

“Riverfront” Forum, April 24, 2010

Cold Spring Special Board for a Comprehensive Plan

Mike Armstrong introduced the topic of the Riverwalk by describing the concept and the proposed route – that it would go from Foundry Dock Park, owned by Scenic Hudson to the Greenway Trail. Mike described the sidewalk situation along Market Street (from the Metro North parking lot to Lunn Terrace), that it was unsafe and unusable by disabled and/or handicapped people and/or people with strollers or carriages. He stated that the proposed route with the pedestrian bridge has implications for homeowners who have views of that area. He stated that a pedestrian bridge would require an approximate 26 foot clearance from the railroad tracks and would require a substantial ramp for ADA compliance, according to Metro North. If there were no ramps, elevators would be required; Metro North quoted approximately \$1M per elevator. The Village garage is approximately 2 acres. It could be nicely landscaped with benches and trees and could provide a lovely site to view the Hudson and the Highlands.

Session 1 – 17 people attended

Why doesn't the plan for the Riverwalk go to Little Stony Point? A: The northern Village line is approximately 250 feet south of the intersection of Fair Street and Route 9D; the remaining section of road is a County road. The Village does not own that property..

The route from the Village limit to Little Stony Point is not safe.

Can you tell me about the Greenway? A: The Greenway is a concept at this point. Proposed by the Town, it would go from Bear Mountain Bridge to Beacon; it would accommodate bicycles and pedestrians. Q: Who is proposing the Greenway? A: The Town of Philipstown and a non-profit group. It is estimated to cost approximately \$3M. It is not yet funded.

Is the Riverwalk dependent on a pedestrian bridge? A: It is possible that that the concept could become just a park at the Village garage site.

We first came to Cold Spring to hike the trail once. However, when we walked through the Village to get to the trailhead we fell in love with the Village and bought a home here. Wouldn't following the proposed route (bypassing Main Street and the side streets of the Village) be counter to the economic health of the Village?

Signage could be created to direct people from the train to Main Street for dining and shopping, and to the Riverwalk for a route that provided more views of the mountains and the river. There was a comment that this would make Main Street more of an afterthought.

People coming off the train and onto the platform don't know where Cold Spring is. A: The Special Board has had conversations with Metro North about Signage.

A map should be part of the signage.

Installations of sidewalks with appropriate ADA compliance, and upgrades/improvements to current sidewalks would improve the quality of life in the Village.

Fair Street narrows as it proceeds north beyond Mayor's Park; wouldn't this make this proposed path of the Riverwalk unsafe? A: Easements could be obtained for the portion of the Riverwalk in the Village; the Special Board has not yet looked into the question of easements for the section of the Riverwalk that would exist on the County Road.

How would this be communicated/coordinated with the County? The Special Board would work with the County on this.

Please describe more about the pedestrian bridge? A: No engineering studies have been done yet. But, by our estimates, the Village garage site has an elevation of approximately 20 feet. The bridge would have to have an elevation of 26 feet. So there would need to be a ramp on the Village garage site to get up to 26 feet elevation. On the Dockside side, there would need to be a ramp that would get from the bridge down to the ground.

ADA requires 1 in 12.

Mike then discussed the alternate route, with a boardwalk to the west of the Metro North road bed (the tracks and the vehicular road) going from Dockside to the site of the old wood dock. At the wood dock, there would need to be elevators on both sides of the tracks to permit pedestrians to get across the tracks. This would allow people on the northern edge of the community easier access to the river.

People on the northern edge of the community do not have to go too far today to get to the river.

How would people walk west of the railroad? A: There would need to be the construction of a boardwalk on piers. Metro North would not pay for this but they may provide a right of use.

Metro North has a 50 foot right of way on either side of the tracks.

A pedestrian bridge would impact the property values and quality of life of property owners in the vicinity of such a bridge.

I would be strongly opposed to such a bridge. Today, hikers can cross the railroad at the bridge at Little Stony Point. A boardwalk from the Village to Little Stony Point seems like a better proposal.

It was pointed out that the presentation has a proposal and an alternate. They should be renamed "Proposal 1" and "Proposal 2".

Move the pedestrian bridge to Mayor's Park

Have the Riverwalk come up Main Street to Fair Street and then north.

I would not be opposed to a Riverwalk on Main Street.

A Riverwalk could be created with a sidewalk on the west side of Fair Street.

A boardwalk from Little Stony Point to Dockside would probably be about half a mile in length.

Mike then talked about the possibility of having a small inn located on the current Village garage site; it could bring revenue into the Village which is one of the goals (lower property taxes) of the Comprehensive Plan.

A park and an inn could work.

The views of the sewage/water treatment plant would not be esthetically pleasing. A: Landscaping could screen those views

Photos were then passed around the table showing the views from a resident's property and it was pointed out how a pedestrian bridge at the Village Garage site would impact the view, including the hundreds of people a day who would use such a bridge

What would be involved in moving the Village Garage? And by the way, the sidewalk on Fair Street is in terrible condition. A: Currently the garage site is used for repair of equipment and storage of recyclables, salt, equipment, etc. Each of these component uses could be addressed over time.

If the Village garage site is, as you state, the most beautiful site in the Village, why would you want to damage the site by the construction of a bridge with its infrastructure, height, ramps, etc.?

Leave the Riverwalk and take the bridge out of the plan.

At some point during the session, Mike pointed out that the Comprehensive Plan was a 20 year plan.

Session 2 – This session was attended by 9 people

There is already a pedestrian crossing at the railroad station. Why not plan a Riverwalk which incorporates other venues which have historical and/or scenic value such as the Campbell property; the planned Foundry Park; a route up the Haul Road to Route 9D which allows a trip to Boscobel as well; the Marsh Trail. There is no need to build another pedestrian bridge.

Instead of the proposed route, go up the coastline to Little Stony Point on the west side of the tracks, on a boardwalk.

There are already 4 pedestrian crossings: the railroad station, the subway, Lunn Terrace bridge, Little Stony Point. There is no need for another.

Instead of building a bridge with new materials, it may be possible to find an old bridge that could be re-used.

The State proposed a path a number of years ago that was on Route 9D and accommodated a bicycle path as well.

A bridge at Dockside, if it accommodated vehicular traffic, would provide Metro North with vehicular access to the west side of the tracks. There were also comments that Metro North does not currently have vehicular access to the west side of the tracks.

There was also some comment at this session that there was not a requirement to have a pedestrian bridge ADA compliant and that this could work for the Village garage site, similar to the Metro North pedestrian bridge at the Breakneck railroad stop which is not ADA compliant. It was then pointed out that that bridge was constructed well before ADA requirements. Of note, any construction funding provided from Greenway must meet ADA requirements; Metro North has stated that any bridges that they might build must also be ADA compliant.

Where would the Village garage go? A: We are currently working with the Town to share some services and storage; we need to have conversations about each of the elements that are stored at the site.

Would the Village sell the land? A: Leasing, and potentially other arrangements, are possibilities.

Dockside and the Village garage site are prime pieces of property. It would be insane to continue to use the Village garage site as it is used today.

At the Dockside discussion I attended earlier, there were points raised that intersect with topics being discussed concerning the Riverwalk. There discussions should not occur separately; they need to be reconciled. A: It is the responsibility of the Special Board to address these overlapping topics and to come up with a recommendation that considers all input, all the pro's and con's, and to reflect this in the Comprehensive Plan.

When a commercial development recommendation is made, I suggest that it be evaluated in terms of how it will enhance existing commerce/businesses. For example, if a new restaurant is suggested, consider if it will benefit existing restaurants. If it does not, it should be rejected. I make this suggestion based on what has been seen in Beacon vis a vis the Beacon waterfront development draining the businesses on Main Street.

As an alternate to the Riverwalk, consider a boat (something that could navigate shallow waters, something like a barge) taking hikers from Dockside to Little Stony Point.