

Monroe County Post – Pittsford edition – **submitted for online use and January 17, 2019 print issue**

"From the Supervisor" column

Submitted by Pittsford Town Supervisor Bill Smith

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Join us for Town Comprehensive Plan Public Workshop on 1/28

The next public workshop for the Town's Comprehensive Plan Update will take place Monday, January 28 at 6:00pm in the Pittsford Fire Department Station #2, 465 Mendon Road (across from Pittsford Mendon High School). By now you should have received the notice the Town sent by first class mail to every household in Pittsford. I urge you to attend.

Your response to the previous public workshops has been central to the work of our Citizens Steering Committee for the Comprehensive Plan and to our consultants for this project, Bergmann Associates, in framing and working out a draft Plan for public review. The January 28 workshop will provide the benefit of your views, in detail, on the specific goals and actions stated in the draft Plan.

In order to employ every means reasonably possible to encourage public participation in this project, the Town in July 2015 set up a separate website dedicated exclusively to the Comprehensive Plan. Since then this website has enabled residents to submit information and ideas online, providing us with the recommendations and insights of those who can't attend the public workshops. You can find the draft Comprehensive Plan and other information at www.pittsfordplan.com.

A comprehensive plan provides a vision for the future development of a community. New York State Town Law provides that a comprehensive plan shall *"...serve as a basis for land use regulation, infrastructure development and public and private investment, and any plans which may detail one or more topics of a comprehensive plan."*

Consequently, a comprehensive plan includes statements of policies and goals whose purpose is to shape future growth in the Town and describes the steps to accomplish the goals. It constitutes the legal basis for a municipality's zoning laws, their revision and application. With a focus on land-use planning, it inevitably touches on related matters. For example, the draft comprehensive plan for Pittsford contains a future land use plan, and sections on community character, including residential development, mixed-use and commercial development, design standards, streetscapes, scenic corridors and areas in the Town, historic resources, the canal front, agriculture, natural resources and environmentally-conscious infrastructure. It considers open-space management, managing traffic, pedestrian safety, promoting healthy living through recreational opportunities and environmentally-friendly practices.

It's important to understand the difference between a comprehensive plan and the zoning laws. The two are conceptually related, but separate. A comprehensive plan provides broad guidance and recommendations on how land-use planning can address the needs and goals of the community. Zoning ordinances regulate land uses as recommended by the plan.

Again, I urge you to attend the workshop on January 28. The Town's consultants for the project, Bergmann Associates, have told us that it's very unusual in their experience for a municipality to do direct mailings to every household in order to encourage public participation in comprehensive planning. We've done it for every public workshop.

Together with our other efforts to engage our residents for this purpose -- the dedicated Plan website, news releases, our eNews, Town social media, the Town website, Supervisor's columns and more --

the direct mailings underscore the importance to the Town of obtaining the views of as broad a representation of our community as possible.

The importance of this should be self-evident. It's important as well because, for a comprehensive plan to be truly comprehensive, we need to hear not just from those with passion for a single issue or narrow agenda, however valid and important the subject of either may be. We need to include views broadly representative of the community, including views of residents who have more general interest in the variety of topics involved in a comprehensive plan.

Please do come out to share your thoughts about the future development of our community.

Should you have any comments about our Comprehensive Plan, or any other topic, as always you may reach me directly by phone at 248-6220 or by email at bsmith@townofpittsford.org. As ever, my door is open and I answer my own phone. Let me know what *you* think!