



SAVE Colonie

A Partnership for Planning

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 26, 2019

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Suzanne Maloney (518) 330-9521 or suzannemm66@gmail.com

SAVE Colonie Calls on Mahan Administration and Town Board to Provide More Notice of Comprehensive Plan Public Hearings

Grassroots Group Calls on Town Officials to Focus Future Public Hearings on Taking Public Comments, Provide More Time for Input

Colonie, NY – SAVE Colonie, a partnership of community members organized to protect and preserve the Town of Colonie’s natural environment and quality of life, today called on Colonie Town Supervisor Paula Mahan and members of the Colonie Town Board to make future public hearings on the town’s draft Comprehensive Plan more inclusive and well-publicized.

An Albany [Times Union article](#) notes that the next public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan will take place on April 4, 2019, however there is no notice of this public hearing anywhere on the Town’s website, including on the Town Board agenda page, since the hearing will presumably be part of the next Town Board meeting scheduled for the same date; the sections of the webpage that announce events and press releases; or on any of the Planning Department webpages dedicated to the Comprehensive Plan.

“If the Town of Colonie is going to hold another public hearing next week, they should be publicizing it in as many places around town and on the town website as possible so that residents can learn more and participate,” said Wendy Allen, a Colonie resident and member of SAVE Colonie. “Furthermore, the town should be making public the document used during the March 21st public hearing and any other materials being added to the February draft that is currently posted on the Planning Department website. Open meetings law and general good government practices should motivate the town to do these things. For some reason, our town is doing as little as possible to fully share the information on this draft plan with residents and encourage participation.”

During the March 21, 2019 public hearing on the draft Plan, a 34-page Power Point presentation was handed out to attendees and read for more than an hour by Chuck Voss of Barton & Loguidice, the town’s consultant on the Comprehensive Plan. Following this long introduction and a statement by Supervisor Mahan, members of the public were then invited to make comments at the public hearing. After each person made public comments, Town Board

members responded, and in some cases engaged in back and forth discussion with the person commenting.

“Public hearings are intended to solicit input from residents, stakeholders and other members of the public, said Suzanne Maloney, another member of SAVE Colonie. “Our town officials should be listening to learn. Instead, they defended past work that brought the town to a better financial position but seem not to understand that now is the time for the next phase of the Towns wealth, health and wellbeing, spending valuable time which should have been dedicated to hearing the public opinion on debating parochial issues or details. This was unfortunate and dampens the public’s willingness to participate.”

In order to make the remainder of the Comprehensive Plan process meaningful to both residents and the town, SAVE Colonie calls on the town to:

- Schedule sessions to continue the public hearing that began on March 21st only after notifications of additional hearing dates on posted the town website and the Planning Department website, as well as in other venues such as Town Hall and the Library with flyers, in addition to whatever legal notices are filed with the Spotlight, the town’s official newspaper. Doing the bare minimum with a legal notice in the Spotlight is not sufficient and will not inform the public adequately.
- Post all materials related to the draft Comprehensive Plan, including the 34 page Power Point provided at the last meeting, and any additional revisions or documents that are being created and discussed by the Town Board on the Comprehensive Plan webpage in advance of any public hearings, so that members of the public can come to the hearings informed and prepared to make relevant comments.
- Use a professional facilitator for the public hearings to ensure time is maximized for public input, and to reduce debate between commenters and Town Board members.

While the town website does not provide updated information to residents, SAVE Colonie has [posted a copy of the presentation](#) used at the March 21 public hearing on its website, with an update to its members about that meeting.

SAVE Colonie is a partnership of community members organized to protect and preserve the Town of Colonie’s natural environment and quality of life. We believe in a balanced approach to development in our community that encompasses current best practices in urban planning. We organized to find and pool resources from the residents and businesses in the Town to provide input to the planning and development activities both underway and proposed.

SAVE Colonie’s vision is for development in the Town of Colonie to be planned and implemented in a way that ensures the conservation of environmental and historic assets, and a strong sense of community.

Learn more about SAVE Colonie at www.savecolonie.com, and connect with us and our more than 600 followers on [Facebook](#)

###.