

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

APPROVED MEETING NOTES – APRIL 27, 2006

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM.

Community Plan Committee Attendees: Douglas Adema, Steven Appler, David Brody, Mary Carr, Kim Giannelli-Calos, Brian Kulpa, Walter Pacer, Victor Paquet, Wesley Stone, David Vitka, Kate Waterman-Kulpa, Edward Zabel

Absent: Thomas Claxton, Paul Iskalo, Pastor Timothy Madsen, Todd Nelson, Carolyn Schlifke, David Sutton

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

Village Board Members: Mayor Mary Lowther, Trustee Richard Sweeney

Other: Christopher Church, NYS DOT

Residents: None

ACCEPTANCE OF MEETING NOTES

On motion by David Brody, seconded by Steven Appler, the February meeting notes were accepted as amended.

Doug Adema and Edward Zabel abstained from the vote.

Motion Carried.

CANCELLATION OF MARCH MEETING

Dan Howard discussed that the March meeting had to be cancelled because the analysis and review by GBNRTC and NYS DOT were not complete in time for the March meeting. He apologized for the last minute cancellation, and stated that the intent is to have that discussion in May.

DRAFT FUTURE LAND USE CONCEPT

Dan Howard noted that there are parts of the Village, aside from Main Street, that need to be addressed in the Community Plan. He reviewed the map of existing land use, as well as the conceptual plan for the future of the Village. He stated that the future land use pattern will probably not be significantly different from the current land use pattern. However, there may be some things that happen in the future that would change the use of certain areas, such as the sale of property. He would like the Committee to look ahead at where those changes might take place, and what the desired land use pattern would be if those changes occurred. He emphasized that it is important to look at the land use pattern, and to avoid dealing with individual parcels. We are looking for a general pattern of land use throughout the Village that will meet the goals of the plan and vision identified by the public and the plan to date. He would like the committee to focus on the type of use, as well as the scale and overall quantity of the use. Compatibility is an issue as well. For example, there are spots of commercial within residential neighborhoods. The Committee needs to discuss whether or not this is appropriate.

MIXED USE

Jocelyn Gordon then reviewed a Draft Future Land Use Concept Plan. It is meant to provide a rationale for the Village Board to enact a new Zoning ordinance. It doesn't mean we are changing anything now, or moving anybody off their property. It means that when things change, we plan to make the best use for the land. She then reviewed the changes that were made, and the rationale for making those changes.

Recommendations for the Main Street Corridor feature a change from a mix of different uses to a "mixed use" designation. Mixed use does not mean that anything goes. It is intended to allow for flexibility in land use. There are building and site design parameters that can be regulated for mixed use. This enables the owner to modify the use of the land. The goal is to try to create a character, so that no matter what the business is, it has a certain appearance or character, and enable a live/work/play development setting. She then showed some pictures of various mixed use buildings.

Vic Paquet asked if a gas station would be allowed in a mixed use zone. Jocelyn responded that it possibly could be allowed, depending on whether it is a permitted use for the Mixed Use zoning district. However, it would be best to have it follow mixed use design standards, that might specify the appearance, location and access to the site. Mary Carr asked if there was a way to eliminate things like gas stations or drive-thru windows. Jocelyn stated that yes, there definitely is, but that would be a later decision that the Village Board would make.

Mixed use allows you to transition from commercial to residential areas in a more positive way.

Kate Waterman-Kulpa asked what uses are not allowed. Jocelyn replied that would be up to the Village Board. The consultant could make some general recommendations, but

that isn't really the purpose of this part of the plan. She stated that heavy industrial usually would not be allowed in a mixed-use zone.

David Vitka asked if the consultant has done anything where covenants that were created ended up being too restrictive and backfired. Jocelyn replied that this has not happened yet. They are closely monitoring the City of Rochester, who is in their third year of implementing a mixed use zoning district. Dan Howard advised that what the Committee is doing here is fixing a concept that is not cast in stone. Plans and ordinances change. The town is preparing to adopt a zoning ordinance, and they already know of several things they may want to adjust. You may find that it needs tweaking, as the plan will likely need some adjustment over time. Planning is a continuous process and they will require some adjustment over time.

Dave Vitka asked if the Village boundaries are set in stone. He felt the Village is a very strange shape and there are certain neighborhoods that are blocked in. Dan responded that there has not been any discussion on changes to the municipal boundaries. That would not be part of this project unless the Village and Town decided to look at that.

David Brody thought it may be beneficial to look at the transition from the Village into the Town. He felt the gateway shouldn't be only into the Village, but into the respective parts of the Town. It would be appropriate to look at those areas that surround the Village and see if the land use is compatible. Dan Howard said that they have land use information available in the Planning Department that they would bring over later in the meeting for the Committee to review.

Steve Appler asked if types of acceptable building materials would be regulated to help establish a Village identity. Jocelyn stated that is not generally in the scope of a Community Plan, but would be part of design standards or guidelines.

Ed Zabel asked if there were any villages that have gone through the planning process and have mixed use that the Committee could use as an example. Jocelyn stated that she could bring information on the Village of Lancaster. They have done the streetscape and are starting to look at the buildings. Steve Appler also suggested looking at Main Street in East Aurora, as there has been a lot of recent development. They have a very walkable retail area. Jocelyn stated that they have been very successful in getting even Tops Markets to conform to their standards.

OPEN SPACE

Jocelyn stated that the consultant is trying to make the greenspace more connective, and improve circulation. They have created a north-south "necklace" of greenspace connected to Amherst State Park. They are also trying to make connections in the south-west quadrant, with access across Main Street. In a general sense, they would recommend open space or the land use for those portions of the Village.

RESIDENTIAL

Jocelyn discussed the GBNRTC projection of approximately 350 new housing units in the Village by the year 2030. The Committee needs to take a proactive approach to handling that new development. The consultant tried to come up with some spaces where that development would be appropriate. Hi-rise developments are definitely not appropriate on Main Street, and may not be elsewhere in the Village, but higher density residential could possibly be put in the area where the Village Glen currently resides. If the business moved or closed, it would be a great space for higher density residential use. There is also an area in the south-west quadrant where current commercial uses have been recommended for higher density residential. Both areas are connected to greenspace and have access to Main Street. There are also opportunities for housing along Main Street, as shown in the examples earlier. Some of the density could be achieved along Main Street by putting housing on the 2nd or 3rd floor of the existing buildings. This could extend the business day in the Village from 6 AM - 8 PM, instead of 9 AM to 5 PM. This is a big component of the mixed use concept.

Vic Paquet asked about the businesses that would be affected by the plan and the change in land use designation from the current use. Jocelyn stated that they can still operate or sell their business, but the new owner would have to conform to any changes made to the zoning code. Vic asked how the land would become medium density residential,. He wants to understand how the concepts get used in the future. Dan responded that there are many ways to implement the Plan. It can be proactively implemented through Village-initiated changes to the Zoning map. Another tactic would be to rewrite the Zoning code to implement the goals of the plan, but to change the map over time, so that when a parcel is being sold or redeveloped, the Village can use the comprehensive plan as its guide for rezoning and redevelopment. Mary Lowther asked if this would negatively impact property values. Dan responded yes, it could affect the value, either higher or lower. If the Village changes the Zoning, they could have some issues. Mary asked if it could be done legally. Dan responded that it can, but that impacts must be considered.

David Brody said it would depend on what the impact on the ground would be. If the economic use is taken away, it could be a problem. He would love to see everything be mixed use. This stimulates economic activity everywhere. He thinks it's important to be able to run a business in a residential area. Some of the businesses along California Drive are light industrial or industrial. It doesn't seem to him that there are a lot of complaints from the residential occupants. That is probably because the businesses were there before the residents. He thinks this makes the community safer – people, workers or residents, are there during the day.

Brian Kulpa felt that mixed use could be developed in the Village Glen area (i.e. housing with a public health club included).

David Brody questioned how the figure of 350 housing units was developed? Jocelyn reported that the projections have started pushing population growth toward the City of

Buffalo and first ring suburbs. This is assumed to be the trend that the growth would take. David thinks this presents some problems for the Village Board, but it would probably be a good thing for the Village. Jocelyn felt that the Village needs to be proactive and consider it in their planning.

Dave Vitka commented that the growing demographic here is the aging. The trend is to live in your home as long as possible.

Dan Howard stated that the projections are developed for regional transportation planning purposes. They are used to prioritize regional infrastructure investment. Dan also noted that population may increase because of changes in household size, for example, as homes are repopulated with young families. The 300 units would likely play out across the Village, and not in one place.

David Brody felt this would help with the tax base. Much of the infrastructure is collapsing around the region. There are serious issues and we will see a need for major redevelopment of infrastructure in the future. A lot of infrastructure was built where there aren't people living yet. There is new infrastructure that isn't being used and deteriorating infrastructure where people are.

Dan Howard noted that with higher density, there is a larger tax base to support the infrastructure. The Village's infrastructure is in good shape according to the Inventory and Analysis report. There is probably available capacity as well.

DRAFT FUTURE LAND USE CONCEPT MAP REVIEW

The committee then moved into the Activity Room to review the maps in detail.

The Committee discussed various potential alterations to the maps, which will be incorporated into a document which Jocelyn would prepare giving the reasoning for land use changes.

Some of the items discussed include:

Continuing a greenway onto the St. Francis Home property, where there is land that is in the floodplain and may not be buildable .

It was also noted that there is a need for additional greenspace in the residential areas.

Changing some of the areas that the consultant had labeled as high density residential to mixed use, to allow additional uses on the lower floor(s). Jocelyn will create two different mixed use codes – one Mixed Use Residential, which would be heavier on residential than commercial; and one Mixed Use Commercial, which would be heavier on

commercial than residential. In addition, the area at Garrison & Wehrle will be left as high density residential and not changed to mixed use.

Additional green space could be added near the California Drive area; or mixed use and higher density residential.

Questions included if churches and municipal areas be coded as mixed use? Should they remain designated as community facilities?

The entrance to the Town parking lot on Cayuga was discussed. Could this also be coded as mixed use with businesses fronting Cayuga? The parking lot could also be turned into a ramp, etc.

The Committee requested that they receive smaller copies of the large maps that were reviewed this evening. They will be mailed out with the next mailing, approximately one week prior to the next meeting.

CLOSE OF MEETING

On motion by Ed Zabel, seconded by David Brody, the meeting was closed at 9:22 PM.