

SECTION VIII
LOCAL COMMITMENT

VIII. LOCAL COMMITMENT

From the inception of the LWRP, it was recognized that involvement and commitment by both local officials and citizens was essential to the development of an effective program and to carrying out the various tasks to achieve its implementation. The program to achieve local commitment is described below:

A. Waterfront Advisory Committee

The first action taken by the Village Board following approval of the LWRP planning grant was the appointment of a Waterfront Advisory Committee. The Committee of 13 members (see Exhibit C) includes former members of the Village Board, members of business, civic, planning and environmental groups, and residents of the waterfront area. Also appointed were two representatives from the Town of Saugerties, one of whom was elected chairman of the Committee.

The Committee was assigned major responsibility for guiding and developing the program. Its first task was selection of a planning consultant. During the remainder of the planning period the Committee met at least once a month, and often more frequently, to discuss policy, consider alternative approaches and recommend specific actions. The Committee has endorsed the program developed herein and recommended to the Village Board that it be adopted.

B. Public Meetings

The general public has been involved in the planning process in two ways - through response to a questionnaire (discussed below) and through participation in two public meetings. The first meeting was held at the start of the program to determine public concerns, to explain the purpose of the program and its potential benefits and to set forth the schedule and procedures to be followed. The second meeting was held at a point when the policies had been established and a program determined but when modifications were still possible based on public response. A final public meeting will be held prior to approval by the Village Board.

C. Questionnaire

In order to provide an opportunity for members of the community to express their opinion on a variety of issues related to the waterfront, a questionnaire was distributed during the week of October 2, 1983. The questionnaire was delivered to Village residents in the Sunday Penny Saver, distributed to students in the Cahill School to be taken home, printed in the Old Dutch Post Star and made available at the Village offices. By the end of October, exactly 100 forms had been returned.

Set forth below is a summary of the most significant findings from the questionnaire returns.

- * Twenty-two percent of the respondents live within the defined Waterfront Revitalization area; 52 percent elsewhere in the Village; and 25 percent outside the Village.
- * Less than half the respondents currently use the waterfront, other than to "enjoy the view." About one-third use it for fishing, boating or swimming (many for more than one activity).
- * Over 90 percent of the respondents favored more activity on the waterfront and public access to the water.
- * Traffic congestion and money were seen as the biggest obstacles to developing waterfront access.
- * Over half the respondents believed that pollution control had the highest priority for waterfront improvements. No other choice for first priority was indicated by more than 25 percent of the respondents.
- * Seventy-five percent favored mini-parks on the waterfront and 55 percent favored restaurants among non-water related uses.
- * Among water related uses, boating, fishing, sailing, skating, river access and picnicking were favored by at least half of the respondents. Scenic and walking tours also had considerable support.
- * Ninety-five percent of those who responded indicated they would make use of a waterfront park if one were established.
- * Over 60 percent favored restoration of underutilized or deteriorated buildings; only one-third thought they should be razed.
- * Virtually all respondents favored saving the lighthouse and preserving the shell as a landmark even if it cannot be restored. The C.A. Lynch Firehouse and Hill Street School also received support for restoration from at least half the respondents.
- * Over 90 percent favored use of legal means to correct building violations and nearly 75 percent favored creation of an historic district on the Southside.
- * Opinion was equally divided on abolishing the Southside industrial zone completely; but 90 percent favored restricting industries that create noise, air or water pollution.

- * Over 85 percent preferred retention of low density development on the Hudson River waterfront.
- * Sixty percent objected to additional commercial zoning on the Southside.
- * Over 60 percent assigned top priority to public works projects involving new sewers or correcting sewer problems.
- * Over 70 percent favored encouraging water related nonresidential uses on Ferry Street; opinion was evenly divided for such uses on Lighthouse Drive.

D. Village Board Briefings

The Mayor and Village Board have followed the activities of the Waterfront Advisory Committee and the preparation of the LWRP throughout the planning period. The Mayor is the local official responsible for the preparation of the program and has attended most Advisory Committee meetings as well as attending to many administrative functions.

The Village Board received copies of all preliminary reports and memoranda and was provided with several briefing sessions. Board members also attended both public meetings as well as a special joint meeting with the Advisory Committee at which time the Committee transmitted its recommendations. As a result, the Board has had an opportunity to express its concerns and discuss the rationale for elements of the plan.