

ROCHESTER REPORTER



News & Facts about our Town

Published by the Rochester Town Board to keep residents informed and involved

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MEETINGS & EVENTS

6/8 (Th) Environmental Commission, 7pm TH

6/13 (Tu) ZBA, 7:30pm TH

6/14 (W) Comp. Plan Update Committee, 7pm TH

6/17 (Sat) Comp. Plan Outreach Town Meeting, 9am TH

6/19 (M) Historic Preservation Commission, 4pm TH

6/20 (Tu) Plan. Board, 7pm TH

6/21 (W) Youth Dept. Board, 9:30am CC

6/21 (W) Comp. Plan Outreach Town Meeting, 7pm AIF

6/21 (W) Fire Commissioner Board, 7:30pm AcF

6/22 (Th) Comp. Plan Outreach Town Meeting, 7pm RTC

6/27 (Tu) Comp. Plan Outreach Town Meeting, 7pm R2F

6/28 (W) Town Board (Audit), 4:30pm TH

6/29 (Th) Comp. Plan Outreach Town Meeting, 7pm AcF

7/6 (Th) Town Board, 7pm AcF

TH=Town Hall

CC=Community Center

AcF=Accord Firehouse

AIF=Alligerville Firehouse

R2F=Rochester II Firehouse

RTC=Rochester Town Court

Progress Continues on Comprehensive Plan Update — Public Input Invited 2nd Series of Outreach Meetings Scheduled

The first series of Outreach Meetings were held last April. The main purpose of this first series of public events was to receive input related to the proposed goals for the plan. The goals fall into six general categories:

- Land Use
- Environmental Quality
- Economic Development
- Community Character
- Infrastructure
- Government Services

The general impression of the Committee members and consultants is that the outreach meetings successfully presented the basic concepts for revising the Town's Comprehensive Plan. There was also a sense that town residents were actively and productively engaged in listening to each other. It seems that the fear among some residents of forced or unwelcome changes becoming part of the Plan has

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Comprehensive Plan Town Meeting Schedule

1. Sat., June 17, 9:00 AM
Town Hall (Scenic Drive)
2. Wed., June 21, 7:00 PM
Alligerville Firehouse (Creek Road)
3. Thurs., June 22, 7:00 PM,
Rochester Town Court (Samsonville Road)
4. Tues., June 27, 7:00 PM
Rochester II Firehouse (Samsonville Road)
5. Thurs., June 29, 7:00 PM
Accord Fire House (Main Street)

 ★ **BURNING BAN LIFTED:** Due to the recent rains, the Town ban on open burning has been ★
 ★ lifted. Residents are reminded they must be in possession of a burn permit and phone the fire ★
 ★ department before they burn. Free, 30-day burn permits are available from the Town Clerk. ★

Property Reassessment Grievances Heard

The Board of Assessment Review (BAR) concluded its Grievance Hearings late last month. The five-member BAR conducted approximately 12 hours of hearings on May 23 and 24 at the Town Hall.

This year the number of grievances was higher than usual because of the recent town-wide reassessment, which was the first conducted since 1999. The BAR, chaired by veteran member Alan Levine, heard approximately 70 cases in person over the two day session, with an additional 30 or so

cases heard by petitioners who did not appear in person.

After the initial Change of Assessment Notices were sent to property owners in March 2006, Assessor Sharon Hornbeck met with approximately 725 taxpayers to discuss their assessments.

The BAR will meet over the next month to discuss each case and come to agreement of its determinations.

The BAR's job is to fairly and objectively review the informa-

tion, documentation and/or evidence that is submitted and to make a determination to ensure property tax assessment equity.

The Board is empowered to reduce an assessment or to leave it unchanged; it is not empowered to increase assessments. In making its determination, which will be done by July 1, 2006, the BAR is required to consider only those grounds that are permitted by New York State Real Property

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(Plan Update, continued)
dissipated as a result of the outreach efforts, and that the new plan will represent the will of the community.

The consultant, Peter Fairweather, is now in the process of analyzing responses to the Plan's goals as well as to the Slide Show "visceral response" exercise that was conducted during each session. This information is being incorporated into a new working

draft that will be presented for discussion at upcoming PZC meetings, all of which are open to the public.

The general sense of Committee members and consultants is that the following concerns appear to be most important to Town residents and thus will be worked into the update:

1. Affordability
2. Controlling taxes
3. Protecting water resources
4. Balancing individual prop-

erty rights vs. public needs.

Other priority attention is being given to preserving scenic views of the ridgeline, especially along Rt. 209, and boosting economic development, including tourism, with a particular focus on the Town's historic hamlets.

A revised draft of a plan is being developed for presentation to the community during the upcoming outreach meet-

ings. It is hoped that a ready draft will be completed this July, along with a natural resource inventory, which is being concurrently prepared.

Outreach meetings are the public's main opportunity to provide input into the Comprehensive Plan Update. The larger the turnout, the better the product.

Minutes of the meetings are available on the Town website.

Fire Commissioner Vacancy Filled

Mr. David Lawrence has been appointed to the Accord District Fire Commission on an interim basis until the end of 2006, filling the vacancy created by the resignation of Jonathan Blair.

Transfer Station Again Accepting Used Motor Oil

The Town Transfer Station is once again accepting used motor oil after a hiatus of several weeks.

After a new oil reclamation company assumed responsibility for picking up discarded motor oil from the Transfer Station, tests revealed that the oil was contaminated beyond acceptable limits. As a result, the collection of the oil was suspended. The problem has been resolved and the oil can

once again be deposited for recycling.

Residents are reminded that they may not add any other ingredients (such as antifreeze, gasoline, bleach) to the oil they bring to the Transfer Station. Tests kits will be used by Transfer Station attendants to insure that the oil to be disposed of is free of contaminants. For more information, call the Transfer Station at 626-5273.

(Grievances, Continued)
Tax Law. These grounds are (a) unequal assessment, (b) excessive assessment, (c) unlawful assessment, and (d) misclassified property assessment. Those who have filed grievances will be notified of

the BAR's decision by letter.

The BAR is not permitted to consider any other factors, including a property owner's ability to afford to pay property taxes.

Historic Preservation Commission Considers Public Input

Following the 90-minute public hearing on the draft law on Historic Landmark Preservation, its back to the drawing board for Commission members. About 150 residents were in attendance to voice their opinions of the draft. Most of the attendees expressed concerns over the way the present draft was worded.

The Commission acknowledged that additional work and clarification are needed before another draft of the Chapter 22

Law can be again presented for public scrutiny and eventual Town Board consideration.

Over the coming months, members aim for a new draft that will gain wide support of residents. Those interested in witnessing the deliberations of the Commissioners as they develop the next draft are welcome to attend their meetings, which are held every third Monday of the month in the Town Hall at 4:00 pm.

Need Mulch? A Free Treat for your Garden

The Town Transfer Station has mulch to spare. Stop by with your container — the mulch is free while supplies last.

New Town Sign on Rt. 209

As part of the Town's efforts to improve communications, a new notice board has been erected along US Rt. 209, just south of the Saunderskill Farm Stand. The sign will be used

to post notices of public meetings and other Town events. Pay attention as you drive by, and then attend those events that interest you. Open government requires participation.

Better Cell & Internet Connectivity?

The Town Board has given approval for a private company, Homeland Towers, to conduct testing in the Town over the next 6 months to determine potential sites for a pole (not tower) structure to improve cell phone and Internet connectivity in the Town. The tests will be at no cost to taxpayers.

Disposal of Hazardous Waste & Electronics

Rochester residents can dispose of hazardous waste and electronics at the Wawarsing transfer station on June 10. The special collection, organized by Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (UCRRA), will be from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Residents must call UCRRA for an appointment at (845) 336-3336. Get more information from the Town Clerk or Town website.

List Your Business (It's Free!) Place information about your local business on the Town's website. If you have your own website, a direct link to it will be offered. Go to www.townofrochester.net and click on the *Business Directory* link for more information and to sign up.