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## 6. Long-term Planning Considerations

The preceding section reviewed a number of goals and objectives and the specific actions that will help achieve them. The following section examines less detailed, longer-term goals that the Town should consider pursuing in order to preserve and strengthen the Town's rural character.

### 6.1. – Consider adoption of a zoning local law specific to Meredith's needs.

Zoning was originally intended to strictly separate incompatible land uses, primarily in dense urban areas. The intent was to keep industrial uses away from residential areas because industrial pollution often resulted in negative health effects in the surrounding living environments. Over time, however, the strict separation of land uses contributed to sprawl in suburbanizing areas where former farmland on the edges of cities was developed into geographically separated residential, commercial and light industrial uses. Within the past twenty years, however, zoning laws have been modernized to include a host of techniques that allow mixing of compatible land uses, clustering within subdivisions to maintain open space, planned unit developments, transfer of development rights, and the establishment of overlay zones to protect important natural features. If the agricultural economy in Meredith fails to keep pace with outside economic pressures, more farmland will be converted to non-agricultural uses. To protect itself from unfettered land conversion and unmanaged development, the Town will need as many sensible land use tools as possible. One of these tools could be zoning.

Several of the more rural towns in Delaware County already have effective zoning ordinances – Andes, Bovina and Franklin. These laws are not extremely restrictive; rather, they generally indicate where certain uses are preferred in a rural landscape. For example, commercial uses are generally sited along existing primary roads. Residential uses are generally located along secondary roads where lot size minimums are established as are setbacks and road frontage requirements. In fact, rural zoning ordinances often have only two or three general classifications - residential, general business and industrial (if desired). In those districts, various types of uses can be permitted or prohibited depending on what the Town desires.

The Town should seek grant funding from the Department of State Master Planning and Zoning Initiative award program to hire a consultant to draft a zoning regulation appropriate for the Town of Meredith. This law could also integrate the other land use tools the Town currently has like subdivision review, the cell tower law, and any future tools desired by the Town such as site plan review. The Planning Board, in partnership with the County Planning Department, would be responsible for hiring the consultant and reviewing the draft law. Any new zoning law is subject to public hearing but public input should also be obtained throughout the process to ensure

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the law preserves the rural landscape as the residents prefer. The Town Board would ultimately adopt the law.

## 6.2 – Local Economics

### **GOAL: Preserve the existing economic resources of the community, especially agriculture**

- Support and enact recommendations from the Delaware County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan (DCAFPP).

The County Board of Supervisors adopted the DCAFPP in 2000. It sets forth numerous recommendations to be used to protect agriculture and the natural resources of the County. In support of the Plan, Meredith should consider adopting Right-to-Farm local law. This law would further protect farmers and farming in the Town. As part of the marketing concepts offered in the DCAFPP, Meredith should locate and map active farms and include contact information on the Town website if farmers so desire.

- Encourage organic agriculture in Meredith.

Organic farming is a growth industry. For a variety of reasons, people are becoming more aware of where and how their food is produced and as a result many are turning to food that was produced locally and organically to make certain that it is safe to eat. Local farms in Meredith could help meet this growing demand by producing more products organically. Tying this production in with the regional marketing ideas from the Farmland Protection Plan would make sense. Organic farms could be recognized by the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) and could also sell shares locally in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operations.

- Support continued development of small and home-based businesses.

The Town can cost-effectively support the development of small businesses in several ways. First, a directory of local producers could be established that is similar to a 'yellow pages'. Including business contact information, what products are offered, etc., will allow easy local and regional distribution of this information. The same information could be included on the Town's website.

- Encourage second homeowners to relocate businesses to Meredith.

While many second homeowners are looking toward Meredith to vacation or retire, some may be interested in relocating a business, or a portion thereof, to the town. These businesses could eventually create new jobs with the right product or service

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directed at local and regional markets. On the other hand, the availability of high-speed Internet connections could allow a small publisher or software developer to relocate to Meredith and communicate and work electronically. Given Meredith's proximity to eastern markets and continued decentralization of new-economy jobs, such business relocation is a possibility.

### **6.3 – Watersheds**

#### **GOAL: Ensure the Town of Meredith is prepared for future challenges in the New York City Watershed and the Susquehanna/Chesapeake Bay Watershed**

- Support the Delaware County Action Plan (DCAP) by keeping abreast of the actions of regional bodies that address watershed issues and programs that affect the Town of Meredith.

DCAP programs were developed to enable the residents of Delaware County to better cope with New York City's watershed regulations. These programs are efficient and cost-effective and provide the dual benefits of better water quality and cost savings for the Town. When grievances arise between localities and watershed regulators, the regional watershed bodies like the Coalition of Watershed Towns are Meredith's most important tools to address these issues. While it is not critical to be involved in all the activities of these groups, Town officials must stay current with who these groups are and what they can do for aggrieved residents of Meredith.

### **6.4 – Historic Resources**

#### **GOAL: Preserve the historic resources of the community**

- Inventory historic resources of community, including those along the Catskill Turnpike, Meridale Farms, community and private cemeteries.

The rural and historic character of Meredith is something to be preserved. To enable preservation, the historic resources of the town need to be counted, mapped and assessed. While several sites in Meredith are on the State and Federal Registers of Historic Places, more may be eligible.

- Develop a map and driving tour of historic sites in Meredith and adjacent communities.

With an updated inventory of historic sites in Meredith, the Town should work with other localities with similar historical assets to develop a map and driving tour of the area. This map and tour would increase tourism locally and regionally.

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- Compile a resource library of publications that discuss the historic significance of the community.

## **6.5 – Recreation**

### **GOAL: Clearly identify recreational activities and promote them to benefit all potential participants**

- Inventory recreational opportunities in the community including snowmobile trails and hunting and fishing areas.

A simple inventory of recreational opportunities could be posted on the Town's website and could lead to increased tourism.

- Develop a park on the DEP-owned lake parcel on Waterman Road.

The lake is a unique natural feature within the Town of Meredith with definite potential for development as a day-use park. A partnership is suggested between the DEP and the Town to develop this area into a handicap-accessible day-use park for fishing and boating. Such a partnership would promote a greater level of trust between Meredith and the DEP and provide a beautiful area in which to recreate within the Town of Meredith. The parcel is quite close to both State Route 28 and County Route 14 and is no more than five miles from the Village of Delhi. Parking could be available on either side of Waterman Road or on the parcel itself on the former building site which is open and flat. That site could also be developed into a playground area with a shelter to be used for picnics or other small events. Similar partnerships exist in the Village of Margaretville and in the Town of Windham. The Planning Board and County Planning Department will pursue grant funding to design and create the park.