

Report to the town board from the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CoPIC)

by Joan Breslin (Chair) and Bernard Rivers (Deputy Chair)

15 October 2020

Here are the activities over the past month of the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CoPIC) and its working groups:

- **Improve communications** working group (Convenor: Karen Rothmyer Rivers):
 - The group is making good progress on the first edition of the town newsletter, the “Durham Courier”, which will be sent out in November; first drafts of all the articles have been received.
 - The group now has a list of 1,800 addresses to which the newsletter will be sent. These are the mailing addresses of all owners of Durham residences, some of whom own several properties.
 - The town has agreed to contract with the Durham Task Force (a nonprofit organization) to send out the newsletter, thus saving the town much postage. The group hopes that this arrangement will be ready for the first newsletter, but if not it will certainly be ready for the second one.
 - The group held a meeting with the town clerk to discuss possible improvements to the town website, and is planning more.
- **Increase community activities** working group (Convenor: Terry Ward). The group did not meet in person this month. However the resource directory which will be included in the welcome wagon is on its last proof, ready for publication.
- **Enhance economic development** working group (Convenor: Joanne Schindelheim):
 - After obtaining town board approval, the group organized the first Durham Town Flu Shot Clinic, which took place on October 3rd at the Oak Hill - Durham Fire House. (The Working Group wishes to thank the firehouse members for making their facility available.) The group hopes to repeat the event next year, this time with planning to start earlier in the year.
 - Other activities, as reported on last month, will resume now that the work required for the flu shot clinic is completed.
- **Advocate for improved broadband** working group (Convenor: Rosemary O’Brien):
 - The group obtained approval from the town board to investigate how to create publicly-accessible free WiFi hotspots for use by residents. The group is working on four possible locations for parking-lot access and two possible locations for inside access during working hours. Once detailed plans are completed, the town board will be asked for final approval.
 - The town board agreed that the Supervisor should write a letter to relevant state authorities complaining that a state map incorrectly states that almost everybody in Durham has access to adequate broadband. This map needs to be corrected because otherwise, grants to improve the situation might not be forthcoming.
 - Calculations by the group show that wired broadband service is currently only available on approximately one third of Durham’s roads. A draft map has been developed showing which roads / residences / census blocks have how much service.
 - Work is proceeding on funding opportunities and on barriers to the provision of service.
- **Improve historic preservation** working group (Convenor: Dan Clifton):
 - The group is working on the following:
 - Create a photo gallery of historic properties in Durham.
 - Check the accuracy and completeness of historical information currently on the town website.

- Prepare a map indicating the specific location of each historic property.
 - Work with the Durham Historic Preservation Commission, the Durham Center Museum and the Town Historian (who is already a member) regarding possible divisions of responsibility and/or forms of cooperation.
- **The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CoPIC)** (i.e. the parent committee to the working groups):
 - The Committee, consisting of the chair and Deputy Chair plus the five convenors, met on Sept. 25.
 - Various working procedures were agreed upon.
 - The town’s Annual Report (which is required by the Comprehensive Plan) will be posted each spring at the town website and will be summarized in the spring mailing of the town newsletter. It will be followed by the town’s Annual Meeting (which is also required by the Comprehensive Plan).
 - The Committee will develop and propose to the town board a procedure for booking the town barn’s meeting room for meetings by CoPIC and its working groups.
 - The Committee will look into options for creating a nonprofit arm (which is relatively easy) but not a tax-exempt entity (which is much more difficult).
 - The Committee will seek a more pleasant name for itself than “CoPIC”.

Further details on CoPIC and the working groups, and a copy of this report, are provided at www.durhamtogether.com/comprehensive-plan.