Preamble for Code Changes

The Town of DeWitt has unique locational and demographic assets which make its limited commercial areas exceedingly attractive for development. The Town has long been committed to assuring the highest possible quality of commercial development and relates that quality of development to the quality of life. With the 2017 reaffirmation and amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, the Town has incorporated some of the basic tenets of the international movement of "New Urbanism". New Urbanism replaces automobile-centric development with pedestrian-oriented, human-scale development.

In March of 2016, the Planning Board created a codes committee to investigate how New Urbanism could be further incorporated into the Town Zoning Code. The committee researched national model ordinances and numerous local ordinances across the county. In addition the committee found causes for concern regarding development within the Town, which became primary items to be addressed:

- Despite some recent high-quality projects, the Town remains an automobile-centric place where goods and services are disconnected from residential neighborhoods;
- Some projects still consist of buildings located as islands in seas of parking, disconnected from pedestrian activity along major streets;
- Empty nesters find there are few walkable communities within DeWitt;
- Downtown Syracuse has actively marketed itself as a pedestrian-centric, mixed-use center, now with 1900 apartments and 3600 residents;
- Office parks within DeWitt have lost some major tenants to Downtown, where it is easier to attract younger employees looking for a more exciting environment; and
- The Zoning Code does not currently easily provide for the creation of mixed-use development which is vital to the successful transformation of antiquated retail and office developments.

Accordingly, the codes committee recommended a three-prong approach to amend the Zoning Code, which was adopted by the Planning Board:

1. Incorporate New Urbanism-based Overarching Principles and Criteria into the Town's Design Guidelines, which would be applicable to every project within the non-residential zoning districts within the Town;
2. Designate Mixed-Use Village Overlay Districts which would provide for a voluntary optional path of development in the Town's commercial districts that encourage mixed-use developments with required residential use along with the allowable commercial uses;
3. Provide Mixed-Use Village Design Guidelines that would guide the architectural and landscape design when developers elect to build in areas within the Mixed-Use Village Overlay Districts.

With Regard to the matter of the Mixed-Use Village Overlay District, the Town of DeWitt Planning Board recommends the following summary of modifications to the Town of DeWitt Zoning Code:

- Strike and replace the existing definition of “Mixed Use” in 192-14 by replacing it with the provided definition;
- Add the Mixed-Use Village Overlay Districts(s) to the official Zoning Map;
- Incorporate the attached Design Guidelines for the Mixed-Use Village Overlay District; and
- Make changes in corresponding Code Section as presented.