

Report to the town board from Durham Connect (formerly, CoPIC)

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

13 November 2020

Here are the activities over the past month of the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee and its working groups, formerly known as CoPIC but now renamed as Durham Connect.

- **Improve communications** working group (Convenor: Karen Rothmyer Rivers):
 - The group finalized the first issue of the town newsletter and will send it to the printer once the town board approves the 2021 budget (which is reported on in the newsletter). The group wants to publicly thank Dorothee Walliser, who did a fantastic job of designing and laying out the newsletter. This is a great example of a working group obtaining help from a resident with particular skills.
 - The group is working on a number of changes to content and design that it would like to see at the town website.
 - The group has with regret concluded that legal restrictions mean that it won't be possible to save on postage by using the Durham Task Force (a nonprofit organization) to send out the newsletter.
- **Increase community activities** WG (Convenor: Terry Ward). The group did not meet this month.
- **Enhance economic development** WG (Convenor: Joanne Schindelheim): The group did not meet this month.
- **Advocate for improved broadband** WG (Convenor: Rosemary O'Brien);
 - The group is continuing its work on creating publicly-accessible free WiFi hotspots for use by residents. Once detailed plans are completed, the town board will be asked for final approval.
 - The group has agreed on an outline and format for the report to the town board on broadband availability in Durham that the Comprehensive Plan calls for.
- **Improve historic preservation** WG (Convenor: Dan Clifton):
 - The group is planning a project for 2021 to clean/repair cemetery headstones.
 - The group is identifying minor errors and potential additions regarding Durham historical properties on the town website.
 - The group is developing ideas for a map indicating the specific location of each historic property.
- **The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee** (i.e. the parent committee to the working groups):
 - The Committee, consisting of the chair and Deputy Chair plus the WG convenors, met on Nov. 12, and will meet thereafter every two months.
 - The Committee and its working groups has changed its name from "CoPIC" (which sounds unpleasantly similar to "Covid") to "Durham Connect."
 - Durham Connect will look into registering as a non-tax-exempt nonprofit organization (a relatively simple matter) and opening a bank account, thereby enabling it to seek donations to support projects it sponsors.
 - Ideas were developed for the town's Annual Report and Annual Meeting, both of which are required by the Comprehensive Plan.