

Village Character Forum, May 15, 2010
Cold Spring Special Board for a Comprehensive Plan

Parsonage/Parrott/Mountain Avenue

Two Sessions:

Anne Impellizzeri, Facilitator

Richard Weissbrod, Recorder

Parge Sgro

Francis J. Lahey

Bruce Campbell

Arinhos Serrados

Kathleen Foley

Seymour Pustilnik

Mike Turton

Barbara Blakely

Dennis Nairn

Jan Thatcher

Phyllis Pustilnik

Ann Bouchard

Richard Blakely

Chuck Hustis

Anne asked: What do people like about or want for their neighborhood?

Comments: Want it left as it is. Others echoed that view.

Everyone takes care of his or her home. Windows, fence, etc.

You should be able to do what you want.

Anne: But basic characteristics such as lot size, setbacks still embody historic roots.

Comment: People do not discuss historic attributes.

Anne: How would people in the community feel if someone bought up several lots and put up something different, maybe larger?

Comments: How are people qualified to be on historic committees [notably the Historic District Review Board]?

Who would possibly purchase several lots?

Next to the Town Hall four lots were put together.

But that was in Nelsonville.

Harold Lyons built seven homes on two acres.

What about joining the Village and Nelsonville?

Anne: It is a matter of how to proceed, whether with Historic District standards or some other protective regulation.

Anne: One thing people like is the neighborliness of Cold Spring. What are ideas to encourage community activity?

Comments: The Village is not Disneyland or Williamsburg. Some changes are interesting.

Some are not.

Regulations do not make you return to the historic setting.

The Village would be a third-party negotiator in property sales. Worried about another layer of government.

We need an example of good zoning to preserve a community.

Question: How could the Historic District process be improved?

Comment: There is a high degree of (architectural) readability such as attic windows, roof

shape, porch stairs, setbacks, side-bay windows.

Question: Were these issues (Mountain Avenue) the Comp Plan has brought up? Maybe we could survey people in these neighborhoods?

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Anne: What would people not want to lose?

Comment: Things like combining lots will never happen. They wouldn't allow it [meaning public officials, but they would need some regulation]

Cold Spring zoning was established when people were not so aware of the differences between our traditional village and typical suburbs. So the current zoning is not sacrosanct.

The Mekeel houses on Mt. Avenue

Summary observations: This is a living village where there is change. Small lots increase neighborliness.

Second session:

Kathleen Foley of the Historic District Review Board explained historic preservation, the McKeel houses, new commuters, etc., and that the Mountain Avenue neighborhood has a unique architectural presence.

Comments: The current Parsonage status is due to the previous block ownership [presumably referring to a single owner for a number of lots].

The Historic District Review procedure is a problem. Let nature take its course. Change comes when it comes.

Like it the way it is

The Village could not be built as it is today with existing building and zoning codes.

Anne: People value friendliness and caring neighbors. How do we sustain that?

Comments: The original lot size was 25' x 100' and everyone lived on two lots.

More comments on Historic District Review:

The zoning code was simply borrowed from Chappaqua and applied to the Village.

"Grudge" houses on Fishkill Avenue [need to ask Dennis Nairn about this].

The process is broken and we need to move toward more objective criteria.

People cannot change. Either you take a quantum leap to new practices or set in motion a significant evolutionary process.