

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

APPROVED MEETING NOTES – FEBRUARY 27, 2007

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

Community Plan Committee Attendees: David Brody, Mary Carr, Kim Giannelli-Calos, Paul Iskalo, Walter Pacer, Victor Paquet, Charles Rizzone, Wesley Stone, David Vitka, Kate Waterman-Kulpa

Absent: Steven Appler, Thomas Claxton, Brian Kulpa, Pastor Timothy Madsen, Todd Nelson, Carolyn Schlifke, Edward Zabel

Consultant/Town/Village Staff Present: Lawrence Bice, Joelle Guy, Dan Howard, Lynda Juul, Sally Kuzon

Village Board Members: Mayor Lowther, Trustee Geary,

Residents/Other Attendees: Charles Akers

APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES

On motion by Vic Paquet, seconded by Mary Carr, the meeting notes of January 30, 2007 were approved.

Unanimously carried.

Lawrence reviewed the topics to be discussed tonight, including the April 24th public workshop.

LAND USE DISCUSSION – BEHAN PLANNING

Lawrence reviewed the Conceptual Land Use Plan, emphasizing that this is only conceptual. There are three residential classifications – low-density, medium-density and high-density. This is very representative of how the Village exists today with residential zoning. There are also three commercial land use designations that are a little different than what has been seen before.

Lawrence then asked if the current residential land use classifications are acceptable.

Vic Paquet commented that he feels that single family areas are fairly dense and there is a fair amount of diversity. He doesn't feel there is an opportunity for high density in the low density areas, and feels the status quo is okay.

Paul Iskalo feels the committee members need to look at and understand the objectives. One is diversity; this can be achieved by allowing areas for higher density. Land cost is a limiting factor in building cost-effective vs. higher-end housing. To increase pedestrian traffic, the areas closer to Main Street may be more appropriate for high density. High density can mean many things; it needs to be defined.

Mary Carr talked about Franklin Street, with five or seven houses that are doubles. On the north side of Main Street there are quite a few doubles (Eagle, N. Ellicott, Evans, etc.). She feels these are in keeping with the character of the Village. This is the oldest section, and the character that people are striving to keep.

Paul Iskalo asked if frontage requirements could be reduced in certain areas of the Village in order to encourage higher density housing. Lawrence felt that is more detailed than we need to be at this point; it's more conceptual. There are many unique residential pockets within the Village.

David Brody feels the Millrace area and the condos on Mill St. (in the Town) are both very nice and done very tastefully. He would like to see the ability to construct those types of housing when the opportunity presents itself. When you get outside of those areas, especially going north along Evans and out toward the school, there are not the elegant old style houses that Mary Carr was talking about. That may be an area to have higher density in the future (along Mill, Wehrle, Garrison, Evans, etc.). He thinks we should talk about higher density within some of the areas designated for medium density, particularly close to the Village Core area.

Paul Iskalo felt that identifying areas with existing character is important, and then allowing options in other areas.

Vic Paquet thought there are opportunities for higher density residential on or along Main Street, and that this is under-represented on the map.

Kate Waterman-Kulpa was not sure that the Millrace-quality developments are appropriate in the "pocket communities"; they are more appropriate on the peripheral areas, along major roads.

Dan Howard commented that one must consider uses that correspond to Main Street. In many cases, uses along Main and the core can compliment one another and the areas surrounding them; a mix of uses can help to transition from one area to another. The Committee and consultant should consider if there are any other areas where transitional uses, including mixed densities of housing, are appropriate along Main Street.

Paul Iskalo felt the Village is an urban center, and the development should be appropriate. By definition this is denser than the suburban alternatives. Dan agreed – there are transitional areas at the edge of the urban core that acknowledge and

compliment what's there. The area along W. Spring north of Main Street is an example. In the plan there will be a map and text. The text gives the opportunity to be a little more descriptive of those relationships.

David Brody likes the idea of the entire Village being mixed use at some level; other members did not necessarily agree.

Lawrence stated that they will take a look at the edges of the Village to find other opportunities for high-density residential.

Lawrence asked the Committee if there is an issue with doubles going up in the medium family district. Chuck Rizzone thought the issue was putting too much in one space. Dave Brody stated there was a project proposed on N. Cayuga and they are talking about putting two 2-unit townhouses (4 units) in an area with about the same footage of land that all the other houses have singles and doubles on.

Discussion centered around the issue of doubles being built in residential neighborhoods. The issue appeared to be more of putting four units on a two-unit parcel. Paul Iskalo felt the issue is character and sensitivity to the surroundings, not the number of units. Lawrence asked if this subject should be left open for public comment. Paul Iskalo felt that it's difficult to discuss conceptually and felt that there are ways to design these so they work.

Dan asked to clarify if the Committee is comfortable with a two-family dwelling on a single-family lot, which would occupy the same space. That's how the zoning is now.

Lawrence clarified that everyone is okay with the main concept, but would like to see some additional higher density housing in some peripheral areas.

Cayuga Road was cited as a distinct area or entryway into the Village that Lawrence noted had its own character; the Oakgrove area was discussed as well.

Chuck Rizzone stated he's interested to see the character of the new development being built at the entryway to the Village on S. Cayuga. They are going to be single family homes on S. Cayuga, with patio homes behind.

David Brody felt there should be something to protect the S. Cayuga area. Many parcels are as large as two lots and could provide enough room for a large development. That would be inconsistent with the existing character which needs to be protected.

David Vitka thought that neighborhood district narratives could be incorporated in to the plan to elaborate on the map.

MONSTER HOMES AND TEARDOWNS

Lawrence asked how the committee felt about the older housing stock being recycled and replaced by larger homes. This has happened, but needs to be done tastefully and in

character with the area. Need to guide what something is replaced with so it is in scale with the rest of the village.

Kate Waterman-Kulpa asked who has the responsibility of looking at a building for architectural detail. Is it the Planning Board's job? Or should there be design guidelines and standards? Lawrence stated it's difficult to do and asked if there were site plan reviews for new housing. He stated that policies could be setup.

Paul Iskalo felt that design concepts should be codified. That eliminates the issue of someone buying the lot, hiring an architect, and getting to the Planning Board and having difficulty with subjective or open interpretation of character.

HIGH DENSITY

Chuck Rizzone asked who is attracted to the higher density housing being discussed. The committee seemed to think it was mixed. Paul Iskalo reminded all that if you're investing in high-end housing now, such housing will become working class in 30 or 40 years.

Lawrence asked if the Committee was comfortable with the densities shown, or if something higher or lower was desired. Paul felt it was appropriate around main street, but not in the middle of a residential neighborhood. Close to the core area is acceptable. General guidelines for high density should be provided that will not tie the Village's hands.

David Brody thought the Evans area was the logical place for high density because it backs up to a commercial/office area. Lawrence felt that this area may be a candidate for high-density residential and open space. Kate Waterman-Kulpa suggested having medium density residential on the street front, with higher density behind. She felt that Evans is a gateway to the Village, and had medium density homes on one side, with high density on the other side.

Lawrence discussed the Blocher Home. If this use was changed, would high density make sense for that area? He added that text may be needed in the plan to carefully establish the nature of development in this transitional area. Dave Vitka commented that you are not likely to see this from adult care in the future, that independent and smaller living units are the current and future model. Uses for these properties may need to remain flexible.

Lawrence asked how the Committee felt about the older homes along Main Street that had been turned into offices. Do these structures define character, or could they be turned into two- or three-story office buildings? The Committee seemed to think that they define the character, but some others could be replaced. It would have to be building by building specific. This concept could be explored at a public meeting for additional conceptual design.

VILLAGE GATEWAYS

Lawrence asked how the committee envisioned these areas. Discussion centered on the use of the word “gateway”. The Committee felt that this helps to visualize an entranceway, but noted that some of the areas on the map are not really entranceways.

Paul Iskalo felt parking should be minimized, but that there should be more landscaping. David Brody felt you need to maintain the transition, but possibly nothing else.

Kate Waterman-Kulpa wondered why we need a gateway or transitional area at all. She felt that you get the big box store once you hit the boundary of the Town. The Town Master Plan recognizes the areas just outside the Village as transitional areas, with the Village as an activity center. Perhaps the transition should be immediate and the Village should not have to accommodate transitional uses and forms of development that could/should take place in the Town. The Committee acknowledged that the gateways to the Village at either end of Main Street were different, and required different approaches to fully consider those characteristics.

LONG STREET AREA

Lawrence asked if the Committee was comfortable showing the Long Street scenarios to the public. Kate Waterman-Kulpa questioned if housing stock was being lost – Lawrence clarified that no housing is being lost. The area being addressed is what is currently more industrial. The Committee overall was concerned with visual representations of higher density forms of residential development because the public does not always consider these as conceptual, but seems to feel they are site plans. Suggestions were made to bring actual photographs showing what the park is now, and what it can be. A suggestion was also made to change the concept drawings so the housing units don’t look so boxy. Pictures of some of the attractive high density housing should be brought and posted next to the rendering. Also, show boldly in data tables that there is no net loss of park area (all scenarios have the same acreage).

Lawrence indicated that he would consider the concepts and modifications that might help convey the proposed form and density intended in the concept plan.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 27th. Lawrence polled the Committee to see who would be available in the afternoon to meet from around 2 PM on that day. All the consultants working on the plan will be present next month, and it would be helpful to conduct some work sessions in the afternoon. The committee agreed to meet in the late afternoon and continue through the evening. Dinner will be provided.

The Committee gave approval to share the Long Street concepts with the public, with the incorporation of their input. Chuck Rizzone requested a legal opinion on deed restrictions for the parkland in the South Long Street area. The committee decided that

they should focus on the long-term concepts, and not be constrained in forming conceptual plans for the area. One of the plans leaves the park where it is, and there would be no issue. Lawrence will bring back additional concepts as they will be shown at the public meeting.

A motion to endorse the concepts was made by Paul Iskalo, and seconded by David Brody.

All were in favor with the exception of Charles Rizzone.

Motion Carried.

David Vitka asked about the Community Service designation, and what it represented. Lawrence stated that it is schools, churches, the cemetery, etc. He noted that some of these designations could be changed if the Committee would like.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Charles Akers, 170 S. Cayuga Rd.

Mr. Akers stated that he is the Chairman of Tree Board. He thinks it's exciting to hear about the central village. He reported that the Tree Board is planting trees on Main Street that are flowering trees, and will transition to the more broad-leaf trees. They are going after funding to replace over 100 trees on Main Street. Mr. Akers then asked about mixed use and wondered if this means shopping in the same building as residential? He has been in a town in California that has shopping on first floor, parking on second floor, and condos on the third floor. Lawrence confirmed that this does represent commercial on the first floor and residential on second floor, but that the Committee hasn't talked in any detail about mixing in parking.

CLOSE OF MEETING

On motion by David Brody, seconded by Kate Waterman-Kulpa, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:00 PM.

Unanimously carried.