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## Future of Sherman

### *Sherman holds a visionary workshop*

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**SHERMAN** — More than 50 residents of the greater Sherman area gathered in the village firehall on Tuesday, Oct. 1 to take the first step in planning the future of the municipality.

John Steinmetz and Robert Murphy, Jr., community planners for the engineering firm, Barton & Loguidice, led the first of several visionary workshops, planned by village officials. The ultimate purpose of these sessions is to help develop a comprehensive plan for the village.

"We are excited about getting started on this project. We're here to help you articulate a future for Sherman," Steinmetz said. "Our goal here is to facilitate your future . . . over the next ten to twenty years."



Photo by David Prenatt

**John Steinmetz (standing) and Robert Murphy of Barton & LoGuidice, led a visioning workshop for the people of the greater Sherman area.**

Murphy noted that Sherman's current comprehensive plan was created in 2006, and focused on the preservation and redevelopment of Main Street, but also set goals, such as providing assistance for businesses and

retaining and attracting young people to the area, he said.

Steinmetz then posed the question of why Sherman needed a new comprehensive plan. "Well, a lot has changed in 13 years." He cited technological changes,

such as the advent of smart phones and blu-ray players. Also, he noted that the trends in population and housing preferences have reversed themselves.

Furthermore, Steinmetz said, in 2006, baby boomers (those born between 1949 and 1964) were the most powerful group. Currently, however, the millennials (those born between 1982 and 2004) have become the most influential group in society. "Millennials have more spending power than any other age group," he said.

The demographics of Sherman village have changed in those 13 years, as well, Steinmetz said. Not only has the overall population aged, but the actual population has decreased from 775 to 680 persons.

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There are several benefits to creating a comprehensive plan, Steinmetz said. Basically, a plan promotes the health, safety and welfare of the public, he said. It provides a guide to decision-makers in a municipality, it can strengthen a village's position in a legal dispute, it serves to make the government more efficient and responsive, and, of course, it increases of acquiring funding, he said.

Steinmetz then presented a general timeline for the completion of a comprehensive plan for Sherman. During the fall of 2019, the firm will summarize data and create a community profile, as well as integrate input from the community, he said.

During the winter months, the final goals of

the plan will be solidified and the firm will draft an action plan. Finally, in spring of 2020, Barton & Loguidice will present a final action plan, which will be reviewed with the steering committee and then presented at a public hearing, he said.

"The role of the steering committee is to help us stay on track," Steinmetz said. He went on to say that the steering committee provides the work choice, tone and content for the plan. "The community is our sounding board to make sure the ideas we have are appropriate for Sherman," he said. Murphy added that "Steering committees have a very critical role in the process."

Steinmetz and Murphy then led participants through a community pref-

erence survey, which was designed to "determine community attitudes toward different types of development and investments," Steinmetz said. "The purpose is to get your preferences on a wide range of ideas."

Those attending then viewed 65 images of outdoor scenes in municipalities and rated each one on a scale of 1 to 9. the categories of the images they viewed included: streetscape and corridors, landscape and screening (using greenery to screen areas), residential development, and commercial development. "We use this as a starting point for conversation," Steinmetz said.

At the end of the evening, participants broke into two groups and considered four

questions. The first of these was "what do you like about living in Sherman?" the second was "what don't you like about living in Sherman?" the third question was "what opportunities are there for improvement?" the final question was "what threats to future development do you see?"

Murphy emphasized to participants that the first two questions deal with the current situation. However, the second two were forward-looking questions, dealing with the future of the village.

Participants came up with long lists of strengths and weaknesses. A primary strength listed was the school. A main threat cited to Sherman's future was the cost of living there and in New York State in general.