

Stuyvesant Greenway Committee II Review of the Town of Stuyvesant 1996 Comprehensive Plan's Final Recommendations

Waterfront Recommendations

1. Continue to work with DEC, DOT and the Greenway Council/Conservancy to improve access to the river and develop a park and boat launch, create historic interpretive facilities and complete the Ferry Rd. picnic and park area at Nutten Hook.

NYS DEC proposed that the boat launch be at Stuyvesant Landing rather than Nutten Hook. A draft plan was presented to the town in 2004, which reflected a bridge from Riverview Street across the railroad tracks. Work to maintain the historic Icehouse Powerhouse continues to be done by the State but there has not been active dialogue with the State to keep the Town in the information loop.

Rose Heintz noted that the former ferry landing is eroding and needs stabilization, which should be brought to the State's attention. Subsequently, during Fall 2007, Town officials spoke with a DEC official who stated that that agency believed that that area of the Hudson River would one day be completely submerged so there is no point to conduct stabilization at this time. In January 2009, Ron Knott stated that other officials have expressed different opinions on this point.

In January 2009, the committee underscored the importance of river access to the economic viability of the town.

In March 2010, NYS DOT proposed closing the at-grade crossing at Ferry Rd. and spending federal stimulus funds to improve the Icehouse Road access to the Hudson River. Town officials and local residents strongly oppose closing Ferry Rd., and continue to advocate for improved public access to the Hudson River.

2. Plan and develop a multi-use trail system along the entire length of the Hudson River utilizing state and railroad lands and voluntary private easements.

The committee suggested reaching out to the State Greenway to find out the status and location of the current trail. Peter Donahoe proposed a walkover of the abandoned rail bed in the Landing to evaluate its current condition and potential for a trail. Given that CSX (which bought out Conrail) now owns the rail bed, this idea was scrapped due to their unwillingness to permit public access on their property. In January 2009, the committee agreed on the importance of promoting the creation of riverfront trails.

(See number 6 under Natural/Cultural Resources)

3. Promote Stuyvesant Landing as a waterfront destination point for appropriately controlled tourism.

- Continue to improve the landing area as a public recreation area and to stabilize the fire dock.
- Continue to discuss the possibility of transferring OGS lands along the river to DEC for recreational purposes with joint management by the Town.

Improvement plans for Stuyvesant Landing were noted, above. Improvements to the fire dock were made following the flood of 1996, which eroded 10 feet of shoreline. OGS lands were transferred to NYS DEC in 2005.

As of January 2011, the committee recommends the creation of a Town Waterfront Committee to advocate for waterfront improvements and consider completing Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP).

4. Promote the Kinderhook Creek in Stuyvesant Falls as a recreation area.

- Continue to pursue funding to develop a park with a picnic area, waterfront trail, and swimming area at the Sandbar.
- Plan and develop a trail linking the Sandbar, bridge, upper falls overlook, and milk pond.
- Pursue permanent public access to the power station owned by NiMo for recreational purposes.

Picnic tables and grills have been installed at the Sandbar Park. Chemtron, owner of the mill building, owns the Sandbar Park and is leasing it to the Town until 2015. They have been making improvements to the mill. Feedback from the County indicates a concern about the strength of the current and the site's safety as a swimming area.

The committee met at the Sandbar Park to familiarize the group with the site and discuss its possibilities and limitations as a public park, as well as a possible trail connecting to the Lindenwald Historic Site.

In March 2008, Albany Engineering acquired the power plant. They are working on improvements to the plant so that they will be able to begin production of power. Owner Jim Beesha has indicated that he would work with the Town to allow canoe portage for people who are on the Kinderhook Creek. With assistance from the Town Historian, Albany Engineering created and installed an informational kiosk at Overlook Park, which is a viewing location for the falls. Improvements to the park were implemented as an Eagle Scout project in Spring 2010.

5. Develop educational programs that promote the waterfront and its heritage.

The Columbia Land Conservancy has used the Nutten Hook site for environmental education programs for Columbia County schoolchildren and adults. The Historic Mill District walking tour developed by former Town Historian Priscilla Frisbee has been utilized by some home schooled groups.

6. Continue discussion with the Village of Coxsackie regarding cross-river regional planning between the two municipalities.

No discussions have taken place. January 2009 - The Committee suggested dropping this recommendation.

Natural and Cultural Resources Recommended Actions

1) Pursue funding and technical assistance to identify and map ground water resources (aquifers).

Water is becoming a key national and international issue, and aquifer mapping should be of utmost importance to the Town. Water quality and quantity are vital to supporting agriculture in the community, and there are impacts on agriculture land when residential development occurs nearby. For example, new residential wells could impinge on a farmer's usable land due to restrictions defining the distance of farmed land from wells. The Committee recommended that the Town consider the potential for wells when siting new development, especially when adjacent to agricultural land given the restriction that wells must be 60 feet from farmland. One-half to one-third of water recharge area comes from agricultural land.

As development occurs in agricultural areas, the runoff pattern changes and increases due to paved driveways and other surfaces displacing ground. Culverts that were previously able to handle the volume of runoff are no longer able to and farmland erosion can subsequently result. Also, farmers with 200 cattle or more are required to have implemented a conservation program known as CAFO, "Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation," which is a nutrient management plan to control soil erosion and feeding.

Ron Knott contacted the New York Rural Water Association (NYRWA) in Claverack and in May 2008 received a proposal for a Groundwater Protection Study and Plan. The committee recommended that the Town Board be proactive in securing the organization to conduct the study. The Town Board is supportive of the study but seeks to fund it at least partially with grant monies.

During Fall 2009, NYWRA received funding from the EPA to provide technical assistance to local communities for the development and implementation of local water source protection plans. Since the town already had a proposal submitted to NYWRA, Stuyvesant was chosen to receive the benefit of this round of funding. Steven Winkley of NYWRA was contracted to conduct the study, which was presented to the town in October 2010.

2) Prioritize historic resources for protection and develop plans for assuring their preservation. *No formal plans for prioritization have been made.*

- Pursue funding for improving historic resources in the Town.

Subsequent to the Town's applying for and receiving a Federal ISTEPA funding for restoration of the Stuyvesant Landing Railroad Station during the comprehensive planning process, the Town applied for and was awarded a Federal TEA-21 grant as well as a NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation grant for restoration work. The OPRHP grant was ultimately not accepted by the Town. The TEA-21 grant has been re-scoped so that Phase II of the restoration project may be implemented during 2011.

- Continue to document the Town's history and heritage.

Town records have been microfilmed thanks to grant funds that were secured with the help of former Councilman Matt Asbornsen. The next step would be to log the microfiche to aid in its usability. Columbia County grant funds have allowed for the purchase of archival storage materials for protection of the Town's historic collections.

The importance of gathering oral histories and photo documenting the town's historic resources was underscored.

Several Historic Stuyvesant Day brochures, such as "History of Waterpower at Stuyvesant Falls" will be included in a new history book for the Town of Stuyvesant. Copies of "Stories of Stuyvesant" will be available by Spring 2011. Compiled and written by Town Historian, Juanita Knott, the book will include "A Brief History of the Town of Stuyvesant" written in 1976 by former Town Historian, Priscilla Frisbee, plus eighteen other chapters providing insight into Stuyvesant's past.

- Consider the desirability of creating one or more Town-level historic districts and determine their boundaries.

Has not been pursued.

3) Link the Town's many historic resources, especially those along the waterfronts, to a tourism development program.

- Continue Historic Stuyvesant Day as a Town event.

Has continued to be celebrated annually, under the leadership of the Town Historian.

- Consider developing historic walks, historic driving tours, and other similar activities that capitalize on the Town's historic resources to promote tourism.

No new walks or tours have been developed subsequent to a driving tour created by Kristina Kwacz during the 1990's and printed on a map of Columbia County.

4) Continue to pursue the purchase and renovation of the old railroad station at Stuyvesant Landing.

The railroad station was purchased by the Town with grant funds through the Greenway Model Community Program. Other grant awards described in No.2, above. A highly-active volunteer Railroad Restoration Committee raised funds and awareness about the project through 2004. Co-chairs Virginia Martin and Kristina Kwacz stepped down in July 2004, and the committee remained dormant until reforming as an active group early in 2006. Councilman Ken Hummel was board liaison of the revitalized committee until his demise. Councilman Ron Knott followed him as board liaison. The reenergized committee hosts a number of activities at the depot, including a seasonal farmer's market with accompanying public programs. In the spring of 2010 a plaque was installed stating that the depot has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

5) Develop a plan for protecting scenic views in the Town and for promoting public enjoyment of these views.

- Create and promote scenic walking or driving tours.

See No. 3 above.

- Consider voluntary guidelines to promote preservation of scenic views.

No voluntary guidelines created.

- Determine the feasibility of establishing a local scenic byway program along Route 9J and other roads in the Town.

No feasibility study done.

As of 2010, approximately 3,100 acres of privately-owned land in the town have protected with conservation easements, primarily with Scenic Hudson, which will help to maintain scenic farmscapes. In 2006, former Supervisor and Councilman Matt Asbornsen and his wife Mimi donated a 50-acre parcel of land on Sharptown Road to the town which is also protected by conservation easements and allows for public access and the enjoyment of scenic views.

6) Develop a plan and pursue funding for a system of trails linking accessible natural areas, historic resources, scenic viewpoints, and other recreational areas. Prime areas to consider for trails include:

- The unused Conrail rail bed north of Stuyvesant Landing.

The rail bed is now owned by CSX, who is rumored to be reactivating the line, making a trail here no longer possible.

- The OGS land along the Hudson River between Nutten Hook and Stuyvesant Landing.

The OGS land is now owned by DEC. No trail plans have been made. The Stuyvesant Trails Committee (formed in October 2009) is exploring ways to connect Nutten Hook and Stuyvesant Landing with a trail. In Spring 2010, the Stuyvesant Trails Committee entered into an agreement with NYS DEC to begin maintaining existing trails along the river, south of Stuyvesant.

- The unused utility right of way (old “trolley line”).

Subsequent to an inquiry made to Niagara Mohawk during the 1990’s by then-Greenway Committee member Kristina Kwacz, no further action has been taken. National Grid now owns the right of way.

In September 2009, Stuyvesant was awarded an inter-municipal grant with the Town of Kinderhook to conduct a feasibility study to develop a multi-use recreational trail along the National Grid right-of-way and on the east side of Kinderhook Creek from Stuyvesant Falls to Lindenwald national historic site. (A Trails Committee project.)

- Kinderhook Creek and other creek beds.

The new Greenway Committee met at the Sandbar in Stuyvesant Falls to discuss the feasibility of a trail in this area.

New item: Ken Hummel Memorial Park

The Stuyvesant Recreation Committee has cut .70 miles of hiking trail at Ken Hummel Memorial Park. The parkland was donated to the town by Matt and Mimi Asbornsen in 2006.

New item: Allendale Road

Identified during a Greenway Committee public workshop in 2008 as a possible way to connect Stuyvesant Falls with Sharptown Rd. and Hummel Park.

Strong public support for hiking trails was identified in the town survey conducted by the Greenway Committee during fall 2009. (46% of respondents supported hiking as a recreational interest of interest – top answer in this category.)

Agricultural Resources Recommended Actions

1) Conduct a cost of community services study.

None has been conducted for the town.

However, the agricultural community in town is aware of the advantages that farmland provides to the community at large. Informing residential property owners could be helpful. Also, a visual build-out scenario for Stuyvesant pursuant to current zoning could be an interesting and useful planning tool.

- 2) Help Stuyvesant farmers solicit technical assistance from agricultural organizations and agencies to aid in improving and diversifying economic gain.**

Ron noted that the Town Board has supported PDR's by resolution as the request of farmers who were applying for such grants.

- 3) Give special emphasis to seeking out agriculture-related services and industrial enterprises to locate in the Town.**

Committee members could not think of any such actions that the Town may have taken within the past 10 years, but agreed that such an effort would be appropriate in the future, given growing interest in cellulosic ethanol (utilizing fast-growing willow trees) and biodiesel production.

- 4) Allow farmers to engage in some limited commercial and recreational service activities that are in keeping with the character of agriculture.**

Through its Zoning Advisory Committee, the Town implemented zoning revisions that have created greater flexibility for farmers.

- 5) Consider developing agricultural driving tours, farm tours, Town wide farmers' markets, and other similar activities.**

Two Stuyvesant Family Farm Days have been held at the Keller Farm benefiting the Stuyvesant Railroad Station Restoration. A Farmers Market at the Railroad Station was begun in 2006. A Historic Stuyvesant Day event was held at Sunnyside.

- 6) Encourage the County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board to expedite the development of a Columbia County Farmland Protection Plan.**

The Town Board has appointed an agricultural committee which meets when needed to deal with issues that arise that impact the local agricultural community.

The Greenway Committee passed a resolution in 2009 supporting Columbia County adoption of a countywide farmland protection plan. The town board also supported the same resolution.

In 2011, the County has received grant funds to create a Farmland Protection Plan. Workshops are underway.

Economic Development Goals and Planning Objectives

- 1) Develop a plan to attract to the Town businesses that are compatible with the Town's character and with the comprehensive land-use plan.

No plan initiated.

- 2) Encourage development of home businesses (cottage industries) in the Town that are compatible with the character of the Town.

Three levels of home occupation have been included in zoning regulations adopted in 2001 to encourage home-based businesses.

- 3) Promote and provide initiatives for the establishment of local tourism programs that capitalize on scenic and cultural resources.

Columbia County Tourism Department is promoting initiatives at the county-level.

- 4) Begin a feasibility study for the development of additional infrastructure for the hamlets of Stuyvesant Falls and Stuyvesant Landing.

No feasibility study conducted. Groundwater study conducted in 2010 indicates that there is insufficient room for future buildout in hamlet areas that would necessitate municipal water or sewer. Information presented in the Source Water Protection Plan suggests that new lot sizes should be considered based on safe distances between septic and wells, in order to comply with NYS health codes as well protect neighboring agricultural properties. The establishment of a new Zoning Advisory Committee is recommended to consider these and other possible changes.