**Dena M. Steele’s comments on the**

**Town of Tuxedo Comprehensive Plan Update Draft**

**February 13, 2017**

Thank you to the Superintendent and the Council for moving ahead with the much needed update of the Town Comprehensive Plan.

My following observations are meant to be constructive not critical contributions to the process of the Town having a coherent vision and plan, capitalizing on its assets, pursuing realistic goals based on approaches and methodologies which anticipate how people will work, shop and live in the future not how in the past.

Before proceeding, two comments on this process and the draft available to residents: a redlined copy highlighting the changes would have been extremely helpful and I will not reference in my oral comments the page numbers relating to the comment.

p. 2- Early in the draft, building community is mentioned as a goal using “social programs and physical linkages” : what about electronic connections such as FrontPorchForum.com, streaming of Town events, resources on screens in public locations, livestreaming of town meetings in neighborhood using the fire stations perhaps, dynamic (easy to update) town website promoting business and recreational opportunities?

p.6-I am troubled by the outdated marketing reports that the “Update” appears to rely on. For example, patterns in shopping behavior have changed dramatically over the last decade making an emphasis on physical retail space of questionable value. Do we understand why our commercial/light industry properties such as International Paper and Xicom did not sustain or have current appeal to research and office users?

p.8-I am not sure of the logic that the 15B interchange will result in a pedestrian friendly hamlet. A 15B interchange will encourage more cars not less. A committed recognition and promotion of the Hamlet as a mass transportation center will result in a pedestrian friendly hamlet. The more we make our downtown area accessible for residences, services and transportation the more valuable ratables the Town will develop. One only has to stand outside the Beacon train station to see the millennials pour off the train and walk to Dia and other local attractions or what is being proposed around the Harriman train station. The Orange County Planning Department has repeatedly stated the benefit of “clustering” of commercial, residential development around transportation centers. The Hamlet historically has meen a multi use place and once again the Tuxedo should take advantage of promoting our mass transit access and the multi use nature of our town center.

p.9-The Ramapo River has indeed been inadequately appreciated and protected. Its watershed and floodplains have been abused and often subject to potential even greater abuse through highly inappropriate development. I welcome the short term actions listed in Section X-Implementation and would suggest that the Town take a Ramapo watershed approach to updating stormwater runoff management, flood manangement, zoning, and recreation. For example, the watershed should have vegetated protective buffers around all body of waters. The Draft Watershed Design Guide: Best Practices for the Hudson Valley, 2014, Published by the Orange County Planning Dept. and Regional Plan Associates, suggests vegetative buffers of not less then 50’. Any recreational infrastructure such as paths, fishing access should not be implemented that compromises the stewardship of the watershed and without follow up programs with Trout Unlimited, NY/NJ Trail Conference or other committed groups to introduce residents and visitors to the many appropriate ways to enjoy the Ramapo River and its watershed being arranged and promoted. Also, has an update been done on the Tuxedo Lake watershed? After the Four Corner fish kill off, it appeared that the Tuxedo Lake watershed included the wetlands near the Highway Department and old recycling facilities.

p.49-Is the removal of the Gaming Overlay Zoning District contemplated? If not, why not?

P.11- Why is there no mention of restoration of ski facilities or emphasis on year round enjoyment of the natural surrounds? Any Exploration of skating rink?

p. 57 What is the “new Town Park” mentioned on p.57? Quarry Mine Field? Power Plant? What are the plans under consideration for QMF other then possible a solar panel field, Power Plant?

P.74- Is the Recycling Center mentioned on p. 74 the mulching operation? Why is the Town not promoting more environmentally appropriate composting and on site mulching and stop providing a “service” that is not good stewardship and a waste of municipal resources?

Does the Town have an effective approach to reducing the attraction of Tuxedo for dumping operations?

p.74-Who would manage Tuxedo Farm trail permitting system? Would Tuxedo residents be required to have/purchase a permit?

p.92-I wholeheartedly support the creation of an Environmental Management Council

p.93and 96- The introduction of a jitney service should not be limited to seniors but with a view of establishing service to allow everyone, especially seniors, young people, visitors and residents to access recreational, transportation, and services resources without adding to increased traffic.

Has any consideration been given to promoting more “festivals” such as Octoberfest, use of food trucks until more permanent establishments can be developed?