**Meeting Summary**

**March 19th, 2025** | **9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

**The purpose of this meeting is for the County Planning and Zoning Group to discuss recordkeeping, how different towns handle development review, processes and systems, successes and challenges, and discussing if there are opportunities for the County to assist municipalities.**

**The meeting began at 9 a.m. with brief introductions.**

**Matthew Smith asked the group a question about the clarity of the day to day processes and the systems that people have. There was a group consensus that the processes are not always clear and can be confusing. Some towns such as Johnsburg and Hague are still using hard copy paper filing, Lake George was using a very old system but is now using a newer software that had an upfront cost of approximately $26,000 and an $8,000 yearly fee. Also using an excel spreadsheet system to keep track of records and data.**

**People mentioned the historical records management was poor in some cases from confusing or vague records such as minutes to multi year gaps in records and data altogether. This is a huge challenge and having this data and the records is very important. Various municipalities are making progress in digitizing old paper records. This is an ongoing effort.**

**The group heard from Horicon that they had 16 different forms which was overwhelming administratively and they worked to consolidate those forms. The group also heard that being able to inform applicants what forms and information the County needs would be great. After applicants are done filling out town forms, they ask what the County needs and towns may not know so more clarity about that would be helpful.**

**Glens Falls is moving to a new software as well to better manage their records. Has been challenging to come into the position and refer to historical data as well as perform the day to day, trying to make improvements to the system. A point that was made is being able to know that other department heads have reviewed a document, so they have the ability to now send a document to department heads who must return with a signature that they reviewed the document.**

**Sara Frankenfeld discussed the possibility of having a system for data management and recordkeeping through using GIS. She talked about how there used to be a system in the early 2000’s where the County was a central**

**point for data management, and technology advancements making the program operating system obsolete and a high level of complexity for smaller towns were two factors that led to that program not being in use anymore. With technology advancements now, a system similar to that would be possible to set up with a lot more tools, information, and possibilities.**

**Matthew Smith then asked what everyone’s version of an ideal system looks like. Consistency and predictability were identified as two key parts of a successful system. Both applicants and staff benefit from having the processes be clear and easy to complete.**

**The group discussed what the program could look like, including the possibility of having drawn to scale features to make things streamlined for applicants and staff. The group discussed the information that could be useful for other positions such as assessors and sewer districts so that the program could work in concert for multiple offices in a single municipality.**

**The group talked about the wait time and high price for architectural and engineering drawings. Having the ability to draw to scale would be very convenient.**

**Minutes were immediately identified as a large undertaking for every municipality. It can take a person a few weeks to complete minutes due to the time-consuming nature of transcription. The quality of the recordings can also be a problem if the equipment is not able to record clearly. The group talked about using artificial intelligence software to transcribe which results in some editing but not word for word transcription reducing the time a bit that way. The group discussed the style of minutes, mainly summary vs verbatim minutes, and possible ways of making minutes easier and if there were opportunities for the County to assist.**

**Matthew Smith and Sara Frankenfeld then introduced two new maps. These maps were developed as part of the Housing Strategy to help show development and housing development over the past few years. The first map is a map of all single family and two-family development in Warren County since 2020. The purpose of the map is to visualize where and when development is taking place in Warren County. Each of the highlighted parcels has parcel information attached to provide additional data. Some of the data provided includes Year Built, Full Market Value, Acres, Bedrooms, Bathrooms, Square footage, Owner, Mailing Address, and the Tax Map Number. There is also County and town specific data such as Median Full Value, Median Square Feet, and total parcels developed. This data can be**

**filtered by town and year. The group said that this tool would be useful for understanding development in their municipality and if combined with other data for other departments such as assessors and building codes, it could be an all in one tool for assisting in planning and permitting processes.**

**The other map introduced was a Multi-Family Housing map which shows three family or larger development within the County. The map is essentially the same as the previous map however the data is slightly different. For this map, there is a timeline to show what stage the project is in, the architectural drawing plans of the building/s, the developer, total number of units, number of affordable units, and a description of the project. Like the previous map, tracking multifamily housing is part of our Housing Strategy. It provides us with data points for better understanding the challenges of building multifamily housing such as how long it takes to build from first introduction at a planning board until construction is complete, as well as any variances needed to be able to construct a multifamily housing project. This is important to understand the housing pressures and availability of multifamily units so Warren County can better address the housing crisis and ensure that people can find and afford housing in Warren County.**

**There was positive feedback from the group saying that the maps would be useful to municipalities so they are now available.**

**Scattered Residential Development Map:** <https://warrencountyny.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/a81f0cd01c64475eb0d1d5b80132dbb0>

**Multifamily Housing Pipeline:** <https://warrencountyny.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/12bb31c1add8473ca6a52f582c0b0c16>

**If you see anything missing, wrong, or needs updating, then please let us know! Any additional information provided by municipal planning staff would be greatly appreciated.**

**The County Planning Department will be maintaining these maps monthly to keep an up to date picture of the development of housing within Warren County.**

**The group discussed the possibility of having a similar map that could be used by staff for historical development data such as previous permits, variances, and other data. There was interest in a system like that.**

**The timeframe for a system if there is support by Municipal Planning and Zoning staff would be at least a year. A few towns volunteered to test a possible system to see how it would work and improve their day to day functions.**

**Next Steps:**

* **WCPD to further explore options to coordinate planning/permitting processes.**
* **WCPD to explore opportunities to address challenges associated with complying with NYS requirements for meeting minutes.**
* **WCPD to develop a survey to evaluate municipal planning, zoning, and code enforcement needs (technology, coordination, etc.)**

**The meeting ended at 10:30 a.m.**