

**Landmarks Preservation Commission
Responses to BFJ Planning Questionnaire for Comprehensive Plan Update**

For Noah Levine, AICP, PP
Associate Principal

Overview: Brief overview of your committee including how often you meet.

The LPC consists of seven members appointed by the Town Board and is charged with implementation of Chapter 241 of Town Code. It meets monthly and is responsible for designating town landmarks and historic districts as well as ensuring compliance with code regulations for structures so designated. We also work closely with the ARB in reviewing projects in the downtown area, which is also a town-designated historic district.

Recent Projects/Actions: Provide an overview of significant actions or projects you have worked on in the past 10 years (if applicable).

Since completion of the current Master Plan in 2003, the Landmarks Preservation has been instrumental in setting up the following extensive historic districts, as recommended in Policy 5.4J of the current Comp Plan:

	Historic Resources	Year
Downtown Riverhead Historic District	219	2006
Jamesport Hamlet Historic District	36	2006
South Jamesport Historic District	78	2006
Wading River Historic District	40	2008

We have also created two extensive National Register Historic Districts:

National Register of Historic Places: Districts

		Historic Resources	Year
Riverhead Main Street District	(included in town's Downtown district)	36	2012
Ostrander & Second	(All but 8 included in town's Downtown district)	129	2017

We have designated 25 more historic resources as individual town landmarks, bringing the total number of individually designated historic resources to 62. We have assisted in the designation of 4 additional National Register sites, bringing that total to 14 in the town. Altogether we believe approximately 400 resources are either in town designated

historic districts or individually designated landmarks or both. Our current National Register districts include approximately 175 contributing resources.

We attempted to create an extensive National Register Historic District extending along Main Road in the hamlets of Aquebogue, Jamesport and Laurel, including parts of Southold Town in the hamlet of Laurel. The proposed district encompassed about 240 historic resources. Unfortunately, we were forced to withdraw the nomination because of vocal opposition, in part caused by the SHPO requirement that a portion of Southold Town be included. However, the district did receive SHPO designation as qualifying for National Register designation, and presumably bringing the additional review requirements that go with that designation – but not the benefits such as tax credits for work on historic residences.

We have instituted a 10-year tax abatement for increases in assessed value caused by historic preservation renovations.

In 2008 we published a booklet “Wood, Brick and Stone” with walking and driving tours of downtown Riverhead.

Another LPC initiative, we inaugurated a Downtown Riverhead Historic Trail in 2022 that is enabled by QR codes and also available virtually on the town and BID websites.

In 2022 we also dedicated an historic marker for the Bell Town Heritage Area, celebrating the town’s heritage of Black communities founded by people who came here in the Great Migration.

As recommended by Policy 5.3A and 5.4A of the current plan, we have prepared a Survey of Historic Resources in Riverhead. It currently has 816 resources, but needs to be updated to include all resources identified in the four town historic districts as well as identified in the proposed Main Road National Register district. It also needs to be edited to include current addresses in parts of the town where these were changed about 25 years ago. Perhaps the most critical part here are historic resources not included in current districts!

As suggested by Policy 5.4C, the LPC has developed a set of design guidelines for landmarks and historic districts. This is available on the LPC section of the town’s website.

Issues: Overview of issues of concern as it relates to your committee.

- Lack of enabling legislation to protect the Sound Avenue Scenic and Historic Corridor created by the state legislature and town board in 1976.
- Lack of protection for historic resources on the Main Road corridor in Aquebogue, Jamesport and Laurel.

Priorities: Overview of major priorities your committee has for the Comprehensive Plan (over the next 10 years).

- Adoption of Pattern Book for downtown.
- Creation of adequate parking for downtown to take away pressure for demolition of historic structures.
- Completion of the Main Road National Register District (we need help figuring out how convince SHPO to accept a district that is within town boundaries)
- Other possible National Register districts:
 - Sound Avenue
 - Polish Town (could also be designated a Town Heritage Area)
 - South Jamesport
 - Jamesport Camp Grounds

Other Considerations: Other issues or opportunities the Town should consider for the Comprehensive Plan.

- It is important that the Comp Plan continue to incorporate a recommendation for flexibility in interpretation of zoning rules when historic preservation is at stake, as stated in current Policy 5.4D.
- A current list of incentives for historic preservation is attached. What other incentives can be made available?
- Is Certified Local Government (CLG) status worth pursuing, as currently recommended in Policy 5.3A and 5.4I?
- To prevent “demolition by neglect: In town historic districts and for town landmarks, add a code requirement that requires basic maintenance of exteriors and repair of any major structural problems.
- Whenever owners violate Landmarks Code requirements, formal violation notices should be issued by the town.
- The LPC maintains a “Watch List” of threatened buildings. A number of buildings previously on the list have in fact been restored, in part as the result of LPC efforts. The current list includes:
 - 178 Main Road (corner of 105)
 - 1117 Main Road (Leslie Alexander):
 - 57 South Jamesport Avenue (Albert Young House):
 - 1368 Sound Avenue (Irving Hulse House)
 - Half Hollow Barn
- Currently penalties for not complying with historic preservation code are minimal and need to be strengthened.

- Strengthen architectural guidelines in sensitive areas, especially the Main Road and Sound Avenue corridors, to make sure new construction is compatible with the area's rural and historic character. Make the guidelines standards rather than voluntary guidelines. Perhaps a "mini pattern book" is appropriate defining what "rural character" is in terms of massing, size, roof slope, building arrangement, etc. Consider official designations of additional scenic and historic corridors with underlying regulations, as recommended in Policy 5.5B and 5.5C of the current plan.
- Whenever LPC and ARB review new construction in historic districts, add a code requirement for submission of elevations showing adjacent structures and properties.
- Require notification of LPC with 40-day window for any demolition permit that involves structures more than 50 years old. While this would not prevent demolitions of historic resources not designated individually or in districts, it would give the Commission time to perhaps discuss alternatives and incentives with the property owner. Something similar is suggested in Policy 5.4B of the current Comp Plan.
- The town history in the plan needs to be edited to include the wave of Irish, Polish, Black, Hispanic and other immigrant groups that have transformed the town in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.
- Town should provide appropriate recognition and interpretative signage for the Sharper's Hill archaeological site in Jamesport/
- Designation of additional resources related to the town's Black history.
- We note that Policy 5.1E in the current Comp Plan suggests design standards and guidelines for subdivisions to protect scenic views. We believe ARB review should be required to facilitate this goal.

Due April 30