***Julie Cohen***
- ***Peter Doty***

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the previous May 5, 2025 meeting. Ben Gedaminski offered a correction; a motion was made by Brian Boom, seconded by Alden Warner, and approved unanimously by members.

UPDATE ON PROCUREMENT PROCESS

- Supervisor Richard Wolf stated that a Revitalization Specialist has been assigned from the Department of State (DOS) to advise the Town's Comprehensive Planning Review Committee (CPRC) with a focus on Smart Growth Principles.
- Town received four Contract Reporter responses; each will be rated and an official Consultant selection made soon.

UPDATE ON SURVEY

- Fifty printed surveys will be distributed to start, but on-line survey completion is preferred for ease and accuracy.
- Jeanne will arrange paper survey placement at the Town Clerk's Office at Town Hall, the Roe Jan Community Library
- Seniors can receive assistance with surveys via local seniors' groups: the Young at Hearters & Hillsdale Safe at Home.
- Colored flyers publicizing the June 28th Community Workshop will be posted by CPRC members in prominent community businesses and post offices in all four hamlets.
- The Community Workshop will be publicized in the upcoming Copake Connection, the town's on-line newsletter.

FOCUS GROUP #1: COPAKE FALLS (5:30 – 6:30PM)

- CPRC was delighted with the strong community turnout with 28 people in-person, and 1 attending virtually.
- Over the next 5 months, focus groups will meet as part of the CPRC process to gather broad community input and to establish new goals for the next 10 years, with zoning and town codes to comport with the new Comprehensive Plan.
- Questions were posed by Brian Boom with Chair Jeanne E. Mettler, beginning with introductions of the CPRC members and focus groups participants.
- First question: What do you like and dislike about Copake Falls? Response summaries follow.
 - Lesley Wood described Copake Falls as a "tight community" that adapts to the seasonal stream of over 250,000 visitors each year to the Taconic State Park (TSP).
 - Mibs Zellej described as "a community that knows and care about each other and the town" and with unique treasures such as Bash Bish Falls, TSP, ore bed swimming hole, and Copake Ironworks and museum.
 - Lesley Doyel: The Roe Jan Historical Society, like the sister institution Copake Ironworks, was abandoned and rescued by the community 42 years ago to preserve an important local historic resource.
 - Jon Strom: Suggested establishing zoning and codes by hamlet because of their unique characteristics.
 - Jane Peck: Route 344 is dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists due to limited road width and limited visibility. Consider defining a walking or biking lane.
 - John Duffy: Suggests looking at lowering the speed limit in the hamlet.

- Madeline Silverman: Suggests stop sign for bikes at Rail Trail crossings
- Rosemary Ahern: Not willing to give up property for sidewalks. Visitors are welcomed and respectful.
- Richard Barton: Preservation of the Taconic Inn (TI) is extremely important to this community and the town's support is requested. Perhaps add sidewalks to Route 344 where there is more traffic.
- Laurie Gross: Prefers Miles Road to remain without sidewalks. Route 344 is different because lack of visibility around the hill makes it dangerous at night. Consider adding a sidewalk or increased road shoulder.
- Jennifer: Enjoys hamlet walkability to post office, the Taconic Inn (TI) and museum. Local businesses fear the loss of TI. The Geller-owned houses are not well-maintained to the detriment of quality of life.
- Richard Wolf responds that zoning issues such as eye sore and nuisance could be enforced through code.
- Bill McCann: Overgrown bushes on the road need to be trimmed back. State could contribute to their maintenance.
- David Guren: He understands that the owner of the American Legion building intends it to be a civic building. State Park has restricted parking so that visitors pay. St. John's has stopped visitor parking on the grass.
- Deb Cohen: She knows of new possible locations for increased TSP public parking. Make ore bed parking more accessible. American Legion owners might permit visitor parking. Museum parking is challenging.
- Address Copake Falls residents' identity and its character, and being part of the Town of Copake.
 - In general residents feel there is a good relationship with the Town of Copake.
 - Residents feel well served, and Town Hall and the highway department are responsive.
- What do you like/dislike about the hamlet's proximity to Taconic State Park? Can the Town help promote it?
 - Copake Ironworks Historic Site is regarded as the area's 'crown jewel' and town could help promote more.
 - Stephanie: Copake Economic Development Committee (CEDA) could offer guidance to promote the Park.
- Do Copake Falls residents feel safe?
 - Mibs: The Park attracts all walks of life and visitors from across the world. They add a lot to our community.
 - June Makela: The ore bed is a community resource that should remain open beyond August 15th. Efforts should be made to find lifeguards necessary to keeping it open through Labor Day Weekend.
 - Edgar: The issue is also state regulations and liability. Suggests exploring an alternative to keep open.
 - Dick: Town must correct the problem of incidents of loud music and bad behavior in the heart of the hamlet.
 - Could there be a Town Manager to create continuity between administrations, or even for 3 towns?
- How do the Copake Falls residents feel about short-term rentals (STR)?
 - STRs prevent the children of locals remaining in the community.
 - Viola: STR is a risk to housing stock and community building. Suggests looking at zoning to restrict.

FOCUS GROUPS

- The schedule for upcoming Focus Groups was distributed via email and will be publicized in Copake Connection.
- Moving forward, Focus Groups will be held from 6:00-7:00 PM as part of regularly schedule monthly meetings

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP – scheduled for Saturday, June 28, 2025 10AM – 12PM at Town Hall

- Margaret Irwin will lead the community conversation on the Comprehensive Planning process
- Define the demographic profile, town vision and goals to set the stage for all to come.
- Use large group setting for conversation about what the community wants to accomplish in the next ten years

RELEVANT PLANS COMPLETED TO DATE

- Margaret Irwin had no updates and will table until the next July 7th meeting.

MEETING FINALIZATION

Actions to be taken

- Next focus group on Copake Hamlet will take place on July 7th led by Stephanie Rabin and Alden Warner

Adjournment: 7:06PM.

NEXT MEETING

Monday July 7, 2025, 5PM at Town Hall Building

TOWN OF COPEN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES: MAY 5, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee was held on May 5, 2025 at Copake Town Hall. It began at 5:00PM and was presided over by Jeanne Mettler, Chairperson, with Catherine Mikic as Secretary.

ATTENDANCE

Members Attending In Person

- ***Jeanne Mettler, Chair***
- ***Todd Proper***
- ***Brendan Cranna***
- ***Brian Boom***
- ***Terry Sullivan***
- ***Ben Gedaminski***
- ***Catherine Mikic***
- ***Richard Wolf, Town Supervisor***

Members Attending Online:

- ***Alden Warner (dismissed for technical issues)***
- ***Peter Doty***
- ***Stephanie Rabin***

Guests

- ***Bill Gregory, Highway & Park Superintendent***

Members not in attendance:

- ***Julie Cohen***

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous April 7, 2025 meeting was made by Jeanne Mettler, seconded and approved unanimously by committee members.

PRESENTATION BY BILL GREGORY, COPEN HIGHWAY & PARK SUPERINTENDENT

- Oversees 7 full-time employees all union teamsters. Salaries & benefits competitive with public & private sectors.
- Oversees 53 miles of roads, and snow removal at town parking lots, sidewalks, school. Employs best practices.
- Bill is responsible for planning which includes forecasts for equipment replacement, and contractor oversight.
- The Department works closely with Hillsdale and Ancram and the County
- Park grounds and facilities (bandshell, pavilion, community hall) are maintained by the grounds team

UPDATE ON PROCUREMENT PROCESS

- Supervisor Richard Wolf stated that the town has a sign-off from Department of State (DOS) on procurement.
- Pursuant to the state grant, the town will hire a consultant to work with the Comprehensive Planning Committee.
- The Town will be able to post opportunities via NYS Contract Reporter on planning, design, and construction

SCHEDULE FOR 2025

- Margaret Irwin led the schedule overview, confirming that the Committee will meet in August.
- This week Local Plans and Community Profile.
- Advisor from the Department of State is underway and will join the Committee at the June meeting.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PLAN

- The Comp Committee will turn its attention to focus groups starting in June.
- Posting of the Comp Plan Committee website will explain the process, roles, and outreach to the community

UPDATE ON SURVEY

- The ten-page Community Survey is ready and will go live in the next week or so.
- Paper surveys will be distributed at the Town Clerk's office and Roe Jan Community Library
- Public assistance for survey completions will be offered to Young at Hearters group and Hillsdale Safe at Home.
- Fifty printed surveys will be distributed to start but on-line completion is preferred for ease and accuracy.
- Ben Gedaminski offered to present to the membership of the Copake Grange.

FOCUS GROUPS

- Proposed Focus Groups, Schedule and the Committee leaders are as follows:
 1. (June) Copake Falls – Brian Boom & Jeanne Mettler
 2. (July) Copake Hamlet – Stephanie Rabin & Alden Warner
 3. (August 1) Copake Lake/ West Copake - Stephanie Rabin & Brendan Cranna
 4. (August 2) Local Businesses & Employers – Todd Proper
 5. (September) Craryville – Brendan Cranna
 6. (October) Not-for-Profit/ Churches/ Organizations – Catherine Mikic & Jeanne Mettler
 7. (November) First Responders & Health Care – Terry Sullivan & Peter Doty. Note: Engage with the Copake Economic Development Advisory Committee for outcomes from their own survey and focus groups
- Julie Cohen has not been assigned and it will be determined.
- Brian Boom is preparing a framework for the upcoming Copake Falls focus group on June 2nd.
- Will Morningstar's group is focused on farming issues.
- Focus Groups will be held as part of regularly schedule monthly CP Committee meetings from 5:30-6:30PM with an option to participate remotely.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP – scheduled for Saturday, June 28, 2025 10AM – 12PM at Town Hall

- Margaret Irwin will lead introduction to the Comprehensive Planning process
- Define the demographic profile, town vision and goals to set the stage for all to come.
- Use large group setting for conversation about what the community wants to accomplish in the next ten years

RELEVANT PLANS COMPLETED TO DATE

- Margaret Irwin had no updates and will table until the next June 2nd meeting.

MEETING FINALIZATION

Actions to be taken

- Jeanne Mettler will prepare the Focus Group table for the next meeting.
- Brian Boom and Jeanne Mettler will lead the first Copake Falls Focus Group at the June 2nd meeting.

Adjournment: 6:25PM.

NEXT MEETING

Monday July 7, 2025, 5PM at the Park Building

TOWN OF COPEN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES: APRIL 7, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee was held on April 7, 2025 at Copake Town Hall. It began at 5:03PM and was presided over by Jeanne Mettler, Chairperson, with Catherine Mikic as Secretary.

ATTENDANCE

Members Attending In Person

- **Jeanne Mettler, Chair**
- **Stephanie Rabin**
- **Todd Proper**
- **Brendan Cranna**
- **Brian Boom**
- **Terry Sullivan**
- **Catherine Mikic**
- **Richard Wolf, Town Supervisor**

Members Attending Online:

- **Alden Warner**
- **Peter Doty**

Guests – none

Members not in attendance:

- **Julie Cohen**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous March 3, 2025 meeting was made by Jeanne Mettler, seconded and approved unanimously by committee members.

MATTERS UP FOR DISCUSSION

- Margaret Irwin led the continued review and approval of the draft Comprehensive Plan Survey

TOPIC	DELETIONS	ADDITIONS
What is Your Vision for Copake	• What 3 words and phrases best describe your vision.....	None
Economic Development	• Encourage light industry • Create an industrial park • Add co-working space • Develop shared parking • Locate utilities underground... • 7. Roughly how much of your monthly spending.....	• 9. What types of businesses would you like to see more of in town <u>over the next decade.</u>
Hamlets	• Encourage new businesses • Enforce town codes... • Develop beautiful gateways.... • Beautification of the hamlets • Design and construct wayfinding systems..... • Link hamlets by trails	• Link hamlets with multi-use trails. • Goal is to develop community development profile by hamlet Reorder as follows • 1: Prepare community development profile... • 2: Enhance the distinct historic character... • 3: Encourage mixed use development...
Housing	• In-law apartments • Affordable housing options for young people • Second home development • Co-housing • Advancing Copake’s Pro-Housing Communities	• Affordable farm worker housing • Affordable workforce housing • Seek grant funds for housing rehabilitation • Note: Group senior related questions together
Community Facilities and Recreation	• Develop a master plan for & to improve Copake Memorial Park • Encourage more activities for... • Encourage development of... • Share recreation resources with... • Continue Summer Concert Series	• Develop a plan to improve Copake Memorial Park...

	(move to 20: Arts & Culture) • Develop a Plan of Action for Copake Trails... • Develop public spaces along... • Build accessible fishing sites... • Help implement projects in the... • Encourage reuse of the Roeliff Jansen School (move to 21)	
Agriculture	• Support local farms to create CSA • Expand the Town capacity to fund, purchase & protect.... • Would you support formation of a Community Preservation Fund. • If you answered yes, do you have any need for local facilities for processing products (e.g. small culinary kitchen, Ag & Market programs	• Town zoning shall support on-farm ag & market rules
Open Space and Environment	• Develop a Climate Adaptation... • Purchase & conserve open space • Monitor & support water quality issues in residential areas... • Promote large-scale utility solar... • Promote large-scale wind energy (for utility grid) • Update building code...	• Support small scale solar/wind energy for individual farm use • Limit light pollution with Dark Sky policy Re-order below to top of list: • Protect rural character • Protect scenic views... • Protect forested areas... • Protect wetlands... • Protect wildlife habitats • Protect and restore streams & riparian...
Arts and Culture	• Program cultural resources... • Encourage new arts & culture...	None
Infrastructure	• Develop interconnected bike & walking lanes • Continue to evaluate feasibility... • Improve the condition of bridges. • Improve the condition of roads...	• Improve amenities for <u>pedestrians and</u> bicyclists...
Historic Preservation	• Commission a Historic Resources. • Encourage protection of Copake's farmland & historic barns • Encourage protection of local archaeological sites • Encourage rehabilitation of Copake hamlet... • Integrate historic resources & preservation efforts into Town Master Plan & policies • Communicate the benefits and costs of National Register...	• Pursue <u>Explore</u> historic districts...
Other	24. Should Copake become a Certified Local Government? 38. Did you work remotely from Copake during the pandemic?	29. Volunteering – Move to end of survey 30. If you would like to participate in a Comprehensive Plan Focus Group.... – Move to end of survey and use Focus Group categories 33. If you answered yes to questions <u>33 or 34</u> above, please describe..... 40. How many years have you lived in Copake? Add- <u>40+</u>

OTHER MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

- Create QR code for local business windows

MEETING FINALIZATION

Actions to be taken

- At next May meeting, schedule and propose focus groups and participation plan
- Summary of plans and studies
- Margaret will email a link to the online Survey that we can all take

Adjournment: 6:40PM.

NEXT MEETING

Monday May 5, 2025, 5PM at Town Hall

TOWN OF COPEN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES: MARCH 3, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee was held on March 3, 2025 at Copake Town Hall. It began at 6:00 and was presided over by Jeanne Mettler, Chairperson, with Catherine Mikic as Secretary.

ATTENDANCE

Members Attending In Person

- **Jeanne Mettler, Chair**
- **Stephanie Rabin**
- **Alden Warner**
- **Todd Proper**
- **Brendan Cranna**
- **Brian Boom**
- **Terry Sullivan**
- **Peter Doty**
- **Catherine Mikic**
- **Richard Wolf, Town Supervisor**

Members Attending Online:

- **Julie Cohen**

Guests – none

Members not in attendance:

- **Ben Gediminski.** Note: Ben, who is a member of the Copake Fire Company, advised that he was unable to attend because he was on a fire call.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous February 3, 2025 meeting was made by Jeanne Mettler, seconded and approved unanimously by committee members.

MATTERS UP FOR DISCUSSION

- Margaret Irwin led review of Remaining Sections of the Comprehensive Plan Survey

TOPIC	DELETIONS	ADDITIONS
Arts And Culture	• Develop new cultural events. • Increase marketing of existing cultural events. • Encourage performance arts (music, theater, dance)	• Encourage and support new local arts and culture events. • Encourage existing cultural events, e.g. Summer Concert Series, Copake Grange. • Encourage new open streets initiatives/ events at the new Town Center. • Encourage performance arts (music, theater, dance) <u>that feature local artists.</u> • Encourage programming at outdoor public green spaces, e.g. fire pond • Support programming at cultural resources and historic sites.
Infrastructure	• Improve facilities for bicyclists. • Develop a sewer system in the hamlets as possible. • Develop a water system in the hamlets as possible.	• Improve amenities for pedestrians and bicyclists (bike racks, lanes, trails, striping) • Develop projects that prevent and mitigate flooding. • Review local flood management policies. • <u>Note:</u> Reorganize the list with walkability and bike-ability at top, and like-topics together.
Historic Preservation	• Conduct an inventory of historic buildings and sites. • Create a local Register of Historic Places. • Petition to add local properties to NYS Register Historic Places. • Educate property owners about grants and tax incentives for historic homes and places.	• Commission a Historic Resources Survey and evaluation of historic buildings and sites. • Encourage protection of historic resources. • Explore potential community benefits and risks of hamlets' Historic District designation.

Town Government	• Make more services available on-line. • Increase consistent code enforcement. • How well does the Town communicate with residents and taxpayers (e.g. the Copake Connection, Facebook page)	• Rate your satisfaction with the Town website • Rate your satisfaction with the Town's on-line tax-paying system. • Rate your satisfaction with Copake Connection newsletter... Facebook page. • Are there other on-line functions that you would like to see.
Volunteering	• Note: Move section to the end of the Survey	• Add note: 'check all that apply'. • Add Rescue Squad.
Advance Smart Growth Principles	• Encourage compact neighborhood design and concentrated development <i>around existing infrastructure (remove)</i>. • Prioritize transportation options such as walking, cycling, <i>and public transportation (remove)</i>.	• Note: Address flooding risks. • Note: Add hyperlinks to define terms, e.g. infill, Smart Growth Principles, etc. • Encourage compact neighborhood design and concentrated development. • Prioritize transportation options such as walking, cycling. • <i>Continue to</i> (add) engage in an inclusive and collaborative planning process.
Vision for Copake		• <u>Note</u>: Move section to the beginning. • What do you like best about Copake. • What do you like least about Copake. • Keep to 20-character text box.
Changing Population in Copake	• 31. <i>Have you maintained another (remove) residence...</i>	• <u>Note</u>: Purpose is to update data to capture impacts of the pandemic. • 31. <i>Do you maintain</i> a residence in addition to your residence in Copake?
Tell Us about Yourself	• How many years have you owned property in Copake?	• Move section before Changing Population • How many years have you <i>lived in Copake</i>? • Modify household annual income range, add <i>Over \$200,000</i>.
From the Agricultural Group (to be integrated into Survey)		• Establish a Community Preservation Fund – <i>include hyperlink</i> – paid into by new homeowners in Copake. Agree or disagree.

OTHER MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

Bring paper surveys into the community to reach individuals without computer access.

MEETING FINALIZATION

Actions to be taken

- Margaret will prepare a full and revised Community Survey for review at the next meeting in April.
- Margaret will talk further with Will Morningstar, Chair of the Agricultural Group.
- Margaret to revisit Historic Preservation section with input from Catherine before the next meeting.
- Time to now turn toward developing implementation tools.

Adjournment: 6:39PM.

NEXT MEETING

Monday April 7, 2025, 5PM at Town Hall

MINUTES
Comprehensive Plan Review Committee
Copake Town Hall
Monday, February 3, 2025 – 5:00 pm

Present: Brian Boom, Brendan Cranna, Peter Doty, Benedict Gedaminski, Jeanne Mettler, Terry Sullivan

Present via Videoconference: Julie Cohen, Stephanie Rabin, Alden Warner

Not Present: Todd Proper (traveling for business)

Guests from Town Committees: Mary Ann Carrick, Chair, Conservation Advisory Committee; and Sub-Committee Chairs: Bradley Pitts, Mohican Allyship Committee; and Catherine Mikic, Historic Preservation Committee. Two Committee representatives who did not present: Dan Haas, Chair, Climate Smart Task Force; and Will Morningstar, Chair of the Farmland Protection Committee

Town Board Liaison: Supervisor Richard Wolf

Present: Margaret Irwin

1. Call to Order: Meeting was called to order by Chair Jeanne Mettler at 5:00 PM. Stephanie contacted the Chair to say that she could not attend due to a doctors' appointment.

2. Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the January 6, 2025 meeting were previously distributed. Motion to approve minutes was made and seconded; all in favor.

3. Presentation by Conservation Advisory Committee (CAC) and Sub-Committees. Jeanne Mettler introduced Mary Ann Carrick, Chair of the Board's Conservation Advisory Committee that oversees the following Sub-Committees: Climate Smart Task Force; Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) and Mohican Allyship Committee (MAC). Select Chairs were invited to provide an overview of their work and will be invited back to provide recommendations when we are further along in our work.

- Mary Ann Carrick: CAC was formed in 2013 in accordance with the recommendations from the 2011 Town Comprehensive Plan to preserve Copake's rural landscape as its primary goal. Recent CAC accomplishments: collaborated with the Columbia Land Conservancy on the Upper Taconic Watershed Conservation Plan; and helped achieve Climate Smart Community Bronze Certification in 2024.
- Catherine Mikic, Chair HPC: It was formed in 2021 to preserve the Town's historic resources, and to secure local National Register District designation. Past achievements include the Town Historic Resources Inventory List, 2024 Bicentennial Historic Markers Project, and 2024 Copake Heritage Guide.
- Bradley Pitts, Chair, Mohican Allyship Committee: MAC was formed in 2023 to increase understanding of the Mohican people past and present, and to advocate

for local policies and procedures that acknowledge native sovereignty. Past achievements are the writing and passage of the Town land acknowledgement, and a bicentennial public presentation at the Roe Jan Historical Society Museum.

4. Review of Draft Survey. CPRC members discussed Margaret Irwin's draft of the Copake Community Survey, offering comments and possible new questions by topic:

- Economic Development. Potential new questions included: percentage of monthly spending individuals direct to local businesses; individual's interest or willingness to volunteer/serve the community; are childcare needs being met; are transportation needs an obstacle to obtaining or sustaining jobs.
- Hamlets. The intent is to develop a concept plan and rendering for each of the hamlets (including Copake Lake). Potential new questions: is there a need for new businesses, more retail shops; whether residents take advantage of access to Copake Lake; whether residents support public access to Copake Lake.
- Housing. Margaret noted that post-pandemic, the state offers many new programs for housing development and renewal. Under the newly adopted law in Copake ; Accessory Dwelling Units is not a zoning but rather building permit matters. Potential questions: determine the community need for affordable options; the need or interest for co-housing and co-operative home ownership.
- Community Facilities and Recreation. This area overlaps with housing, nursing home and recreational resources for the elderly. Potential questions: is more public parking needed at Taconic State Park to improve access; need for increased public access to waterway resources; identify specific community facilities used regularly.
- Agriculture. Will Morningstar suggested a Community Preservation Fund to protect land and keep people farming. Potential questions: what industry is replacing dairy; are farmers diversifying their farms including addition of farm stores; is there a need for farmers shared commercial kitchens and processing facilities; is there a trend toward value-added products.
- Open Space and the Environment. Copake has a unique eco-system with recurrent flooding issues that are critical to address. Opportunities to explore nature-based hazard mitigation measures and limitations to individual solar use. Prioritize protection of prime farmland and the NYS DEC protected watersheds. Taconic Shores at Robinson Pond, Chrysler and Upper Rhoda Ponds have existing water quality issues that need to be addressed. Zoning limits farmers' right to have a farm store, which could be resolved with a zoning revision.

5. Adjournment – Next meeting Monday, March 3, 2025- 5:00 pm

Respectfully Submitted
Catherine Mikic, Secretary

MINUTES
Comprehensive Plan Review Committee
Copake Town Hall
Monday, January 6, 2025 – 5:00 pm

Present: Brian Boom, Brendan Cranna, Peter Doty, Benedict Gedaminski, Jeanne Mettler, Todd Proper, Terry Sullivan

Present via Video-Conference: Julie Cohen, Catherine Mikic, Stephanie Rabin, Alden Warner

Guests from Planning Board: Edgar Masters and Marcia Becker

Town Board Liaison: Supervisor Richard Wolf

Present: Margaret Irwin

1. **Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order by Chair Jeanne Mettler at 5:02 PM.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the December 9, 2024 meeting were previously distributed. Motion to approve minutes was made and seconded; all in favor.
3. **Introduction of Committee members.** Jeanne welcomed Margaret Irwin who assisted the Town with the current Comprehensive Plan. Highlights of members self-introductions:
 - Terry Sullivan, former Town Board and School Board members, she works at Fairview Hospital and consults with Camphill Village.
 - Brian Boom, member of the Copake Conservation Advisory Committee (CAC) and is involved with the Friends of Taconic State Park.
 - Brendan Cranna lives in Copake with wife Lauren and son Burch, and is an attorney with an office in the City of Hudson.
 - Stephanie Rabin is a member of the Copake Economic Development Committee (CEDAC).
 - Todd Proper grew up in Copake and moved away for about 20 years, returning to Copake 3-4 years ago. He is a member of CEDAC.
 - Peter Doty has been running the Rescue Squad for the last 10 years.
 - Ben Gedaminski is active in the community through the Fire Department and Friends of Taconic State Park.
 - Catherine Mikic is owner of the National Register-listed Sweet-Sherman Homestead in Copake and is Chair of the town's Historic Preservation Committee.
 - Julie Cohen is current Chair of the Copake Planning Board and has lived in Copake full time since 1999 where she has raised her family.
 - Alden Warner retired last year from a 45-year banking career in New York City and now lives full-time in Copake. He is also on the Board of Assessment Review.

4. Presentation by Planning Board Members:

- The Planning Board applies the town's zoning code to projects brought before it. The code is enforced by the town's Building Inspector. The zoning code carries out the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure the town's orderly growth.
- The Planning Board requests that the CPR committee reviews the 2011 Comprehensive Plan to preserve what is working, identify what needs updating, add what is needed, and make recommendations for changes in zoning.
- The Board is undertaking a review of the Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone (SCOZ) over the next 6-12 months with Lisa Nagel from EDR Consultants, concurrent with the CPRC process.

5. CFA for Grant to fund Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan and Procurement

Process: Supervisor Wolf reported that the town has been awarded an \$81K grant from CREDC to fund the Comprehensive Plan update.

Presented by Margaret Irwin. Refer to the PowerPoint attachment to the Minutes.

- The Town Comprehensive Plan establishes a shared vision, protects resources, and encourages planned growth that is orderly, predictable and efficient.
- The Plan will be based on Smart Growth Principles of compact growth, mixed land use, open space conservation, and attractive, inclusive spaces, including a focus on recovery and resilience, flood mitigation and drought as major local issues.
- The proposal reserved funds for development of hamlet-specific strategies.

6. Roles of the Comprehensive Plan Committee. Presented by Margaret Irwin.
Refer to the Power Point attachment.

7. Review of Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan Concepts: Presented by Margaret Irwin. Refer to the Power Point attachment.

The Department of State is looking for implementation of Smart Growth principles to create livable, sustainable and equitable communities, and mixed-use neighborhoods with sidewalks and amenities to meet individual needs on a day-to-day basis.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 3rd, 2025 at 5:00 pm at Town Hall.

Attachment:

Margaret Irwin's Town of Copake Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan PPT

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Mikic, Secretary

MINUTES
Comprehensive Plan Review Committee
Copake Park Building
Monday, December 9, 2024 – 5:00 pm

Present: Brian Boom, Brendan Cranna, Julie Cohen, Peter Doty, Jeanne Mettler, Catherine Mikic, Todd Proper, Stephanie Rabin, Terry Sullivan, Alden Warner.

Present via Video-Conference: Ben Gedaminski

Town Board Liaison: Supervisor Richard Wolf

1. Call to Order: Meeting was called to order by Chair Jeanne Mettler at 5:03 PM. Jeanne began by acknowledging that Ben is participating remotely tonight due to illness and is able to vote remotely because this qualifies as an extraordinary circumstance.

2. Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the November 11, 2024 meeting were previously distributed. Motion to approve minutes was made and seconded; all in favor.

3. Committee Membership Update: Jeanne Mettler notified the Committee that two original members have tendered their resignation: Erin Dougherty due to increased demand on her time, and Tom Goldsworthy for spending the winter months out of town. Motion to accept resignations with regrets was made and seconded; all in favor.

4. Regular Monthly Meetings: The Town Court holds special sessions on some second Mondays. Therefore, changes were proposed to schedule this Committee's meetings on the first Monday of each month. First new date confirmed for January 6, 2025 at 5:00pm at Town Hall.

5. Review of 2011 Town Comprehensive Plan: The Town Board has filed an application with NYS seeking \$81K in funds (with \$9K cash match) for a consultant. State funds are expected in early 2025. If denied, the Town is prepared to commit the funds needed.

- Review of Goals: Jeanne led the discussion of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan by highlighting some of the goals and catalysts, determining what had been achieved and which remain relevant based on current community needs and conditions. Discussions bypassed the large topics of historic preservation and natural resource conservation.

- Community Profile Update: Town demographic, population, income and employment data will need updating using sources that include the 2024 Consolidated Funding Application and the 2021 Copake Waterfront & Community Revitalization Plan.

- Land Use: Since 2011, housing affordability has become a big issue for the Town, small business activity has grown, and the real estate tax base has doubled due to skyrocketing property values and new housing construction. New business

establishments show a notable shift in the character of the community. Recognition given to the need to reassess land use regulations considering new developments.

- Parks and Recreation: Discussion highlighted the growth in recreational activities and facilities, including expansion of the Harlem Valley Rail Trail, and addition of a park bandshell and pickleball courts by the Town. The Town is currently exploring options for a Rail Trail spur into the Copake hamlet. Discussion regarding the need for adequate staffing and resources to maintain facilities. Town has seen increases in the Community Rescue Squad service calls in recent years and needs are changing along with the technology.

- Copake Community Survey: A community survey is required to assess opinions of residents. The 32% response rate in 2011 was well above the 25% target rate.

- Goals and Action Plan: The NYS grant requires a visioning workshop, focus groups, and other outreach. Stephanie suggested meeting with select focus groups early in the process.

- Close and Lively Community: The local population is changing and there was discussion on bringing newer residents together. Focus groups could reveal more about what the town can do to foster community. Ben suggested that churches and the Grange make links to other local service organizations to better serve the community.

- Thriving Farms: Following the 2011 Comprehensive Plan, a 2014 Farmland Protection Committee generated a separate report. Since then, agriculture has radically changed. The new Farmland Protection Committee will bring forward recommendations that help preserve farmland and agriculture to be incorporated into the new Comprehensive Plan.

- A Healthy Natural Environment: The Conservation Advisory Committee was established as a result of the 2011 Plan. The 2011 Plan proposed a Community Preservation Fund which was never pursued. A past action was to explore options for providing free public access to water for swimming and boating. Richard mentioned that the Town Board is exploring public access to Copake Lake from a section of county-owned lands.

- A Thriving Economy: The 2011 plan recognized that a vibrant hamlet plays a critical role in quality of life and economic vitality. Toward this end, Supervisor Wolf stated that the town seeks more funding to revitalize and rehabilitate downtown buildings and streetscape. A second municipal parking lot is planned at hamlet center.

- Well-Maintained Infrastructure: Essential updates are needed on community infrastructure, including water management and access. Hamlet roadway reconstruction by Columbia County is scheduled to begin in spring 2026, including relocation of the Copake Memorial Clock. The Town's part in the project (including, for instance, benches, lighting and landscaping) is being led by the Roads Advisory Committee and Chair Bob Haight. A consultant to the town is examining options for a Harlem Valley Rail Trail (HVRT) spur to connect to Copake hamlet, and the State has expressed interest in creating an underpass at Route 22. Longer term goal is to create trails linking hamlets and the parks.

- **Modern Communications:** Most households in Copake are served by high-speed internet. Cellar service is insufficient yet essential to business and private life, and is an issue that must be addressed by the Committee.
- **Town Government:** The 2011 Comprehensive Plan had a suggestion for Towns Consolidation (Copake, Ancram, and Hillsdale) which was never pursued. The towns successfully cooperate in road maintenance. Ben stated that the Copake Fire Company is all-volunteer mostly staffed by an aging population, and he believes that ours is one of the best trained. OSHA is coming out with new guidelines that will impact regulations and trainings and require more frequent replacement of protective gear that will be costly. Many of the 2011 zoning recommendations were addressed and implemented by the town committee, that does not mean it shouldn't be reviewed again. CEDAC, of which Stephanie and Todd are members, has established actions to assist local businesses. Work with Bill Gregory to develop a comprehensive road maintenance plan.

6. Preliminary Identification of Focus Groups. Jeanne distributed a list of Possible Focus Groups and constituency groups met with in 2011 as part of the Comprehensive Plan which will likely expand. Farmers' input will come through the Farmland Protection Committee. An approach was suggested to organize focus groups by hamlet. Other member suggestions included Camps, Copake Lake Conservation Society, the Copake Falls Day group, and people who work from home. Discussion on enhancing communication methods to better connect with residents, particularly seniors and those less tech-savvy. Community involvement was acknowledged as vital for successful comprehensive planning and implementation.

7. General Announcements: Terry mentioned the upcoming Copake Holiday Light Parade on December 14th, and committee members were encouraged to participate.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for January 6th, 2025 at 5:00 pm at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Mikic, Secretary

MINUTES
Comprehensive Plan Review Committee
Copake Town Hall
Monday, November 11, 2024 – 4:30 pm

Present: Brian Boom, Brendan Cranna, Julie Cohen, Peter Doty, Erin Dougherty, Benedict Gedaminski, Jeanne Mettler, Catherine Mikic, Stephanie Rabin, Terry Sullivan Alden Warner

Present via Videoconference: Tom Goldsworthy, Todd Proper

Town Board Liaison: Supervisor Richard Wolf

1. **Call to Order-** The meeting was called to order by Chair Jeanne Mettler.

2. **Welcome-** Supervisor Richard Wolf welcomed the members of the committee and thanked them for being willing to serve. He told them that the previous committee had worked for three years but this time the Town Board would like a more compact schedule and would like this done in a year and a half. He praised the committee and said the Board was looking forward to what they would come up with.

3. **Introduction of Members of Committee-** Jeanne invited members to say a few words about their background. Jeanne started by saying that she was raised in Copake Falls and after College and Law School she relocated to Westchester where she practiced law for 34 years. She returned to the area when she and her wife purchased a home in Copake in 2006. The first involvement she had in the Town of Copake was chairing the first comprehensive plan committee in 2008-2011. She joined the Town Board in 2012 and was Town Supervisor 2020-23. She said that she was pleased to be appointed to this committee since the work of this committee is integral to the future of this Town.

Brendan Cranna lives on Snyder Pond Road in Copake. He said he was “a fairly new resident”, having moved to Copake 3 years ago. He grew up in Columbia County but lived elsewhere for several decades and then returned home in 2020. He is a practicing attorney with an office in Hudson and looks forward to assisting Copake in moving forward.

Julie Cohen has lived in Copake full-time since 1999. She has raised her son here for the last 12 years. Julie has been on the planning board for 12 years and now she is the Chair of that board. Julie and her husband have a real estate company and a building firm. They live on Cambridge Road over near the Rheinstrom Hill Audubon Society.

Stephanie Rabin has been in Copake since 2020. She is on the CEDAC committee. She works upstate full-time and lives here full-time, but she still has ties to

the city. She just bought the old Peck insurance building. Stephanie is an actuary and an organizational psychologist. She works in the insurance industry.

Terry Sullivan is a speech pathologist and audiologist, and she also teaches Zumba in town. She has been living in Copake since 2002. She works in healthcare and is employed by Fairview Hospital. She also consults at Camphill Village. She has served on both the Copake Town Board and the Taconic Hills School Board. She is currently a member of the Copake Park Commission.

Brian Boom has had a home in Copake Falls since 1995. He lives on Valley View Road. He is a retired botanist having worked with the New York Botanical Garden for 35 years. He has been on the Copake Conservation Advisory Committee for about 10 years and serves as secretary. He is very interested in serving the community in any way he can.

Peter Doty was born and raised in Rhinebeck and Clinton Corners. His four kids are born and raised here in Columbia County. He lived in Copake for 20 years and for the last 10 years he has been in Hillsdale. He has been with the Community Rescue Squad for 30 years; he has been Operations Supervisor for the last 10 years. This is the first Town committee on which Peter has served, but he is very happy to have been asked to join; he would like to see the Town left in a beautiful way for his kids and everybody else's kids.

Erin Dougherty lives in the bird streets section at Copake Lake- she moved here in 2020. She is a costume designer for television and movies. She and her partner Aaron started a pizza business in Craryville. It is called Tommy B's Slice Shop. Erin is excited to join the community.

Catherine Mikic has been in Columbia County since 2018. She lives in Hudson and came to Copake in 2020 when she purchased a historic farm property on Center Hill Road. Since then, she has been working and focusing on the farm property. In 2021 she was invited to join the Copake Historic Preservation Committee. The committee has done a lot of work in kind of inventorying and raising awareness about the historic landscape. Catherine is excited to be a part of the Comp Plan committee is because she feels very passionately about the vernacular landscape and heritage. She sees vernacular heritage and landscape as completely inseparable. She is very much in favor of land conservation and historic preservation.

Benedict Gedaminski says he is a "displaced Bostonian". He was born and bred and lived there for 40 something years and then moved to New York City in 2009 when his wife got a job at Columbia University. Benedict's career was in financial software development, and he retired in 2010. He got involved in a number of different organizations in the city including the Blue Hill Troupe. He was head of construction for the Blue Hill Troupe. He has also been president of the New England Society which is

214-year-old social organization in the city which awards scholarships of up to \$25,000 for four years. When Covid hit, Benedict's wife was studying to be a psychotherapist and seeing patients online. They were living in a two-bedroom apartment on the upper West Side. They decided they wanted to get out of the city, and they knew Columbia County. They started house hunting every weekend and ended up buying a home in Roeliff Meadows. Benedict joined the Copake Fire Department in 2021, he is on the Board of Friends of Taconic State Park, he helped Edgar Masters build the Pomeroy Railroad and he is involved with the Copake Grange.

Alden Warner loves the landscape and the natural setting of Copake, which is one reason he was interested in joining this committee. Alden and his husband Peter are New Yorkers. They bought a house in Copake in 1999. This is their 26th year in the same house; it is just off High Meadow Road. Alden and his husband are active hikers and cyclists and do a lot of outdoor stuff all through the Taconic Mountains. They bike down to Millerton and beyond. Alden spent 44 years in finance at JP Morgan retired a year ago. His husband retired from the Museum of Modern Art four years ago. As of 2024, Alden is a member of the Copake Board of Assessment Review. His husband is on the board at the Columbia Land Conservancy. They are trying to get more involved in the town and the county.

Tom Goldsworthy has lived in Copake since 2014. Previously, he lived in New York City for 35 years. Tom was a banker and then was CFO for a number of software companies. He started coming to Columbia County in 1998. First, they lived in Chatham, and then they had a house in North Hillsdale near Hawthorne Valley School. When they decided to retire full-time to Columbia County, and move out of New York City, they built a house on Center Hill Road in Copake. They moved into that house in 2014 and retired. Tom wanted to be involved in the community, and he has been. He was on the Hamlet Revitalization Task Force with Roberta Roll for a number of years. He served on the Zoning Board for five years. He chairs the Copake Economic Development Advisory Committee which is known as "CEDAC". He is chair of the volunteer committee that runs the Roe Jan Ramble; that has been very very exciting. Tom is vice president of the Grange and secretary of the Roads Advisory Committee which focuses on rebuilding the roads in the center of town. He is also on the board of the Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association.

Todd Proper apologized for being remote, explaining that he was in transit, heading to a client meeting in Toronto. He was actually on his way to LaGuardia as he spoke to us. Todd told the Committee that he grew up in Copake and lived here until he was 18, when he moved to New York where he lived for 20 years. Then, as he always knew he would, he moved back to Copake. Todd's father was Larry Proper who was very involved in everything to do with the town. Todd said he is trying to uphold his father's legacy to the best of his ability. He is very interested in doing whatever he can.

He is on the CEDAC committee with Tom and Stephanie and is excited to be involved in this effort.

4. Overview of 2011 Comprehensive Plan; Agenda for Comp Plan Review Committee

Jeanne Mettler gave the Committee an overview of the Comprehensive Plan process as follows:

What is a comprehensive plan?

Jeanne explained that a Comprehensive Plan is often referred to as a roadmap or a blueprint- it expresses the aspirations and values of a Town, and its vision for the future. But it is more than a wish list, it legally binds the Town.

In 1993, the NY State Legislature gave Towns both the authority and responsibility to prepare and adopt a Comprehensive Plan. Pursuant to Town Law Article 16, Section 272-a:

“Among the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to a town government is the authority and responsibility to undertake town comprehensive planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens...”

(e) The participation of citizens in an open, responsible and flexible planning process is essential to the designing of the optimum town comprehensive plan.”

Jeanne stated that the importance of the Comprehensive Plan cannot be overstated. All Zoning and land use decisions must comply with the Town’s Comprehensive Plan.

A comprehensive plan is far reaching- it deals with every aspect of the Town. Services, infrastructure, and capital investments. It deals with the values of the Town such as: whether open space should be preserved, whether there should be development and if so, where; whether and what the town should do to encourage and or discourage business; whether the Town should provide parks and recreation; whether and how the Town should preserve its history and whether and how the Town should support green and renewable energy.

The Town of Copake Comprehensive Plan.

In 2008 Town Board recognized that Copake would benefit from a Comprehensive Plan. The Town Board appointed a large, diverse committee. Jeanne was elected the Chair.

The 2008 committee started from scratch. They did not know what a comprehensive plan was or the first thing about how to prepare one. They brought in speakers from

other towns and the State to help. They realized that they could not do this without a consultant, and the Town hired Margaret Irwin of River Street Planning.

Jeanne believes that it is really critical that a Comp Plan committee has credibility. The first step is to appoint a large enough committee and a diverse enough membership that all the people in the Town feel that their views are represented. Then the committee has to be transparent and gather input from the people in the Town.

The original Comp Plan committee did over a dozen focus groups with various groups in Town- young people, seniors, business people, realtors, and not for profits. They did a visioning workshop, public workshops and a town survey.

The committee worked from March 2008 to May of 2011 when they presented a first draft to the Town Board for approval. By law, the Plan has to undergo a SEQR review and it has to be reviewed by the County Planning Board. The Plan must also be reviewed by the Town Planning Board. Copies of the Plan must be made available to the public and the Town Board has to conduct a public hearing before it can adopt the Plan. In July of 2011 the plan was adopted unanimously.

By law, a Comprehensive Plan is supposed to be reviewed periodically- and the Town did that. Under Supervisor Jeff Nayer, the Town Board met several times and assessed what of the Goals had been achieved and what goals or actions were outstanding.

Jeanne believes that for the most part she thinks that the goals of the Comprehensive Plan were achieved or at least addressed.

Agenda for the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee

The Comprehensive Plan Review Committee is charged with reviewing the 2011 Plan and drafting a new Comp Plan. The Committee may adopt many of the same priorities that were recognized in 2011-but there are new circumstances and realities today. (The Committee looked at the Priorities listed on page 12-15 of the 2011 Plan.)

The Support of the Town Board

The Town Board has shown its support for the committee's work by filing an application with NYS seeking funds to hire a consultant. Those awards are typically announced in December or January. The Town is seeking an award of \$81K and will put up matching funds of \$9K.

Jeanne stated that she will forward to the Committee the Town's application for the grant to fund this process. It is quite lengthy but has a wealth of information about Copake, including demographics and sets forth the tasks which we must complete and a timeline for completion.

The Town Board is asking that the Committee complete its work within 18 months. The work this month and in December will be in preparation for our work with the consultant.

The Committee will start to work our consultant in January 2025 and finish by June 2026.

5. Election of a Secretary

Jeanne stated that Catherine Mikic has said that she is willing to be secretary. Jeanne advised the Committee that Catherine is an excellent writer and she has a familiarity with a lot of the issues we will need to discuss. Jeanne nominated Catherine to serve as secretary. The nomination was seconded by Alden. There were no other nominations and upon a vote, Catherine was elected, unanimously.

6. Regular Monthly Meeting Date

Open Meeting Law: Jeanne advised the committee that the Town Attorney has said that this committee must comply with the open meeting law. This means that we need to meet in public and in person. This does not preclude attending remotely. If a member has an “extraordinary circumstance” such that they cannot attend in person, they can attend remotely. Extraordinary circumstances include such things as illness, taking caregiving responsibilities, and an unexpected event precluding attendance at the meeting. A member demonstrating “extraordinary circumstances” can attend remotely and participate - and vote- if there is a quorum in the room.

A member can attend remotely without showing “extraordinary circumstances” but they cannot vote.

The committee reviewed members availability for every weekday. Jeanne projected that meetings might last up to two hours. The committee agreed that the second Monday of the month at 5:00 pm was the best for the most people.

7. Adjournment The meeting was adjourned at 5:27 pm. The next meeting will be **Monday December 9 at 5:00 pm**. Jeanne asked that everyone should read the 2011 Plan in preparation for the December meeting. Jeanne will also send out the Grant Application for member’s review.

Submitted by Jeanne E. Mettler
with Secretary, Catherine Mikic