

## West Monroe Master Plan Moving Forward

The February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Town of West Monroe Master Plan Committee focused on a rough draft plan of goals, policy and action that included seven major topics of discussion. The rough draft was presented to the group by James Kent, President of Kent Environmental Planning and Design. The committee was very pleased that for the first time there were several residents in the audience.

Concerning growth the first hurdle would be to identify areas of the Town where expansion and consolidation of industrial, retail and business land uses can occur. Goals of the growth plan would be to encourage commercial development along the Route 49 corridor from I-81 eastward and to attempt to encourage a neighborhood type of growth at the intersection of Rt. 49 and Co. Rt. 11, a hamlet type growth. Actions necessary for this to happen would require a revision of the Town Zoning Code and Map to identify, expand or consolidate areas of the Town where these types of commercial and industrial entities are allowed. Additionally for any of this type action growth to occur water and sewer would have to be extended to this area.

Mr. Kent emphasized strongly to the committee a long standing notion by the planning profession that "the cost of infrastructure to support single family homes exceeds the tax revenues these homes generate." Knowing this the plan for the Town would be that every effort would be to attempt a development balance of new single family homes with non-residential growth. This being an industry wide accepted fact the goal of the Town would be an ongoing balance between single-family development and commercial, industrial and retail businesses.

A goal of the plan is to maintain high quality residential development and life standards as found in current residential neighborhoods and in areas where water and sewer infrastructure exists. Action to achieve this goal would be to create and map new residential zoning districts and expand as we move along and as needed.

Similarly a goal of the plan would have the Town promote high quality non-residential development. Action required would be to formalize a set of guidelines/standards for private non-residential development that reflect a high standard for site and building design. And revise the Town Code to enable and authorize the Town Planning Board to apply these standards to all new non-residential and renovation projects.

Second in the draft plan of major goals for growth and development is extension of utilities, water and sewers. In the coming years the Town will make every effort to encourage single family home growth in areas where water and sewers already are in place. With these efforts develop a rational program for extension of these utilities based on a plan and as need suggests. To achieve this goal a map would be required for Planning Board use that would include areas where water and sewer does not exist or in areas where existing capacity is limited.

Third of a major goal of the draft plan concerning housing is maintain owner-occupancy as the prevailing form of habitation. Action required by the Town would require a comprehensive study that would identify trends in our population, i.e. household configuration, aging of the population and income trends on housing supply and demand. Additionally a review process to insure regular maintenance and improvements to property are fully supported and not penalized by significant tax increases.

The draft plan suggests some diversity in housing types. Studies have confirmed that in recent years there has been an exodus of retirees from the Sun Belt to live their lives near their roots and near family. Action required for this phenomenon would be altering the zoning map to identify measures to allow additional multi-family developments.

Fourth as a major item of the draft plan is develop policies for non-residential growth both new and existing. Town policy would accept appropriate and beneficial new non-residential activity and to promote and encourage upgrading of older non-residential activities (property). The Town will continue to pursue quality job opportunities through new projects and redeveloped parcels that compliment existing businesses but not create additional traffic pressures on existing streets. It is the Town's policy to over an extended time period eliminate non-conforming uses. It must be understood by the Town's citizenry that all existing non-conforming non-residential businesses will be grandfathered in concerning any Town Zoning or Town Code revisions. In this vain the Town Code would be revised to include non-conforming uses.

To accomplish these goals the Town would take action to establish zoning regulations affecting non-residential development, i.e. site plan review regulations and requirements which would include signage regulations in the zoning ordinance. Additionally better regulate the development of all automobile related businesses, automobile repair and used cars sales. Other actions would include conducting a comprehensive review and update of the zoning ordinance and map to define which districts will allow automobile related businesses. And develop a town permitting process for all used car and automobile facilities.

Fifth item on the draft plan addressed is the Town's natural resources with goals that would include creating low density land use buffers at the boundaries of sensitive natural resources. It was noted at this meeting that the Town of West Monroe has more documented wet lands than any other Oswego County township. It was also noted that much of the natural resource land within our Town borders is state owned and under the jurisdiction of the DEC. A goal of the draft plan is to work with the DEC to develop recreational opportunities where permitted.

Sixth item on the draft plan to be addressed is traffic and transportation with the understanding that increased traffic on regional and local roads will occur as a byproduct of expansion of West Monroe. A high priority goal would be to develop a highway system with an integrated network of local, collector, and arterial streets to encourage

traffic movement and eliminate points of conflicts or delay. Several goals are within the plan to address this action plan including creating Town Subdivision Regulations to require connectivity between neighboring subdivisions wherever possible. Additionally seek assistance from appropriate elected officials to identify and secure federal highway funds. And require developers to complete reasonable off-site mitigation where the new project impacts the highway system, i. e access parallel roads. Included in this transportation goal is a provision for the Town to develop systems that can safely accommodate pedestrians and bicycles as well as automobiles on local streets.

Seventh item on the draft plan covers Recreational; the Town is very aware the increased interest in off road recreational vehicles and the goal is to address the concern and potential conflicts between landowners and off road recreational vehicles. Action required for this goal is identify suitable areas in the Town for these activities. And work with state and local organizations to implement policies aimed at furthering recreational activities. Recreational goals also include recognizing the need for a permanent Town Park designed for multiple uses and at a location free from vandalism.

West Monroe residents must realize this is a very rough draft plan that will be critiqued and refined as weeks go by. The entire rough draft plan is listed on the Town web site at [www.townofwestmonroe-ny.us](http://www.townofwestmonroe-ny.us), residents are urged to read it and make comments to the email address provided. Fine tuning of the draft plan will occur during future meetings of the Master Plan Committee, residents are urged to attend and make comments. The next scheduled meeting will be Tuesday March 17<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 P.M. at the West Monroe Town Hall.