

“Two Main Streets” Forum, May 1, 2010
Cold Spring Special Board for a Comprehensive Plan

Notes of Meeting on *Overcoming Hurdles to Thriving on Both (Main and Chestnut) Commercial Streets*. VFW Hall, Cold Spring

In attendance:

Marc Sabin, Facilitator
Richard Weissbrod, Recorder
Parge Sgro
Marie Early

Janice Hogan
Judith Rose
Sam Tallerico
PCNR Reporter

Suggested Topics

Jobs in Village
Prices ?
Crowding ?
Cleanliness?

Sidewalks, missing or poor condition
Lighting?
Safety?

Chestnut Street

“Daily needs” businesses (market, drying cleaning, banks, etc) are generally located on Chestnut.

(Another group is discussing the possibility and issues surrounding Butterfield Commons as it impacts the commercial nature/status of Chestnut Street.)

Main Street

The opening of the Dutchess Mall in 1980 changed activity on Cold Spring’s Main Street. Many Villagers shifted some “daily needs” shopping to the Mall and most of those businesses that remained viable in Cold Spring migrated to Chestnut Street. (With some important exceptions, such as the hardware store, the newspaper and the insurance agency.). Antique dealers took advantage of the empty and therefore inexpensive storefronts on Main Street and located in Cold Spring. Today, the few remaining antique dealers join with restaurants and a broad range of boutique businesses that attract tourist/shoppers mostly on weekends.

Types of Business

Several attendees commented on the lack of non-retail, M-F businesses such as professional offices. Others pointed out that the loss of storefronts to professional offices would reduce the number of tourist-attracting boutiques. This in turn might lessen the attractiveness of Cold Spring as a weekend destination.

Mix of businesses

Marc Sabin pointed out that some of the businesses are operated as extended “hobbies,” while others operate as profit maximizers. This can result in important differences. For example, Janice Hogan mentioned that for many boutiques, business-days and business-hours can vary widely and inconsistently from business to business and even for a single business. This, she pointed out, does not contribute to a shopper-friendly environment.

Restaurants

Members of the discussion group viewed closing of the Dockside restaurant (both as a restaurant and an event site) as a major loss with important trickle down effects. For example, weddings

and receptions attracted overnight guests who stayed in the local hostelrys, visited the shops and ate additional meals in the Village restaurants (Janice Hogan).

Particular Issues

Utility poles. Judith Rose joined others in observing that burying the utility lines along both commercial streets would greatly add to the late 19th and early 20th C ambience of the Village. Janice Hogan suggested that the sidewalks and drain improvement projects should take into account this improvement.

Hikers

Judith Rose and Janice Hogan both observed that the hikers, bicyclists, campers and others enjoying the surrounding outdoors do not seem to shop, dine or otherwise take advantage of the Main Street offerings. Michael Turton did say that he sees some hikers patronizing McQuires. Judith Rose suggested that the Town Trolley include routes that include the major hiking trailheads in order to pull people back to the Village.

Chamber of Commerce

C of C, which serves Village businesses, other Rt 9d business and Rt 9 businesses, has a very broad charter that may or may not serve the unique objectives of the Main Street merchants.

Greener on the Other Side of the Street

Janice Hogan thought as a destination, Nyack had a more diverse and therefore a better mainstreet than Cold Spring. Janice also commented that Hastings-on-Hudson also had a better mix of stores offering a wide variety of attractive goods. She also mentioned a town near Ithaca that similar to Nyack had a more attractive range of retail stores to include a bookstore. I think she was intimating that the merchants had a better connection with their customers.

New or Potentially New Businesses

Sam Tallerico, founder of ColdSpringRadio.com, discussed his internet radio project soon to be located on Main Street. He stated that his facility would have a lounge area which could double as a resting spot for hikers and tourists as well as a studio for live and lively discussions. The Group enthusiastically greeted his enterprise.

B&Bs

Janice Hogan and Judith Rose expressed their view that the Village needs new B&B's in order to attract new business.

Support through the Internet.

Mike Turton expressed the opinion that more could be done using the internet to attract tourists/shoppers to Main Street. Janice Hogan commented that internet sites of Main Street Shops were weak in the sense that competing stores in other locales had better/stronger sites.

Important Unanswered Questions.

Marc Sabin asked "Whether a stronger Main Street would attract more customers or vice versa?" Janice Hogan asked "Who are the businesses (Main Street merchants?) trying to attract?"