

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

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

11 December 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 known as Durham Connect.

- **Improve communications** working group (Convenor: Karen Rothmyer Rivers):
 - The group completed the first issue of *The Durham Courier*, the town's new newsletter, and mailed it to all Durham's property owners. (We don't have data regarding people who live in rented accommodation.) A number of people have responded that they'd like to receive future issues by email, which will reduce the costs of future issues.
 - The group has started to plan the next issue of the newsletter, to go out in May.
 - The group is continuing to develop its thinking about how to enhance the town website.
- **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 has finalized its ideas for creating publicly-accessible free WiFi hotspots for use by residents.
 - Arising from this, the group has persuaded Mid-Hudson Cable to carry out a significant upgrade to their equipment and capacity at the town barn. They carried this out on December 11. As a result, people using the town barn's parking lot now have free access to the Internet, with no password, via WiFi. This will accommodate 25 or more simultaneous users conducting video streaming, or 35 users browsing the internet, doing email, etc. It's available 24/7. The town clerk will have software enabling her to monitor usage. This is a major development and should significantly benefit many members of the community.
 - The group is continuing its work on the report to the town board on broadband availability in Durham that the Comprehensive Plan called for.
- **Improve historic preservation** WG (Convenor: Dan Clifton):
 - The group is continuing its plans for a project to clean/repair cemetery headstones. Supplies will be purchased this year (because the town has a 2020 budget line for this), and the work will be done next year.
 - The group is continuing to develop its plans to improve the list of historical properties on the town website, and to create a map to go with that list.