

**TOWN OF DAY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
COMMITTEE MEETING
APRIL 2, 2009**

Members Present: Ted Mirczak, Chairman **Members Absent:** None
Dave Cox
Mary Ann Johnson, Supervisor
David Davidson
June Dixon
Ken Metzler
Judy Traeger
Larry DeRubbo
Richard Lamb, Consultant

Others: Suzanne Denn

Committee Member Davidson presented the following compilation of data to the Committee Members (Outline of Data Compilation through Town Working Proactively with HRBRRD to Represent Citizens):

Outline of Data Compilation:

A total of 1,583 surveys were mailed, 26 returned as undeliverable and as of this date, 801 have been returned.

Committee Member Davidson provided the Committee with data compilation of the multiple choice questions and the Resident Data Set of the open ended questions. While this analysis does not draw any conclusions; Committee Member Davidson would be willing to present a one page conclusion. There were over 2,000 comments to the open ended questions. Copies of each handout are attached.

There was only one instance of a photocopied survey being returned; several original surveys were returned in different envelopes than those provided; and the remote possibility that a landowner with more than one parcel may have received more than one survey. A random sampling may have produced different results than strictly landowner responses who are traditionally an older population.

Response Rate:

There was over 50% response rate which is unprecedented. It was noted the responses were contemplative. There were many unsolicited comments written in the margins of the survey along with an additional page or pages of comments and suggestions which indicates a very strong interest in the future of the community.

Residence Category:

Population breakdown mimics the census data. There were differences in opinions on the interpretation of how residents characterized themselves as “permanent” or “seasonal”.

There was the addition of a fourth group referred to as “landowners” who own only acreage with no structures on the parcel which were not separated out as a group in the compilation. Some of these respondents left this question blank with an explanation.

There were a lower number of lake access permit holders who responded to the survey than anticipated. Many comments were answered “lake access” making it difficult to differentiate between if the respondent wished to have lake access; wanted additional access for boat launches; or, if their concern is beach permit administration.

Length of Time of Residence:

The average length of time of residence was 26 years with the range between one and 80 with 20 as the aggregate. A large number of respondents are lifelong residents. If the median is less than the average, it suggests that the average is being driven by relatively few people who have been in the area for a very long time period. While the Town is “old”, there may be some evidence to suggest it may be getting younger. It may be worthwhile to split the data into two categories: more than 20 and less than 20 which may indicate age or experience differences in their opinions on economic development, etc.

Permanent residences were at the bottom of the scale. These figures may be driven by the larger number of landowners retiring here. There are 920 permanent residents in the Town of Day.

It was a problematic question for 38 respondents who did not respond and others responded with multiple answers, i.e. owned for 40 years and lived here for the past eight years. This was totaled and scored 48 years. Some respondents who spend time here but have residences elsewhere do not feel qualified to answer some questions to the survey. Others may not live here but do wish to be actively involved.

Economic Growth:

The majority of responses are in the middle category of 3 and 4. When Committee Member Davidson read the comments, he was better able to understand what economic development meant to the respondents. Some of the responses were “rural nature”, “unspoiled nature”; “natural beauty” which qualifies the numeric score to indicate there is no compelling case for Economic Development. Supervisor Johnson stated if 4, 5 and 6 were scored together; Economic Development would become an important issue. It was noted there were a large number of surveys with number 4 being the predominate response which may indicate there is some significance. Committee Member Davidson stated it was his intention to make the survey a six point scale to force respondents not to be in the middle. It was noted that some of the comments contradicted the multiple choice answers.

The Committee will discuss how the information will be disseminated to the public at the next meeting. It was agreed it would be in the form of a summary.

Economic Growth through Residential Development:

It could be interpreted as more positive than Economic Development. This would be an area which would affect the different zoning districts and where to concentrate greater density. Five different groups of questions should be considered together: Economic, Residential, Commercial, Improved Opportunities for Recreation and Forestry and compared for averages. Residential is reflected as being more important than Commercial Growth.

Economic Growth through Recreation, Travel and Tourism:

This question has a high number of number 6 responses with no clear conclusion in the open ended questions of how to accomplish this. It was agreed this should be targeted in public workshops. The open ended questions indicated a need for improved recreational activities, more restaurants, grocery stores, better quality of goods, etc. by seasonal residents. Permanent residents seem resolved to traveling outside of the Town for many of their day to day needs. Committee Member Davidson stated there is a very strong sense of isolation for a significant group of people living year round.

Economic Growth through Forestry:

Responses indicate there is no strong evidence for respondents being against this.

Economic Growth through Development of New Industries:

It is apparent this subject conjures up images of factories to respondents and a “not in my backyard” attitude. This is a higher concern of resident respondents in order to provide employment.

Affordable Housing:

This is a contentious and negative subject and the Committee may wish to use the term “Work Force Housing” to alleviate the concerns of residents. Residents are in favor of affordable housing with concerns of where their children will live and if they will be priced out of the market.

Encourage Residential Development Off the Lakeshore:

People moving into Town wish to be on the lake. Committee Davidson stated there were quasi subdivision issues off the lake and would be a good issue to hold an informational meeting on in conjunction with residential development.

Enhance Services for Senior Citizens:

This is a social question which created an apathetic response from seasonal residents which may indicate that due to not living here, it created a lack of concern or not being aware of what is currently offered. Therefore, they did not feel qualified to answer the question. In the comment section, there is concern for Senior needs to be met and isolation issues which could be dealt with by providing transportation. Some went so far as to suggest bus services. As the population ages, these concerns may become greater in the future.

Fire, EMS and Police Services:

While there are a significant number of respondents (497) who believe it is a concern but not enough to warrant additional investments unless it seriously deteriorates, there are 91 respondents who believe it is very significant. According to their responses in the comment section, they can be anticipated to make their concern known at a public hearing. There were 133 respondents who believed the emergency services exceeded their expectations.

County and Town Roads Conditions:

Concerns were not so much with road width but services on private roads, traffic conditions, and comments regarding wider shoulders for walking particularly on the North Shore (which is more heavily traveled and more dangerous for walkers).

Internet Access:

A large number do not consider this an issue but there is a higher number who want more competitive services. There are competitive services but not in every region of the town. The comments indicated that not all Town residents have phone, electric or cable service (Turner Road, Hadley Hill Road and Snow Road). While this is more of an issue on private roads, there are some public roads where electrical service is not available. This would indicate problems with some areas' infrastructure.

Cell Service:

There was a very heavy response to the need for cell service or improved cell service. If the response was "cell towers", it was coded as cell service. In spite of a great desire to keep the Town the same, scenic values, etc., there was still a strong call for construction of cell towers outside of their view. While a tower to service emergency services is planned and there is room for cell service on that tower, the provider must be willing to bear the brunt of the expense and none are coming forward.

Cable Service:

It was difficult to ascertain from the survey results if this is an indication of no service at all or the desire for improved service.

Public Access to the Lake:

Many indicate it is not an issue which may be due to 80% of respondents having beach access (with the highest percentage of seasonal residents having permits). There is no strong argument either way for public access. There are a large number of residents (190) who expressed a need for access to the lake. On the opposite side of the resident responses, there are 146 who do not feel access is an issue. Many advocate for town beaches, access on the South Shore, improvements to the park at Saratoga County Park on North Shore, and the park on Kathan Road located in Hadley. Supervisor Johnson stated this is the most difficult issue to address because the County owns the Park on North Shore and HRBRRD owns the Park on Kathan Road where there are public security concerns. APA and DEC will not allow any new beach or marinas. Seasonal residents tended to focus more on recreational activities associated with the lake.

Town Working Proactively With HRBRRD to Represent Citizens:

Due to the high response (491), this would be a good subject for a public workshop to determine how landowners would expect the Town to represent them. Supervisor Johnson stated there is such a wide range of what citizens want, i.e. issues of backlotter vs. frontlotter which conflict with each other. The landowners must make their issues known and the kind of response they expect from the Town. Committee Member Cox stated Broadalbin and Northampton have been very proactive in representing their communities before HRBRRD. Regarding water levels and shoreline issues, there is little the Town can do to change how HRBRRD manages them. The respondent may not want their particular issue to be represented by the Town but to simply have a Town official at the table to address any issues which may affect the Town.

Presentation of Data:

Professor Lamb stated he could assemble all survey questions on a single bar graph rated by averages showing the issue and how important it was compared to the other issues. It would not be prudent to have workshops on all 17 issues on the survey. No final cut off date has been declared on receiving surveys and as of this date, surveys are still being received. It was agreed there was great value in stating that the Committee did take all surveys into account when compiling the data.

Professor Lamb stated this would be the first piece of information to be presented to the public. There was discussion on how “averages” are arrived at and is that a fair way to present the results of the surveys. The issue of the Town working with HRBRRD would be the issue of greatest concern with cell service next. Committee Member Davidson stated he would compare how three groups (responses 5-6, 3-4, and 1-2 grouped into three categories) compared to scoring each number singly (1-6). There was difference of opinion on the values of each response with six being very important and one not important at all. Committee Member Davidson stated the average would work best with this type of bar graph. Committee Member Dixon suggested that grouping 5-6, 3-4, and 1-2 would best reveal the answers on the survey questions. Professor Lamb stated this may be oversimplification on a bar graph – there are extremes on each side of an issue. Suzanne Denn agreed with Committee Member Dixon that the compilation

should be simple and short. She stated since the Committee posed the questions to the entire community, they should address the community's answers which comprises all six selections with no group being eliminated. To exclude any group would give the impression that that group is not important enough to be counted.

Supervisor Johnson stated she would prefer a pie graph on the emergency services questions which would very clearly indicate the interest of the respondents. On this particular issue, there were statements rather than degrees of importance.

Committee Member Cox stated the survey results show that there was no major conflict on any of the issues within resident groups, a result which should be revealed to the landowners. Supervisor Johnson stated the Committee must be careful not to overwhelm the landowners with too many details and much of the information gathered is for the Committee's use in developing the plan. Chairman Mirczak stated the Committee's objective is to present the information in a clear, concise manner. If a landowner would like to see results from the survey which were not included in the public presentation, it would be available from the Town Hall. Professor Lamb suggested the reports could be available from the website but the handouts to the public at the workshops and public hearings would be different. Chairman Mirczak stated if the reports were on the website, there would be a need for a summary to be able to understand how the Committee arrived at their conclusions.

Professor Lamb stated the report would begin with the Executive Summary with the report to follow. He further stated someone would have to make the judgment to interpret the results and determine which are the most important. Professor Lamb did not believe it should be his interpretation. Supervisor Johnson stated it should be a decision of the whole Committee rather than just a part of the Committee.

Professor Lamb will produce the summary graphs for the next meeting and Committee Member Davidson will have the remainder of the results of the open ended questions (Resident Data Sets on Seasonal & Year Round Residents). It was agreed that the summary graph and related data would be posted on the website and be provided at all public hearings and workshops, be available in articles in area publications.

After lengthy discussion on how to split the numbers 1-6, it was stated in a survey where the option to check a category as "no interest" or "not caring" did not exist, would number 3 or 4 represent that group? Would 3-4 represent an inability to decide on an issue? Code Enforcement Officer Metzler stated while it was interesting to see the breakdown of residents vs. year round vs. seasonal, everyone in the Town is a taxpayer and those results should be cumulative. From the survey results, it has been made very clear that the respondents are part of the Town because they want to be here – whether it is only on weekends in the summer or year round. A result in the middle 3 and 4 would simply indicate that the respondent is content with the conditions which currently exist and would not want to explore a change.

The Committee will discuss how the survey results would be distributed, i.e. news articles only or post card mailings, and attendance at Day Property Owners Meeting to discuss results of surveys.

Graphs:

It was agreed that Professor Lamb would make several graphs each displaying the survey question with one graph displaying the results of 1-2 and 5-6. A second graph would display the average for the use of the Committee at this time (it would be determined if the average graph may be used as the summary graph). This may reveal if the numbers would affect the average. A third graph would show the results of all responses. It was agreed there would be no resident lines and be treated as all in the same category. If a property owner would like to see the breakdown according to residents, year round and seasonal, it would be available.

The graphs should reveal which are the most important issues to be addressed by the Committee and made part of the Comprehensive Plan. How to present the information to the public would also be determined by the Committee. These issues would be assigned to focus groups. The survey result compilation drives what the conclusions are and how they would become part of the Goals and Objectives. This defines what the Committee's goals are and those goals must be put in the public venue for workshops to determine what the citizens are interested in.

To present these issues to workshops, the Committee would need to state that these are the issues that the survey responses indicated are the most important, these are some of the suggestions for possibly attaining these goals; and, then open it up for discussion. The first public information meeting would be to present the goals, discuss the issues, review the preliminary list of goals for public reaction and ask for volunteers. Next, would be to hold a public meeting which may be in the form of a workshop discussing one set of issues. Ultimately, this Committee will have to formulate its Goals and Recommendations giving an indication which are a priority.

Professor Lamb has provided each Committee Member with a draft version of "Goals and Recommendations". Once this Committee has determined the issues to focus on, it should then modify through deletions or additions of draft version the "Goals and Recommendations" prior to the Public Hearings. All members should review this document (second version with revisions which was emailed on 3/19/09) and it will be reviewed at the April 21st meeting. Professor Lamb stated he obtained information from previous minutes to revise "Goals and Recommendations" of 3/19/09.

The Committee will decide at its next meeting which type of graph or graphs they will make available to the public. Survey results of specific items will be on the April 21st agenda.

Large Landowners – Larry DeRubbo:

Tom Martin of DEC will be the guest speaker at our next meeting and it is estimated his presentation on large landowners and Nature Conservancy with questions to follow should be 30 minutes in length.

Professor Lamb stated there should be the discussion relating to changing lot size requirements for future tradeoffs with APA.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Byrne
Secretary