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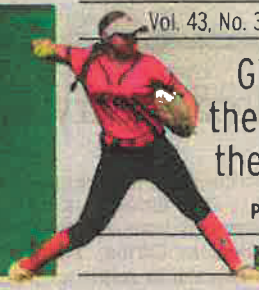

Giving the Devils their due

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Montgomery & Crawford residents discuss warehouses

By JARED CASTAÑEDA
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Over the last few months, numerous Crawford residents have raised concerns and criticisms toward Avion Enterprises' two-warehouse proposal for Route 17K, as discussed during the town's May and June planning board meetings. Most residents who live near the project site expressed frustration with the proposal, and they questioned whether or not their voice will affect the outcome of these warehouses.

Residents Protecting Montgomery, a neighboring organization that has experienced similar projects, lent a helping hand to these residents on Thursday, July 18 during a meeting in Benedict Farm Park. Throughout the evening, the group's chairs gave advice on planning processes and how Crawford residents can engage large-scale projects like Avion Enterprises' warehouses.

Residents Protecting Montgomery

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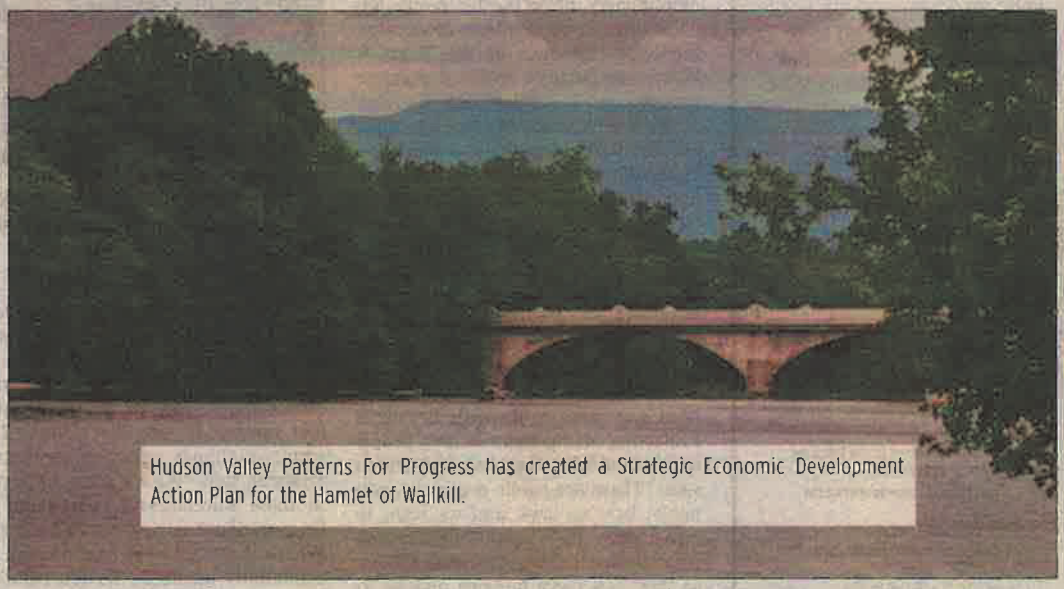
Wallkill's revitalization

Pattern report offers a plan for the future



Hudson Valley Patterns For Progress has created a Strategic Economic Development Action Plan for the Hamlet of Wallkill.

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In 2023, the Town of Shawangunk secured $50,000 from New York State's Strategic and Feasibility Grant, providing ample funding for revitalizing the Hamlet of Wallkill. Flash forward to Friday, July 18, and the town received a Strategic Economic Development Action Plan, an extensive blueprint comprising steps and recommendations for tackling the hamlet's most desirable projects.

As part of the grant process, the town teamed up with Hudson Valley Patterns for Progress, a nonprofit organization that helps municipalities achieve their development goals. Throughout late 2024, PFP collected feedback from residents and stakeholders during Weekend at Wallkill, through an online survey, and at a community visioning workshop. Between these three interactions, participants shared their vision of Wallkill, the hamlet's strengths and weaknesses, and projects they wanted to see implemented.

Using the town's comprehensive

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Shawangunk receives SEDAP from Hudson Valley Patterns For Progress

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plan and community input, PFP created a 53-page SEDAP for the hamlet, overloaded with insightful findings and strategies. This plan summarizes stakeholders' feedback, describes crucial assets in Wallkill, and suggests numerous actions for transforming the hamlet.

Wallkill's SEDAP outlines five core goals toward revitalization: improve synergy between the hamlet and rail trail, revamp the hamlet's look and feel, expand housing opportunities, refine the town's planning and development process, and increase downtown foot traffic. The plan describes several key locations and potential projects in the hamlet, and how they could be improved using the stakeholders' ideas. These assets included the following:

a. Town Hall Annex: Many residents asserted that the town hall annex could be utilized better with new purposes. They suggested that the annex contain more community-base uses, synergize with Garrison Park, offer flexible business spaces, or become the hamlet's new police station.

b. Garrison Park: Most residents agreed that Garrison Park is a major asset in the hamlet, boasting a great location and ample foot traffic, but it could be even better. Projects for the park mainly focused on improvements to safety, shading from harsh sunlight, and playground equipment.

c. Police Station: Numerous residents suggested that the current police station be repurposed for a different use, especially given its proximity to the rail trail and downtown Wallkill. Some ideas included turning the property into an expanded rail trail entrance, a walk-in eatery, a coffee shop or cafe, and a "gateway" building for businesses.

d. Rail Trail: Similar to Garrison Park, residents felt that the hamlet's rail trail is a huge asset for the hamlet, brimming with untapped potential. They requested that the trail receive new signage, additional connectors, and more upkeep.

e. Popp Memorial Park: While residents enjoy the park's pavilion and proximity to the Wallkill River, they hope to see the space enhanced further. Their project wish list included a boat launch, improvements to the Wallkill Riverwalk, and a farmers market.

f. Business District: Residents expressed frustration with business in the hamlet, especially in the Wallkill Avenue business district. Residents want the town to expand local business networking and support, foster a business-friendly reputation, implement businesses that address residents' needs, and attract more diversified businesses like a movie theater or bowling alley.

With these ideas in mind, how should the town move forward with Wallkill? Near the end of the hamlet's SEDAP, PFP included a three-year strategic implementation plan, listing various actions that the town should take. This plan went as followed:

a. For the first two years, the town should prioritize easier, smaller actions that lay the groundwork for bigger projects. PFP recommended the town to update its zoning code, seek out pro-housing initiatives, apply for more grants, and focus on improvements to the hamlet's parks.

b. For year three, the town should maintain its momentum and build upon the previous actions. PFP recommended the town further update its zoning, establish a downtown facade improvement program, focus on the rail trail, and apply for the New York Forward grant.

c. For year four, the town should focus on improving the rail trail, barring that it received grant funding to do so. PFPalso recommended wayfinding signage throughout the hamlet, providing visitors with information on local hot spots.

For more information on Wallkill's SEDAP, check out the full plan atpattern-for-progress.org/portfolio/wallkillsedap/.

The report identifies points of interest in the hamlet.