

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

APPROVED MEETING NOTES – SEPTEMBER 25, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.

Community Plan Committee Attendees: Charles Akers, David Brody, Mary Carr, Paul Iskalo, Walter Pacer (Chair), Victor Paquet, Charles Rizzone, Carolyn Schlifke, Wesley Stone, Dave Vitka, Kate Waterman-Kulpa, Edward Zabel

Absent: Steve Appler, Thomas Claxton, Kim Gianelli-Calos, Pastor Madsen

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

Village Board Members: Mayor Lowther, Trustee Brian Geary, Trustee Brian Kulpa, Trustee Basil Piazza

Residents/Other Attendees: Thomas Frank, Bill Tuyn

ACCEPTANCE OF MEETING NOTES

On motion by Chuck Akers, seconded by Vic Paquet, the meeting notes of March 27, 2007 were accepted.

Unanimously carried.

REVIEW OF DRAFT PLAN

Lawrence Bice discussed the fact that there are two public meetings that need to be held – one by the Community Plan Committee and one by the Village Board. He requested that, when reviewing the Draft Plan tonight, the more substantive issues be discussed. Editorial comments are also welcomed, but he requested that they be sent to Lynda Juul, who will forward them to Behan Planning.

Kate Waterman-Kulpa asked if the Technical Committee's comments were already incorporated into the draft. Lawrence responded that they weren't, and that one of the biggest comments had to do with the center median and fire safety. This is an issue that needs to be looked at.

Chuck Rizzone asked about the summary of the April 24, 2007 Public Meeting. Lawrence thought this information was on the Village web site.

David Brody asked if anyone had read through the entire document – only a few of the members had a chance to review it in its entirety due to the fact that many did not receive it until Monday. He suggested holding off on discussing the meat of the document tonight due to lack of time to review the Draft.

Wally Pacer asked if the plan would still be a working document at the time of the public hearing; Dan Howard responded that it would. Wally would like to have the public hearing after the holidays due to the time-frame. Ed Zabel thought that early December would work. Mary Carr would like to see a detailed schedule for review of the various sections. Meeting dates of October 2nd and 16th were chosen. These are both Tuesday evenings; meetings will be held at 7:00 PM. On October 2nd, we will plan on discussing at least sections 1 through 3, and possibly sections 1 through 5. On October 16th, the remaining sections will be discussed. Lynda will send out information on the meetings to those who are not present tonight. She will also send out the link to the appendices on the Village web site via e-mail. For a public hearing, the legal notice must be advertised at least 10 days prior. The public hearing could be held in early December. Dan Howard commented that it is the charge of the committee to make a recommendation to the Village Board. The final meeting could take place after the first of the year; this would be to discuss the public hearing. Wally was concerned about public turnout if the meeting is held in December.

Suggested Priority Short-Term Actions listed on pages 108-109 were discussed. Lawrence stated the idea was to pull out some concrete steps that can be turned to as benchmarks. The priority implementation actions share several characteristics. They are relatively less complicated or less extensive to undertake. These are more short-term and can be done more readily up front. They also start building momentum for some of the bigger projects.

Kate Waterman-Kulpa felt the list of Village committees need to be examined and cited in the Plan where appropriate. Some committees are not listed, such as the Parks Committee, Historic Preservation Commission, Glen Park Joint Board and the Mill Restoration Committee. David Brody suggested sending letters to committee members to encourage attendance at the public hearing. Chuck Akers suggested that this is also the responsibility of the Trustee liaisons to those committees.

Vic Paquet questioned why the Greenway is not listed as an action item; it's pretty important. He also questioned the Cayuga and Main Street intersection improvements. Lawrence explained that this had to do with adjustments to the phasing of the signals. This was explained on page 60. It would eliminate the northbound left-turn phase on Cayuga.

Paul Iskalo felt that the medians seemed limited to him, and thought they should be more extensive. Lawrence stated there could be more text added about median opportunities. Dan Howard added that before anything is done with medians, an access management plan should be prepared. Such a plan would allow the Village to identify driveways and other access points that must be maintained or opportunities for consolidation or elimination. Paul Iskalo stated that the Fire Departments and public safety agencies typically take exception to medians, and that ultimately their use is a matter of compromise. He also noted that medians can be a successful traffic calming method. By taking a conservative approach to constructing medians,

opportunities to calm traffic and attain the environment we hope for along Main Street might be limited.

Kate Kulpa noted that figure 19 doesn't include Walgreen's at Main & Union. This would have an impact on median treatments. David Brody felt that new construction should be super-imposed. Lawrence agreed to consider how the images could be updated.

Paul Iskalo felt the construction of medians could be phased in as opportunities arise. These can be implemented as cross-access agreements and access management is achieved.

Chuck Akers asked what the time-period is for making changes to Main Street. When will something like this happen? Discussion centered on medians being more short-term and feasible than changes in the curb lines. Lawrence will discuss a phasing plan for medians with SRF Associates. He thought they could talk about or show phased medians. Paul Iskalo stated that we needed to be realistic in the short-term and idealistic in the long-term. He also discussed removing the power lines; that is in the plan.

Vic Paquet had a general comment – he felt that nothing is mentioned about schools, churches, or institutions for the elderly. There isn't really a vision for this. Lawrence commented that this wasn't addressed because they didn't seem to be an issue. Vic felt that these types of institutions are often walked to. This could impact the greenway; it's a secondary benefit. He felt these things should be mentioned in a few places throughout the plan. Lawrence commented that elder-care is addressed, and he would review other places where this could be mentioned.

Kate Waterman-Kulpa wondered about the recommendation for crossing-guards and where it came from. She felt it was "random". Lawrence stated that this came out of David Versel's economic analysis. She wondered why the schools aren't providing crossing guards. The committee commented that they are, but strictly at the school. Main & Garrison is pretty dangerous. Chuck Akers wondered where you would put them. There is also Christian Central Academy, Sts. Peter & Paul, etc. Chuck Rizzone stated that if a light were installed at Spring Street, it could be a logical place for students and prospective shoppers to cross. Dan Howard clarified that the crossing-guard issue is described as being hired out by the BID (business improvement district) on page 75 and would be implemented during priority peak periods.

Chuck Akers asked if the traffic signals can be setup on a split system so they are different during rush-hour than mid-day. Dan Howard stated that he believes the lights are synchronized this way now, noting that Chris Church had discussed this at a prior meeting. One of the problems that Steve Ferranti discussed was that there are peaks, but they are not significant; traffic is fairly heavy for extended periods of time. Chuck Rizzone commented that he felt the signals were timed to give less time for pedestrians to cross the road.

David Brody discussed finding alternate routes to get the traffic off Main Street. He noted that if it isn't desirable to drive Main Street, people will find alternate routes. He then discussed page 1 noting that he did not like the commentary in the second last paragraph pertaining to it not being feasible to return Main Street to what it was. He felt this did not need to be put right up front,

although everyone realizes it's not going to be easily accomplished; traffic could possibly be significantly reduced.

There seemed to be a lot of questions about traffic and transportation; Lawrence indicated that he would see if Steve Ferranti was available to attend the next meeting to help work through the questions.

Chuck Akers stated that there is no handicap crossing mid-block on Main Street at the Eagle House – you have to go all the way to the intersection. Handicap accessibility needs to be improved. David Brody pointed out that this location is used as an intersection during events. Chuck Akers noted that a crossing-guard is an on-going cost and wondered if there is a passive alternative. Mary Carr commented that there is a law in NYS that cars have to stop when people are in the cross-walk. Many states have that law. Lawrence stated that the issue with that is that it can give people a false sense of security until the traffic is calmed. Paul Iskalo stated that this is an idea in the plan, but it doesn't necessarily mean that it will be a cost to the Village. It could be a cost to the BID, to the business association, or it could be volunteers.

Vic Paquet asked if the crossing at Spring Street would be the link from Island Park to Glen Park; Lawrence stated that it would be. Vic thought it was implied, but could be brought out more strongly.

David Vitka asked about the conceptual land-use plan on page 8. He thought the area around Main & Union used to be VMU (Village mixed-use). Lawrence stated that there was some discussion on this at a prior meeting, and that this may be the first time the committee has seen this version of the diagram. David Brody commented that it was discussed that the area wasn't really like the area on the eastern edge, and that it was more VMS (Village Main Street). Lawrence thought this tied with the development of the Long St. area as well. Sections of Figure 1 related to open space on page 8 and Figure 3 on page 26 don't agree and should be modified.

Kate Waterman-Kulpa also asked about page 8. South Long Park doesn't show up, it's engulfed in HDR-OSP (high-density residential-open space). Lawrence stated that they will separate out the park so it is clearer; page 26 shows it as park land. Kate also asked if the stars on page 8 representing special character areas could be identified. They are all historic areas. Dan Howard stated they are identified on page 11 as character areas. Lawrence thought the symbols could be changed to bubbled areas instead of stars so they have a separate identification from the designated local landmarks on page 26, which are represented by stars as well. Kate also mentioned that there are 12 local landmarks identified on page 26 – she believes there are only 11 in the Village. She would like there to be more discussion on historic districts. HPC is waiting for some direction on this; a recommendation on the pursuit of historic districts needs to be considered.

Paul Iskalo felt that studies have shown that historic district properties are more valuable. Lawrence will strengthen this section of the plan.

Kate felt that the verbiage used pertaining to historic districts comes across negatively in the plan. She feels it has at least as much merit than crossing guards, and that it should be mentioned more strongly.

Chuck Akers discussed a location he knows of where the bike path is inside the parking lane, on the sidewalk side of the road. He thought this was a good alternative. Lawrence stated that the main issue is the constrained area that we have to work with.

Mary Carr had trouble with the word “guide” being used to describe the Plan. What if a future Board doesn’t like the Plan? David Brody stated that ultimately, the Board has the ability to amend the Plan in the future. Ed Zabel clarified that Mary meant the word is not strong enough; implying that it’s a guide, but that you don’t have to follow it. Lawrence felt the word could be changed to something like steer, but asked her to think about it some more. Dan Howard stated that if you look in Village Law regarding comprehensive plans, it is intended to be a guide to develop more rigid regulations such as zoning and subdivision regulations. The plan is the big picture guiding the policy that the community establishes for itself. You then take that guide and fashion your ordinances to have legal standing and regulate how things go. It is seen as a guide, and not a rigid document. It is supposed to represent the community’s vision for the future. Based on that vision, the direction to those that make policy is that this is the direction the community wants to go. Dan said he would argue that the word guide is appropriate for this document, and as an adopted document, this will have a pretty firm standing. Making changes to the plan will require an amendment and a public process. Conditions can change so that when the plan needs to be changed you have flexibility. It is the framework for the policy and legal guidance to be used for implementation later on. Chuck Akers thought there were still stronger words, such as “tool” or “framework”.

Kate Waterman-Kulpa didn’t feel the word “guide” was inappropriate. She felt the word “should”, however, may be inappropriate, and recommended it read “the plan may” guide the future of the Village. Dan commented that the map of the Conceptual Land Use Plan is purposely ambiguous; it’s a suggestion for uses. It can then be implemented in detail through zoning.

It was noted that many of the members are on other committees in the Village. Use of the plan is intended to provide guidance to the different committees as they make their decisions. Dan would like the committee to help the consultants and staff by noting if the Plan provided ample guidance. He also noted that the Plan isn’t just for internal use, but for use by other agencies such as the DOT and DEC as well; it is a statement of vision and goals; this perspective should be kept in mind as the committee reviews the document.

Kate Waterman-Kulpa discussed page 108 (Suggested Priority Short-Term Actions) and the verbiage stating that one of the goals is to stabilize the mill and “attract cider operation”. She thinks this is way too detailed and that this is a decision for the Mill Restoration Committee and the Board of Trustees. She thinks the Mill Village concept is pretty concrete. Better wording may be “to attract a viable use”, noting that some of the cider equipment is being sold off. A “viable” use is more consistent with the goals for the structure itself and the Mill Village.

Chuck Rizzone asked about the grand staircase, and wondered where the pricing came from; the estimate is \$400,000. Lawrence spoke with Doug Brackett of EDR, and based this estimate on his experience with grading, etc.

David Vitka commended Lawrence on the immense amount of material put together in such an organized fashion. He feels the Draft Plan is very user-friendly. Lawrence also thanked Dan Howard and Joelle Guy for their help.

David Brody stated he feels we have a remarkably consistent vision.

Lawrence stated that he is in agreement with all the comments that were made tonight.

NEXT MEETINGS

The next two meeting will be October 2nd and October 16th at 7:00 PM. As noted above, Sections 1 through 3 or 1 through 5 will be discussed on October 2nd; the balance of the Draft Plan will be discussed on October 16th.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment made.

CLOSE OF MEETING

On motion by Chuck Akers, seconded by Vic Paquet, the meeting was closed at 9:05 PM.