

## Mayor's Column

June 4, 2018

At the Board of Trustees' April Meeting, the Trustees engaged the services of a professional planning consultant to prepare an updated municipal Comprehensive Plan for the Village. The Village's first plan was created in 1971, and with a few minor revisions has remained largely a static document. Given the changed residential, commercial and economic climate in 2018, it was prudent to revisit our community's visions, goals and policies as they relate to commercial vitality, residential and mixed-use development, open space, community facilities and services and infrastructure.

After careful review, our plan is to then adopt a Comprehensive Plan in compliance with all New York State applicable Village Law. We task the planners to anticipate and respond to changing conditions and utilize sustainable practices that will balance social economic and environmental considerations to prepare for smart growth while preserving the historical and architectural significance of the Village.

Upon acceptance, the Comprehensive Plan will become an official policy document for the Village. It will serve as a guide for evaluating proposed projects and programs and for considering amendments to Bronxville's policies regulations and the Village Code itself.

The Plan will further be used by Federal, New York State and Westchester County agencies when determining funding of any local projects, bond agencies to evaluate our rating, landlords and merchants in their business decisions, residents to evaluate property projects and Bronxville municipal Boards, commissions and administration to have coordinated and uniform responses.

The Trustees determined key areas of focus based on current conditions:

- A thorough review of the Villages residential zoning. At a minimum, this needs to include precise definition of terms, property setbacks, height and floor restrictions, lot coverage, floor area ratios, historic character of neighborhoods, teardowns and rebuilds and the importance of natural landscape with an emphasis on our tree stock.

- The same level of review of the Village's Commercial Business District rules and the commercial zoning code to ensure a vibrant, walkable downtown with provisions adaptable to changes in economic, social and environmental decisions.
- The understanding of the growth and/or changing character of our major institutions, chief among them the Bronxville School, New York Presbyterian/Lawrence Hospital and Concordia College. A thorough review of the impacts of their needs to the surrounding neighborhoods, be it offices, parking, drop off sites, including recommendations for mitigating impacts, will be undertaken.
- Special focus needs to be given to the impacts of the Metro North rail system bisecting our east and west side residential and business districts and the improvements that can be made to make the Village a more unified Village.
- In essence, the Plan should set forth what Bronxville looks like now, what the community should look like in the future with agreed upon goals, objectives and guiding principles, many of which will be codified.

To reach these objectives, we must be prepared, if needed, to implement changes to our current system by amending land use regulations, developing design guidelines and budgeting for additional improvements.

Though the Comprehensive Plan will be led by a professional consulting team, public comment, suggestions and buy-in are critical to a well-designed and thought out plan. To that end, we anticipate holding public hearings early in the process and then allowing ample time for review of the draft document. The Trustees will do whatever is necessary to assure full opportunity for citizen participation in the plan for our Village.

We anticipate important contributions from our Chamber of Commerce, garden clubs and Historical Conservancy.

The process should take approximately one year, with periodic reviews along the way.

At the completion, we hope to have a blueprint model for our Village's sustainability and future enhancements. It promises to be a fascinating and thought provoking endeavor.