

## Valley Rock Inn restoration project promotes Sloatsburg revitalization

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*As restoration and repurposing of buildings continues apace, the Valley Rock Inn campus in Sloatsburg, NY has come into focus. Interior view of the Valley Rock Inn, showing the lawn off the porch of the new restaurant cantina.*

With its wall of landscaping along Route 17, Valley Rock Inn in Sloatsburg, NY, has quietly enclosed itself. But the restoration and repurposing of the Valley Rock campus continues apace as crews have been busily working on an assortment of outdoor projects, creating whole new landscaped spaces, including a large restaurant and porch, a stone and beam courtyard and new in-ground pool — just as revitalization in the wider Village has taken root.

It was barely three months back in mid-April that the Village of Sloatsburg board closed the books on a new Village Center (VC3) zone change that itself opens a new chapter for that slice of downtown Sloatsburg that borders Municipal Plaza, Mill Street and Route 17. Adopting a more Smart Transit-friendly parking approach, the Village's new zoning allows businesses in that narrow district breathing room in terms of parking.

Meanwhile, Michael Bruno's Sloatsburg efforts have resonated throughout New York and beyond. In late June, Bruno was feted at the Rainbow Room in Manhattan as the recipient of a Pillar of New York Award by the Preservation League of New York State. A signature award by the group, the acknowledgement puts Bruno, and Sloatsburg, in good company.

Bruno and his Valley Rock Inn effort also won a 2018 Pinnacle Award from the Rockland Business Association for advancing Tourism in Rockland County.

Those awards are part of the reason the Sloatsburg community is circulating in wider circles throughout Rockland, and beyond. The Village is percolating with revitalization, organic to the community, while involving municipal oversight and partnership at key pressure points. Add to the mix the near future Complete Streets improvement project along Route 17 (after the Rockland County Sewer District 1 sewer project is finally completed) and the upcoming Village Park and parking project along Mill Street and Municipal Plaza and you have real revitalization in Sloatsburg.

The Mill Street district will eventually present a host of inter-related leisure and tourism businesses, including the dean of the block, Characters Bar & Restaurant, the hustle and bustle of #trailtotap Seven Lakes Station, and eventually new edition Village Blend, where you'll be able to pop in for a cuppa joe or an ice cream.

Although anchored by Valley Rock Inn, the entire effort is driven by a re-imagined Sloatsburg village center that promotes smart transit, a pedestrian-friendly walkable downtown and positions Sloatsburg as a vital gateway to the surrounding parks.

To top off the recent momentum, Bruno's Tuxedo Hudson Company was awarded a \$1 million dollar Empire State Development grant this past December "to support the second phase of his business redevelopment along Route 17 in Tuxedo and Sloatsburg" that has included much of the work being done now.

Valley Rock Inn investment and development is a big bet on the future of Sloatsburg, which itself has been instrumental in the revitalization effort — from a Sloatsburg Revitalization Committee presentation to



the Department *Valley Rock Inn, Sloatsburg, NY.*

of Transportation Region 8 team that jump-started Complete Streets to the Village investing in a downtown park and parking.

Although it may feel slow going, with construction projects dotting Village streets, real revitalization is taking place, a genuine economic shift along the Route 17 that will eventually (hopefully) benefit the entire community. This is an important passage for the Village as it approaches its 90th birthday ... though these parts have been settled for much longer. Surrounded by shifting interests and populations, Sloatsburg has focused on its strengths — the green parks all around and Route 17 itself — to claim itself as a gateway community.