

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Town of Arietta Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

FROM: Laberge Group

DATE: October 22, 2008

RE: **ASSETS AND LIABILITIES,  
SUMMARY RESULTS FROM THE FIRST COMMUNITY WORKSHOP**

---

This report summarizes the findings of the first community workshop held at the Arietta Town Hall on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008. A group of approximately 20 citizens attended the session, worked in two large groups, and provided insights and perspectives on the assets and liabilities of the community.

Both groups expressed appreciation for Piseco Lake, citing it as a major asset for the Town and all residents. The Lake received the highest marks from both groups, with over half of participants ranking it as the Town's biggest asset. The quality of the citizens and the sense of community also ranked as a major asset for the Town. Other assets included the undeveloped forest, mountains, lakefront property, and trails. Outdoor activities were also repeatedly ranked as important to the community, such as fishing, hiking, snowmobiling, and hunting.

When asked to provide solutions, or methods to enhance the assets of the Town, quality control of the Piseco Lake water was consistently discussed as an important topic of concern. Residents felt that it was important to protect and continue improving the water quality of the Lake, so as to preserve this as an asset. Concern was also voiced over the Town's ability to provide enough affordable housing for the Town's aging residents. Providing quality places to live was viewed as extremely important in being able to preserve the small town atmosphere of Arietta.

The groups then focused on liabilities, or the negative attributes of the Town. Zoning ranked as the highest liability amongst Town residents. Residents felt that Adirondack Park Agency (APA) regulations were too restrictive and governed too many building types, including back yard sheds. Several attendees also mentioned the lack of descent employment as a reason for families to move away, or not to move to Arietta originally. Health care was also a major issue, raising concern in regards to location of nearest hospital, and lack of general health practitioners, such as dentists, doctors, and pediatricians.

Finally the groups identified strategies for combating the liabilities facing the Town of Arietta. Attendees recommended amending the zoning laws to be more transparent and more consistent. This was viewed as a step towards easing tension between residents and the APA. Also potentially using Town funds to develop incentive packages for marketing towards new businesses looking to locate in Arietta might create better employment opportunities for working families. In addressing the lack of health care opportunities in the Town, participants

recommended the use of Town owned transportation, such as a van or bus to assist with distance travel to medical facilities.

### **Workshop Results**

Participants were broken into two large groups of approximately ten persons. Each group contained a diverse range of residents, property owners, and stakeholders. Groups created lists of assets and liabilities associated with the Town of Arietta and each individual placed a marker next to the topic of importance to them. Based on number of markers, the topics were ranked and the groups then brainstormed on strategies to improve or enhance the Town's assets and to eliminate the liabilities.

### **Table #1**

#### **Assets**

- The Lake – 4
- Quality of the Residents – 2
- Sense of Community and Belonging – 1
- Natural Environment – 1
- Relative Isolation – 1
- The Airport
- The Adirondack Community Education Center (Computer, School, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Library, Physical Fitness Center)
- Small Community Atmosphere
- The Mountains and Forest Lands
- Proximity of Fire, and Safety Services
- Volunteerism
- Roads and Highway
- Sanitation Services
- A Four Season Community
- Low Taxes
- Low Crime Rate
- Mom and Pop Local Business Operation
- Outdoor Recreation (Hiking, Snowmobile, etc.)
- Multi-generation Seasonal Residents
- Large Tourist Population
- Full Spectrum of Housing
- Youth Swim and Skiing Programs
- Museum and Historical Society
- Community Hall
- Three State Campsites
- Point on the Lake Placid-Northville Trail and Trail 8
- Community Friendly Businesses
- Active Fish and Game Clubs

#### **Solutions**

- The Lake:
  - A Lake Association and/or Collaboration Amongst Other Lake Protection Groups (i.e. Fish and Game Clubs)

- Address Duck Itch More Aggressively
  - Explore the Feasibility of Town Access to the Lake (May Tie to Airport Plan)
- Quality of the Residents:
  - Availability of Employment
  - Affordable Housing

### **Liabilities**

- Lack of Employment Opportunities –2
- Distance to Nearest Hospital – 2
- State and Regional Regulations – 2
- Lack of Senior Housing/Assisted Living – 1
- Too Many Tourists (At Certain Times) – 1
- Lack of Cell Service – 1
- Lack of Tourist Accommodations
- Distance to Higher Education
- Lack of Available Building Lots
- Uneven Availability of High Speed Communication Services
- National Grid's Service to the Area
- Lack of Public Transportation
- Lack of Public Education Regarding the Value of the Airport and the Role of the Fish and Game Club in Resource Management
- Black Flu Season and Other Biking Flies
- Lack of Variety of Services (i.e. Doctor, Pharmacy, etc.)
- Lack of Organized Youth Activities
- Lack of Younger Volunteers
- Try to Profitably Run a Business in Five Month Season
- No Larger Business/Employers that Offer Benefit Packages
- No Cable Television
- No Natural Gas
- Uneven Electrical Coverage (i.e. Route 10)
- Lack of Alternative Energy Resources (Due to the Rules Established by the Adirondack Park Agency)

### **Solutions**

- Lack of Employment Opportunities
  - Maximize Opportunities for Telecommuting
  - Enhanced/Targeted Employment Opportunities
  - Incentives for Economic/Small Business Development
- Distance to Nearest Hospital
  - Medical Flights from Arietta Airport
  - Paid EMTs (Basic and Advanced)
  - Clinic Space Availability for Various Medical Specialists
  - Transportation for Non-Emergency Medical Services
- State and Regional Regulations
  - Encourage a Conduit to the Power Structure
  - Limit Unfunded Mandates
  - Regional Approach to Lobbying Efforts
  - Re-Elect Supervisor Rick Wilt
- Lack of Senior Housing/Assisted Living

- Organized Volunteer Services to Assist and Check on Seniors
- Allow Portion of Town Land Use to be Allocated for Senior Housing
- Town Needs to Acquire Land
- Lobby for Change in Federal/State Regulations Regarding Restrictions on Senior Housing Units
- Too Many Tourists (At Certain Times)
  - Lack of Respect for Local Residents and Practices (Perhaps Education of Tourists on Local History to Gain Appreciation)
- Lack of Cell Service
  - Lobby for Regulatory Change

## **Table #2**

### **Assets**

- The Lake – 6
- Woods – 2
- Top Grade Schools – 1
- Workforce – 1
- Airport
- Security/Law Enforcement
- Fire
- Ambulance
- Recreational
- Good Roads/Maintained Well
- Camp Sites
- Fireworks
- Trailer Parks
- Reasonable Taxes
- Friendly Citizens
- Four Season Climate
- Tourism
- Volunteers
- Transfer Station/Atmosphere

### **Solutions**

- The Lake
  - Quality of Water, Need Control
  - Invasive Species
  - Stock Lake with Fish
  - Get Rid of Dam (Control Lake Water Level)
  - Town Beach
  - Snowmobile Lake Access
- The Woods
  - State Land Ownership
  - Handicap Access
  - Less Restrictive Trail Access
  - Bike Trail
  - Improved Maintenance of State Trails
  - Establish Trail Head Lean-To

- Top Grade Schools
  - More Children/More Young Families
- Workforce
  - Improve Infrastructure and Technology
  - Affordable housing (Build Housing for Households with 30k – 60k Incomes)
  - Create Business Opportunities

### **Liabilities**

- Too Restrictive Zoning – 3
- Inadequate Recreational Activities for Families – 2
- No Cell Coverage/ Expand Existing Infrastructure – 1
- Health Care – 1
- APA – 1
- Power/Unreliable – 1
- Youth Doesn't Return to Live and Work in Arietta – 1
- Woods
- Inconsistent Zoning
- Not Enough Tourist Accommodations
- Lack of Internet Access
- Private Phone Company
- Winter seasonal Parking
- Lack of Public Transportation
- More Utilization of Community/Town Hall
- Lack of Population
- Aged Workforce

### **Solutions**

- Restrictive/Inconsistent Zoning
  - Clarification
  - Specificity
  - Age Sensitive Zoning (Young Families have Different Needs than Seniors)
  - Increase Flexibility for Home Improvements
  - Let Common Sense Prevail
  - Zoning and Planning Need to be More Helpful
  - Planning and Zoning Checklist
  - More Transparent
- Inadequate Recreational Activities for Families
  - Municipal Funds for Family/Adult Recreation
  - Movies, Dances
- Health Care
  - Transportation
  - Senior Housing
  - Transportation to Public Health
  - Publication of Health Care/Clinics
  - Better Access to Information