

West Monroe Master Plan Committee Update - Keeping You, the Residents Informed

As a prelude to the regular February 10th meeting of the West Monroe Master Plan Committee, members Doug Fuegel and Randy Shaw hosted James Kent, President of Kent Environmental Planning and Design, on a three hour road trip along each and every road within the West Monroe Township. The purpose of the outing was to familiarize Mr. Kent with the demographics of the town. The Town Board has contracted Mr. Kent's agency to work with the Master Plan Committee in developing and designing a final master plan for the future of West Monroe.

Mr. Kent is a stranger to the Town of West Monroe; consequently, the committee was very interested in Mr. Kent's observations as an expert in analyzing the total inventory of the town. A brief summary of his observations are as follows: once you travel a bit north of the New York Rt. 49 corridor the land and land use is pretty much the same, a mixture of ample open land and wood lot, a variety of home styles intermingled with mobile homes, a few very nice subdivisions, trailer parks, one working dairy farm, a few crop farms, a berry farm, a Christmas tree farm, and a few specializing in hay, corn and soy bean. A very small portion of this northern portion, which perhaps is 60 percent of the total land of the town, has municipal water; none of this area has municipal sewer.

Mr. Kent concluded the area comprising the New York Rt. 49 and County Rt. 37 corridor is pretty much the commercial growth region with some perimeter residential areas of the town. There is some municipal water in this corridor but again no municipal sewer; Mr. Kent noted the lack of sewers in this area is a direct deterrent to any meaningful commercial growth. The Toad Harbor region that lies south of NY Rt. 49 Mr. Kent felt may be the area where residential growth may occur first within the town, however the land mass is pretty much the flat plain leading to Oneida Lake that may lead to water drainage problems. Additionally, the area has no municipal water or sewers and most wells are inadequate in both supply and quality. Mr. Kent's observations mirror that of the committee that if this area of the town is to grow, municipal water and sewers are a must. Although municipal sewers for this area are in the very preliminary talking stage, municipal water has been approved with construction slated to begin this fall. Mr. Kent's comment concerning the Big Bay area was that this portion of the town is "pretty congested"; this area does have municipal water and an aging sewer system running at full capacity. Although Mr. Kent agreed the West Monroe Community Recreation Park is a tremendous asset to the town and its residents, it is also a big liability due to its remoteness of location leading to vandalism and destruction of property.

The regular evening meeting commenced with an overview of possible sewer options presented by John Franz, Vice President/Regional Manager of Shumaker Consulting Engineering & Land Surveying, P.C. Mr. Franz has been working with town officers in an effort to develop a plan for the aged crippled sewer facility serving the Big Bay area. He fully agrees with the Master Plan Committee if any growth is to commence, sewer systems must be considered for the Rt. 37 - 49 corridor and the Toad Harbor area in addition to the Big Bay region. The Committee and Mr. Franz realize cost and funding will be a major concern with each option; however, every avenue of grant funding will be explored and infrastructure funds from the Federal Stimulus package will be essential. Where municipal water is now not available, Mr. Franz stated that wherever possible, water lines would be placed over sewer lines as a cost saving effort.

In an effort to be as effective as possible, communicating up-to-date information to the community Committee Member Bruce Phillips offered several suggestions for upgrading the Master Plan link on the West Monroe web site, www.townofwestmonroe-ny.us. Items that will be added to the web site will be a developed section of frequently asked questions (FAQ's) and an email address that residents may use to ask questions of the committee and offer suggestions. In this regard, residents are also urged to attend Master Plan Committee meetings, where a time will be allotted at the end of each meeting for resident comments and questions. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 24, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. at the West Monroe Town Hall. At the February 10th meeting one West Monroe resident was in the audience.