MEETING MINUTES - Oct 26, 2026
Call to Order - (6:00pm)

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call - Names of members (Write Absent or Present)

- Sara Bayer - present
- Deb Dolan - present
- Philip Mones - present
- Vickie Starr - absent

Introductions and welcome to any audience in attendance. Roy Dignes attended meeting.

Listening tour

The Housing Committee completed Listening Tour sessions in October.

- On Oct 7 we met with the Officers of the American Legion in Phoenicia (Vickie, Phil, Deb attended), and the response was very positive. Topics discussed included:
    - Workforce vs affordable housing vs Section 8 definitions
    - Watershed towns: 1994 - tourism is the best industry - we need workforce housing - This is a broader definition of what we want, this definition ties it to the goal and what we can relate to.
    - Clear agreement we need more workforce/senior housing, and we are also limited as to where due to our land restrictions, where are locations to build and at what density, town needs to grow in order to increase tax rate considering our low revenue (ie ambulance insufficient funds)
    - Group noted discussion needs to continue with town board re comprehensive plan
    - Floating zones tool idea -"ie overlay" which would be able to be implemented by the town board, and would be faster than a whole zoning parcel designation overhaul (original plan was in 1974 - very long time ago - its outdated) Should benefit the town longterm, and help with overall housing issues.
    - Right now all we have are variances which are very long and arduous, and have to go to DOH and DEP. And the zones would allow our town to define definitions of what is positive for a particular parcel. Will make things happen faster, vs overlay would take 5 or more years. Would entourage people to identify projects that make sense, where one of the only few aspects missing would be the identification of the floating zone. Which the board could then apply to that project. The more home town rule the better.
    - The group suggested we also meet with the fire department, and the rotary
- On Oct 19 we met with the Phoenicia Small Business Association (Vickie, Sara). Topics discussed were:
    - A suggestion to see if Ulster County United Way has more precise info regarding Area Media Income (AMI) specifically for Shandaken

    - Our population is declining and aging (Another 4 years until census)
    - Cluster communities which are out of public view / viewshed seemed favorable
        - Discussed Fichtner terrace example
        - But for seniors we would need housing in the town on main street
    - Respect those that don't want close neighbors
    - Need support from county and state
    - Setback concerns about ADUs were raised, although participants noted they are a good idea and we need them
    - Incorporate community gardens - sustainability food independence promote
    - Talked about the school could fit up to 50 housing units
    - We discussed how much housing we may need, maybe 100 is a good starting place.
- Maybe 50 within 3 years is a good goal
- Comprehensive plan - will be 2 more public hearings
- Will be 2 new board members in January

Updates from Members RE: Outreach to set up additional meetings.

We all agreed it's good if we can conduct these gatherings in pairs (at minimum). Updates included:

- Phoenicia Library (Deb) - they can probably work with us to organize sessions, we can bring food and drinks
- Catskill Neighbors (Deb) - can we meet with the drivers / volunteers?
- Firehouses: Shandaken, Pine HIll, Mt Tremper, Phoenicia, Big Indian (Roy - starting with Big Indian and Pine Hill, Phil will take care of the rest)
- Catskill Center (Sara)
- Pine Hill & Phoenicia Water District personnel
- Phoenicia Rotary (Roy)

We agreed to continue brainstorming other groups we can meet with. We also reviewed the "Prompts" (ice-breaker questions) used during listening sessions.

Motion to close the meeting made by Phil @ 7:05, and Deb seconded it. Motion carried.

Our next meeting will be Monday, Nov 23 @ 6pm.

Minutes taken by Sara Bayer