

**20/20 VISION
VILLAGE OF WILLIAMSVILLE COMMUNITY PLAN
COMMUNITY PLAN COMMITTEE**

APPROVED MEETING NOTES – JANUARY 24, 2006

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Walter Pacer announced that three new members have been added to the Committee – Steven Appler, Brian Kulpa, and David Vitka.

Community Plan Attendees: Steven Appler, Kim Giannelli-Calos, Paul Iskalo, Pastor Timothy Madsen, Walter Pacer, Vic Paquet, Wes Stone, David Vitka

Absent: Doug Adema, Mary Carr, Thomas Claxton, Nancy Delo, Todd Nelson, Brian Kulpa, Carolyn Schlifke, David Sutton, Edward Zabel

Town/Village Staff: Allison Dubie, Jocelyn Gordon, Joelle Guy, Lynda Juul, Sally Kuzon, Peter J. Smith

Village Board Members: Mayor Mary Lowther, Trustee Brian Geary, Trustee Basil Piazza, Trustee Rich Sweeney

Residents: Trey Measer

ACCEPTANCE OF DECEMBER MEETING NOTES

On Motion by Pastor Madsen, seconded by Vic Paquet, the December meeting notes were accepted.

Motion Carried

VISION STATEMENT

Jocelyn Gordon discussed the reformation of the Vision Statement from the initial single paragraph that was originally submitted, to the three-page statement that was resubmitted. The new Vision Statement was e-mailed out by Lynda, and no commentary was received back. Vic Paquet wondered what “inclusive diversity” meant. Jocelyn stated that she will make sure that the rest of the paragraph accurately describes the meaning. Pastor Madsen also wondered if it changes the substance of the statement. Inclusive of Diversity would change the meaning. He also suggested adding the following to the final

sentence: “and invites newcomers to share the attractive quality of life that is Williamsville”. Jocelyn stated that she would address those two elements.

The Committee decided that they would like to give a little more time for the new members to review the Vision Statement and give their feedback. They did, however, approve the statement, with the changes discussed, to be released onto the web site. It will still be referred to as a Draft Vision Statement.

Any comments should go through Lynda to Jocelyn.

PRELIMINARY PLAN CONCEPTS

Peter Smith then presented the initial plan alternative.

Jocelyn Gordon reviewed an Interactive Workbook of Williamsville Plan Alternatives and asked for commentary from the Committee.

SYSTEMS PLAN

Vic Paquet felt there are three things that were not addressed:

- 1) Traffic on Main Street (the detailed streetscapes will deal more with controlling the traffic).
- 2) Where Town Hall, Village Hall and the Williamsville Library would go – they are all important.
- 3) The Plan connects those that are close to the core, but what about those down near Wehrle or north of the core? Why not extend the concept to include those people? He mentioned Garrison Rd., Mill St., and Wehrle Dr.; those people are cut off from the Village.

Pastor Madsen felt there are things that are haphazard that he identifies with the Village (Ed Youngs, the Creekview, the Library, etc.). Sorrentino’s is right next to the nice historic meeting house, and that seems disorganized. His Church is on Eagle & Ellicott; this would extend the business district and/or traffic into this area. In the area where the falls are is a big area for wedding pictures. Most people who he marries take pictures there. It’s one of the ways that people get introduced to our central core.

Paul Iskalo felt that changing the streetscape will calm the traffic, but there is only so much we can do to affect traffic. Over time we hope the DOT would buy into this. He agrees with that approach and feels that’s about all we can do at this point. Parking looks good since a ramp is being created. He likes the trail concept of a 20-foot wide park that makes its way through the Village. That pedestrian continuity is huge. That’s one of the things you want to get out of living in the Village. What’s missing in the Village is a square or park that comes to Main Street. There are a lot of practical challenges with this, but there may be an opportunity over time to implement some pieces of this.

David Vitka commented that the sense of place is very spectacular. The diagram is very strong and he likes how the Central Parkscape is dead center. We need to be very respectful of the history of the Village. He loves the elongation of the park space to include all the north and south areas. He would like to see more on the east side coming around like it does on the west side. He stated that he feels it's a very strong plan.

Wes Stone also stated that he thinks it's a strong plan. He liked Vic's comments about drawing the other areas in. He wondered what the consultant envisions for the library. Jocelyn stated that it could be a part of one large civic center. This could be a multi-use facility. Wes also wondered how the DOT would react to this.

Wally Pacer felt the plan is extraordinarily optimistic. In this day and age, where would the funding come from? He loves the plan, but wondered if we should be looking at the parts as opposed to the sum of the parts? He's really concerned about the traffic. Where would it go if this was implemented? Where would Town Hall go? Jocelyn commented that there has been talk of moving Town Hall for a long time. She doesn't know where it would go, but if it did ever move, this would be an alternative use for the property. Wally wondered if the loss of Town Hall be detrimental to the business district.

Steve Appler commented that he lives in the NE section and runs through Amherst State Park a lot. It just oozes potential. He teaches at Amherst HS and knows his students are back there on the weekends at night. It needs to be more accessible to everyone. He thought it would be great to make the north-south axis more accessible. One of the things he would like to see happen is bringing the store fronts to the sidewalk and eliminating the parking in front of buildings. He felt that we need to move those storefronts to the sidewalk level and move the parking behind, such as in the Villages of Hamburg and East Aurora. Having parking in front makes you want to drive faster. He suggested starting with a median and possibly diverting the traffic elsewhere, such as Sheridan Drive.

URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT

David Vitka asked if any thought has been given to an alternative for pedestrians to cross Main Street. There are natural grade changes along the creek. Paul Iskalo commented that this has been done at Youngs Road (Buffalo Country Club), although there may be fewer utility challenges there. Steve Appler asked about an overpass. Paul Iskalo commented that the challenge would be the aesthetics, but thought it could be possible. The idea is to get pedestrians from the north side to the south side of the central common. Vic Paquet thought this would be important since a lot of the south side parking is eliminated in the plan. Paul Iskalo felt that the advantage of going underground is that you almost forget that there's a street there. It connects the park settings very seamlessly. Wally Pacer didn't see pedestrian traffic as a problem if traffic is reduced anyway.

Paul Iskalo asked about the blue circle next to what is now Town Hall. This is a water feature or ice skating rink.

West Stone felt that if the library is in the community center, you would need some sort of parking, drive-in or drop-off. This would need to be considered.

David Vitka asked if the intent of the space near the Mill was to be a place of destination. Are all events in the civic/arts space? Is it a place to be on a Saturday night? Peter Smith stated that the large green circle is an outdoor amphitheater. Steve Appler asked if this could be a place for the museum.

The parking garage was then discussed. Dan Howard stated that in many places they successfully “wrap” the parking garage with retail space.

Paul Iskalo asked if this was the only garage. There is a need further down to the west (near the Pancake House and 5500 Main Street) for additional parking. He agrees that putting “out buildings” up to the street is a nice way to bring frontage - as long as you can accommodate the loss of parking.

Vic Paquet asked if this plan would increase the number of parking spaces, or if it would actually increase our parking problem. Peter Smith stated that you can’t determine this from this diagram. The parking shortage is based on square footage. A rear-yard approach of contiguous lots would increase the parking and spread it out so it’s not in isolated pockets. Vic just felt it would be an issue if the plan actually lessened the parking.

David Vitka wondered if the vision was for mixed use (retail on first level, other uses above). Jocelyn stated that it was. He also wondered about handicap accessibility. The logistics, such as the Eagle House, make certain things accessible from only one side. Peter Smith commented that the design of parking lots could include sharing and connectivity as standards, which could then be made part of the zoning code. . David Vitka felt this is an aging community and is something to be addressed.

Paul Iskalo suggested 5500 Main Street as having a center green with an ice skating rink, instead of an “out parcel”. This would create some synergy where there is already a natural energy (i.e. Key Center skating rink downtown).

Kim Giannelli-Calos could see a real use from a recreation standpoint for the central greenscape / civic area. There isn’t really a core where they can be stationed right now. This would be very positive.

Pastor Madsen felt the civic/art space is currently well used, and that it will take creativity to make the cultural/historic space more than what it is now.

Jocelyn asked the Committee members to take their workbooks home and take another look at them. She would like to come back in February with some revisions. She asked for any additional comments within the next 2 weeks (by February 8th). They can be sent via e-mail through Lynda Juul.

The next meeting is Tuesday, February 28th.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Lowther commented that she felt 5500 Main Street is not the central area or the core. There are many natural things in the core or natural green area. To her that seems like the more natural spot for a skating rink, etc. She felt that it is kind of unrealistic to think about building more in front of it with the parking issues that we have now. She really likes the spine and core plan that is being developed, and felt that it's really impressive. Paul Iskalo clarified that his comment was not to move the green spine in any way, but that 5500 Main Street is a commercial core, and would be a good spot for a water feature. This would create more synergy for public gathering there. There is commercial space as well as restaurants. He doesn't want to take anything away from the central greenspace. Steve Appler also felt that 5500 is a natural draw. Paul Iskalo thought that only a couple of rows of parking would have to be eliminated. There are other buildings which may become obsolete in the future, behind which parking could be located.

Peter Smith stressed that you can't this plan too literally. What you can take literally is the green spine. They are trying to create a center with retail in walking distance. We need to look at some zoning issues. Some of these things can be done in the shorter term. For example, the Village could look at changing square footage if a developer agrees to build up to the street.

Steve Appler commented on the Systems Plan. One way of going north-south could be through the back of the cemetery through Reist, and left back to the old barn pits, and through the natural path into the State Park. This would get you into the second half of the park that's closer to the Village. You could then come back up at the Mill. This would be something similar to the railway line; it could be a mirror image of that.

CLOSE OF MEETING

On motion by Paul Iskalo, seconded by Steve Appler, the meeting was closed at 8:40 PM.

Motion Carried.