

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

**APPROVED MEETING NOTES – FEBRUARY 28, 2006**

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

Community Plan Committee Attendees: Steven Appler, Mary Carr, Paul Iskalo, Brian Kulpa, Pastor Timothy Madsen, Todd Nelson, Walter Pacer, Victor Paquet, Wesley Stone, David Vitka, Kate Waterman-Kulpa

Absent: Douglas Adema, Thomas Claxton, Kim Giannelli-Calos, Carolyn Schlifke, David Sutton, Edward Zabel

Consultant/Town/Village Staff: Allison Dubie, Jocelyn Gordon, Joelle Guy, Dan Howard, Lynda Juul, Sally Kuzon

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

Residents: Anne D. Astmann, MaryAnn Avery, Mary Bobinski, Mr. & Mrs. John Brodnick, David Brody, Christopher Church, Kelly Hair, Joan Stadelman

**DISCUSSION ON THE WILLIAMSVILLE LIBRARY**

Mayor Lowther clarified the issue that has been in the press lately regarding the Plan's Urban Design concepts and the Williamsville Library. There was an article in the Amherst Bee that did not clearly make it known that the library was not proposed to be removed from the community. There was an urban design concept depicting the center of the Village that did not include the Library building, or Village Hall. The Mayor reminded that this is a plan which looks out 20-years into the future of the Village. Many things have changed in the past 20 years, and probably will again in the next 20 years. The design is just a concept. There is a possibility that the library could move, but the Mayor reiterated that she is 100% behind keeping library services located within the Village.

The Plan Committee Chair, Walter Pacer, commented that he didn't recall much comment on the library at all in any of the committee's meetings. He expects the committee feels strongly about ensuring that the library remains in the Village. There has been no discussion about removing library services from the Village. The only reference to such an issue appeared in the Amherst Bee article, which did not fully explain the

conceptual nature of the plan, or that the concepts were intended to address physical development, not service delivery.

Mary Bobinski of the Williamsville Library then spoke. She stated that she appreciates both remarks, but wishes that this could be made public. She knows we want people to pay attention to the entire plan, and not just the library, but that's what people are focusing on at this point. Mayor Lowther stated that she would be in touch with Jill from the Bee and make sure that this was clarified in the press. Mary Bobinski reported that there were 340 new registrants at the library since early this year; the library is very busy in Williamsville. It is doing unbelievably!

Paul Iskalo commented that he feels that for the committee to do its job properly, it must look at a number of different options or alternatives, not constraining itself to current arrangements or uses. Many things may never materialize, but it's all part of the creative process. Because it's public, people see that and misinterpret it. He noted that we need to go look at alternatives to see what the effects are on the surrounding neighborhoods. We are in the early stages of a process and things may be questioned. This is also a helpful way to engage commentary.

Mayor Lowther noted that this is why committee meetings are public, and why Plan information is also on the website. She agreed with Paul's comments; sometimes you need to take something apart before you put it back together.

Brian Kulpa noted that public feedback is very important. The library obviously needs to be an integral part of the plan as a community resource. When we set our priorities, we should really focus on dealing with these issues. Prioritizing that with public feedback is really a good thing.

### **ACCEPTANCE OF JANUARY MEETING NOTES**

On Motion by Vic Paquet, seconded by Steven Appler, the notes from the January meeting were accepted.

Mary Carr abstained from the vote.

Motion Carried.

### **DISCUSSION OF COMMENTS ON PRELIMINARY PLAN CONCEPTS AND ALTERNATIVES**

Dan Howard initiated the discussion by reviewing the meeting agenda and commenting on the process for getting comments on plan concepts from the committee members. An objective of this meeting is to organize and prioritize concepts in order to give the Consultant feedback and a preferred direction that the Committee wants to go. He noted

that we are now working on Task 4, evaluating plan alternatives; this is where the creative process comes into play. The next phase is to take these preferred directions or concepts out to the community and see what they think about it. The Plan can then be modified accordingly to work toward a concept to take to the Village Board.

Joelle Guy recorded comments and concerns expressed by the Committee. These included:

Walter Pacer expressed concern that funding sources for improvements for streets and buildings is uncertain and a concern.

Paul Iskalo felt a good, well crafted, well thought out plan is critical to the Village's economic success. The Village has some property that is very nice, while some is in need of reinvestment. When a developer comes in, they are looking for a very predictable set of rules and regulations before purchasing a property. The Plan and development regulations are very important components that allow people from the outside to see what the rules are. When evaluating a redevelopment opportunity, a clear set of regulations combined with a predictable and even handed approval process are as important to a developer as what the regulations say can actually be built on the property. If the plan is well crafted it will take the Village in the right direction in the future.

Todd Nelson stated that he agrees with Paul. He noted that it is important for the Village to have a plan when applying for grants. All grant agencies seek to know if funding requests and projects conform to the community's plan. Communities with plans are in a better position to obtain funding.

Paul Iskalo stated that most people over-estimate what can be accomplished in a year, but under-estimate what can happen in 10 or 20 years. We should take somewhat of an idealistic view. If you don't plan for what you want, it definitely won't happen. We need a wish list or plan to work toward. Even if we don't get there in 20 years, the half step will still be better than if it hadn't been incorporated into the plan at all.

Walter Pacer commented that he has no doubt in the Committee's ability to come up with a great plan. One of the main issues is traffic. If we don't know what the sources of funding will be, it is difficult to imagine large-scale changes happening. He looks at Main Street and traffic as being the ultimate issue that has to be remedied. He likes the idea of reducing it to two lanes and enhancing walkability, but he doesn't consider some elements to be realistic. It is unclear who is going to fund Main Street improvements. Should we be looking at something mid-road? Somewhere between 2 and 5 lanes? And should we know a little bit more about the potential for funding before we get too idealistic?

Dan Howard stated that at some point, the NYSDOT will do some work to Main Street, even if it is only maintenance. The Plan will provide guidance on improvements and help to determine what happens. The DOT has successfully worked with other communities with plans. For example, Harlem Road from Kensington to Wehrle will now be 3 lanes

instead of 5, with two roundabouts in close proximity to each other. The design there was heavily influenced by the community and its vision for the future. He noted that as the committee considers different scenarios for Main Street, the GBNRTC can assist the review by modeling traffic and will be able to tell us what the impacts are on Main Street.

Jocelyn Gordon added that huge portions of this plan can be done regardless of the number of lanes on Main Street. It doesn't mean we are knocking down any buildings. The Committee can endorse the overall long-term concept. In the interim, the Village can work to enhance the streetscape, keep the historic buildings, and institute relatively inexpensive traffic calming measures. We need to really focus on a long-term plan for the Village of Williamsville.

David Brody stated that he represented a group on Route 20 where the concern was having 5 lanes, particularly through the Village of Lancaster. Ultimately, they negotiated a very good plan with a 3-lane configuration and 4 lanes through the Village of Depew. This took a couple of years and a strong effort by the community to accomplish. He feels that the DOT has become much more concerned about the social impact of their activities. He believes that 3 lanes would not be out of the question at all. The DOT has also done wonderful things in Batavia and Clarence as well.

Steve Appler commented that this plan is empowering the Village to say no in the future to the things they don't want. All over the country this is going on. The Committee should be very optimistic and reaching for the stars at this point. A walkable community should be a goal, and 3 lanes of traffic on Main Street supports this goal. We need to keep our property values solid and keep the Village a place that people want to move to, rather than move from.

Paul Iskalo asked if there is data that relates to density and economic viability in a Village. Jocelyn thought there probably was data available. Paul asked about demographics of similar villages that are successful. He's looking for some type of rule of thumb or standard to use for comparison. This could be helpful for the core area of the Village.

Brian Kulpa felt that one of the problems that exist when you look at data samples is that there are often too many variables and issues that influence such standards. Retail or business mix can also promote different densities.

Jocelyn stated that through the Inventory and Analysis, the Consultant got a good idea of the number of people working on Main Street, but found that they are not using Main Street. The same holds true of people who live around Main Street. She doesn't think it's a matter of density, but a matter of the right mixture of uses. She feels that the density is here, but that people are not using the street. By breaking up the street, it makes each section more economically sustainable. By providing walkability and amenities, we can hopefully encourage people to use the street.

Mary Carr asked about the greenway plan, and the walkways behind the retail areas. She felt that this may exacerbate parking on those streets; however, we do want to connect the greenway to Main Street to encourage walking. Jocelyn noted that the plan tries to accomplish this. The Village needs to be more than one strip of Main Street and become a more comprehensive place; we need to connect people to corridors. Mary felt that would be fine people-wise, but if you don't have designated parking spots, they will park everywhere. She sees that generating a lot more traffic in residential areas. Jocelyn feels there are different ways to implement the concept, but the point is that we need to get people walking around the Village. Then we can worry about how to lay out the parking. That's the next step. The concept must be endorsed first. The residents need someplace to walk, and someplace to ride their bikes.

Kate Waterman-Kulpa agreed with bringing residents to Main Street, but not by putting Main Street parking in residential areas.

### **CONCEPT PLAN MAP SESSION**

The Committee then moved into the Activity Room to view various maps and drawings. Three general concepts were agreed to and voted on.

On Motion by Pastor Timothy Madsen, seconded by Brian Kulpa, the Committee agreed to endorse the overall Urban Design Concept.

Unanimously Carried.

This includes a Central Parkscape area surrounded by two Village Streetscape areas, and followed by two Village Greenscape areas. The number of driving lanes in the various areas will be determined after an analysis by the GBNRTC.

On Motion by Paul Iskalo, seconded by Brian Kulpa the Committee agreed to endorse a connective greenway through the Village of Williamsville with connectivity to Main Street along the Ellicott Creek Corridor, that includes consideration of any historic features.

Unanimously Carried.

The Committee also agreed to the following conceptual boundaries for the division of the various sections of streetscape, for the GBNRTC to run their modeling:

Central Parkscape boundaries:

Village Streetscape boundaries:

Cayuga Road to Mill Street

Reist Street to Cayuga Road

Mill Street to Evans Street

Village Greenscape boundaries:

Union Road to Reist Street  
Evans Street to Hirschfield Drive

**CLOSE OF MEETING**

On motion by Vic Paquet, seconded by Steve Appler, the meeting was closed at 9:30 PM.

Unanimously Carried.