

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

APPROVED MEETING NOTES - OCTOBER 2, 2007

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

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

Absent: Charles Akers, Steve Appler, Mary Carr, Thomas Claxton, Kim Gianelli-Calos, Pastor Madsen, Victor Paquet

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

Village Board Members: Trustee Brian Kulpa

Residents/Other Attendees: Christopher Church (NYS DOT)

ACCEPTANCE OF MEETING NOTES

On motion by Ed Zabel, seconded by Carolyn Schlifke, the meeting notes of September 25, 2007 were accepted.

Unanimously carried.

REVIEW OF DRAFT PLAN – SECTIONS 1 AND 2

Walter Pacer suggested reviewing the plan section by section, hopefully with only substantive changes being discussed.

Lawrence then discussed the dates required to move forward and to fit with municipal law and SEQR. This will help keep the momentum going. The schedule calls for CPC meetings tonight and on October 16th. Behan Planning will make changes from both meetings at once. Comments will be put into the Draft Plan and returned to the committee by October 30th. There will be another meeting on November 6th to authorize the release of the Draft Plan for public review. A public hearing will then be held. The CPC discussed the schedule and decided that they would like to hold the public hearing on December 4th.

Chuck Rizzone asked if anyone would be allowed to speak at the public hearing; anyone can speak as this is open to the public. Can those on committees speak at the public hearing? We may need a legal opinion on whether CPC members can speak at the public hearing that the CPC is holding. Notification to the public was discussed. In the past we have done a Village-wide mailing for the public meetings. The same can be done for this. David Brody said he would distribute to the Williamsville Business Association if we give the notice to him.

David Brody suggested having a shorter Table of Contents that is easier to read. He also felt that splitting the conclusion and implementation sections may be advantageous. Paul Iskalo felt that condensing the Table of Contents would be helpful, rather than shortening it. It was agreed to leave section 6 (Conclusion & Implementation) together.

David Brody reiterated that he doesn't like the first sentence in the second to last paragraph on page 1. He suggested the following verbiage: "Williamsville today is not, nor is it likely to become, the Williamsville of yesterday. Given today's traffic volumes and lifestyle habits...." The rest of the paragraph would then continue as written.

David Brody discussed the 4th paragraph on Page 1. He is concerned that there ought to be a little room for growth throughout the Village. Three-story buildings are too low in High Density Residential (HDR). You don't want to lock the Village in now, forever, not to change at all in those residential areas. There should be some language that permits some type of growth. It is the most obvious in High Density Residential. He doesn't want the plan to be so limited that good ideas can't be accomplished in the future. Paul Iskalo added that the idea of being able to have trade-offs makes sense. That's one way to address this issue. Lawrence stated that people are interested in mixed use, but felt strongly that the existing single-family neighborhoods should stay fairly similar in character in scale. Dave Brody thought this is true, but it doesn't have to mean that there can be no change at all. Wally commented that this almost brings us back to square one. Paul Iskalo felt the sentence was fine. Where it is described in the zoning is where something can be stated. Chuck Rizzone said he would like more input from the residents. Residents at the public meeting in the area that he participated in were very concerned about change.

Chuck Rizzone commented that the first paragraph is repeated on page 7. This is a very important statement to him. This reinforces page 1.

David Brody talked about page 2. He is concerned about how much emphasis is put on the mill. There are rumors that the Village may not be able to save the mill. If the whole plan is based on the mill and it can't be saved, this could be a big issue. He feels it's the place, and not the mill, that is of importance. This is why the mill is there – it's a temporary use of a piece of land. Maybe things could be written to focus on the location and the history of the location, instead of the use of the location. If the mill were not there, the history is still there. Lawrence asked if the plan should state an alternative if the mill were not there. Paul Iskalo viewed this as being a historically significant component in the Village that should be addressed head on. This strengthens the

Village's argument to get funding. Kate Waterman-Kulpa stated that funding has started to come in. The mill project will succeed. It might not be tomorrow, but it will be in the future. David Brody stated he doesn't want to exclude the mill. Lawrence felt that there are enough concepts in the Mill Village, that it's a larger context that could be successful as well. Chuck Rizzone reinforced that these are all concepts, and we should go forward with the idea that we can succeed. Lawrence asked if the Committee felt there were enough layers in the plan for Mill Village for this to succeed – the committee agreed that there are. Carolyn Schlifke commented that we need to base this on what is happening now, and everyone wants to keep and maintain this premise. This is what's happening now. Lawrence felt that common sense says that something similar would go there if something happened to the mill. Wally said he shared Dave's concern about the cost of the mill, but he would tend to agree with Paul and Carolyn that the mill deserves the focus. There is enough here that if something happens to the mill, there is still direction given to the Village Board. Chuck Rizzone analogized this to turning the property at International Chimney into residential. These are all concepts, and he can deal with that.

Paul Iskalo discussed page 8. He feels that Garrison and Evans is an area where the Village character changes. He feels it should be Village Mixed Use (VMU) instead of Village Main Street (VMS). David Vitka stated that the north side of Main Street has some historic homes that are used as businesses. The south side is the old gas station, motel and house. Lawrence suggested keeping the north side Village Main Street and the south side Village Mixed Use. Lawrence asked the CPC members to take a look at it and comment on this at the next meeting. Paul Iskalo stated he views it more as a character change, but admitted that he has a vested interest. A major thoroughfare seems like a more appropriate place to draw the line. This area was originally coded Village Mixed Use until Paul suggested it be changed to Village Main Street. Carolyn Schlifke discussed when the two houses at Main & Evans were slated to be torn down, but were maintained. She was on the Village Board at this time. She agreed to move it back to Village Mixed Use. She felt that when you are at that end of the Village, you are not shopping and walking between stores. David Vitka thought this was acceptable as long as there is wording to protect the historic homes that have turned to businesses.

David Body suggested changing the wording on page 6 from "guide" to "inform".

David Brody felt there are two other focus areas – at the intersection of Mill & Main Street, and Union & Main Street. These are the only two dense shopping areas, or real plazas, that are in the Village. Any real growth will take place here. He is suggesting that we may need some additional language that focuses on how older obsolete shopping areas that could be redeveloped. Lawrence stated that the plan talks about identifying areas that are underdeveloped and working with land owners to redevelop. That may address some of what he's talking about. He asked David to pull out how he would like to address these areas specifically. David Vitka thought one was covered in the Mill Village concept – this includes Ed Young's and adjacent properties. Kate Waterman-Kulpa felt that design guidelines that come from the plan may address some of his concerns (parking behind, etc.). Lawrence will look to see if he can enhance this section.

Ed Zabel discussed page 8 and the Williamsville Court Apartments. On the land use plan, this area is identified as Village Main Street, but felt it should be High Density Residential. Lawrence thought the idea was that this would be a good extension of mixed use. It's a candidate for mixed use, and not strictly residential. Ed felt that the area on Evans could be the same, but is coded as High Density Residential. Dan Howard stated that he felt that these areas had different character. The map isn't meant to be too specific there was some flexibility implied in the map, especially in transitional ones. It's meant to call out an area. We had the same discussion about the end of Cayuga. The areas up against the core could migrate to smaller scale commercial use if that was acceptable. They are transitional areas that are up against the Main Street core. Do they belong to the Main Street core, or do they belong to the residential area? You will see this naturally take place. Chuck Rizzone felt that if we want diversity, this may be a good way of obtaining it.

Ed Zabel asked if the Land Use Map legend colors could more closely match the colors on the map.

Paul Iskalo discussed page 12. His view would be to prohibit cul-de-sacs. This goes against the grain of the Village. He would like to add the wording "strongly discouraged". The whole point of the Village is the grid street pattern and connectivity. Carolyn Schlifke wondered if there was a code about this. Paul commented that safety personnel usually prefer connectivity so there is more than one access route to a location. David Brody disagreed, and felt it's there are only a few parcels remaining, from which you may not be able to get connection to the grid. People shouldn't be constrained if there is no other way to do it. Dan Howard stated that connectivity and access are important issues; it happens all the time in the Town. If there is a strong sense that connectivity should be encouraged and this is what the committee wants, then they need to send a strong statement in the plan. The Village Board may soften this in their review.

David Vitka asked about a cul-de-sac vs. a dead end. He likes the N. Cayuga area. Paul felt that the language should be revised to state that cul-de-sacs are prohibited, unless no other means of connection is available. If we don't state that in the plan, every time it comes up there will be a cul-de-sac. If that's what people want, that's fine. Connectivity is for the greater good of the Village. From a practical standpoint, cul-de-sacs will happen more often than not if there is not wording in the plan. Connecting streets is an integral component and fabric of the Village. Thus cul-de-sacs are prohibited unless no connection to a Village street is practical. Chris Church of the DOT noted that the more cul-de-sacs there are the more clogged Main Street will become because people will not be able to travel within their neighborhoods and will be forced onto Main Street. Carolyn Schlifke felt there are already a lot of barriers in the Village, such as the creek, plazas, etc. Lawrence felt the streets in the Village should be connected where possible.

Carolyn Schlifke discussed the tree planting strips on page 12. There are many areas in the Village where trees cannot be planted between the sidewalk and the street. Wires are a big problem. She suggested not allowing planting of trees under wires without the permission of the Village. No trees should be planted between the sidewalk and the street

without Village approval. There must be some parameters. Chris Church suggested using wording such as “feasible” or “where space and utilities permit”. She stated that safety needs to be a bigger issue than merely planting trees. Paul Iskalo suggested stating that tree species should be identified that are not likely to interfere with utilities.

Wally Pacer discussed the term “impervious surface coverage” on page 12 – what does this mean? It means not having too much pavement on the parcel. This may need to be more specific. Lawrence felt this is setup for more detailed design guidelines in the future.

Chuck Rizzone asked about proposed density. He wondered how it doubles and triples (8 to 16 dwellings and 1 to 3 stories). This gives a lot of latitude. Lawrence stated that the problem is that they are not writing zoning for the Village. Chuck felt that Evans is different than South Long. Does this mean they can be the same? He feels this is very dense. David Brody thought the opposite. He feels there must be at least five floors if there is parking included in the building. He doesn’t feel this belongs in most areas of the Village, but could fit in some areas along Main Street, as well as at Georgetown and in the South Long area. You have to have densities to have useful public transportation. We may make it impossible to ever sustain the economics of rapid transit.

Paul Iskalo felt that different people have different ideas of density. He discussed a development on the way to Toronto that has won awards. It was a former industrial area. Some of the buildings are all brick and people would be very pleased with them. This is density in excess of 8 units per acre. The form is almost more important than the use, as has been pointed out in the plan. What people are satisfied with depends on how it is built. That’s the difficulty when you talk density, that’s the challenge that we face when we try to push this through. David Brody felt that the floor area ratio (FAR) concept is a way to control this type of thing.

Chuck asked that Lawrence put a paragraph in telling what the densities are based on. He will look into that and we can talk about it at the next meeting.

Kate Waterman Kulpa felt three stories should be the max in the South Long area. There are one and two-story homes lining the park. How will that block be bridged? Chuck Rizzone stated it’s based on other properties being redeveloped. Paul Iskalo stated it depends on how much land you have. With a fairly long piece of land, you can gradually step up to 5 stories as you get closer to Main Street. Chuck Rizzone thought five stories would be fine where the DPW garage is currently located, but not in people’s back yards. David Brody felt no one disagreed with this, but they may disagree as to whether or not this could be accomplished. Kate felt “gradual” needs to be defined. Lawrence commented that the committee was starting to stray into zoning. David Brody felt that maybe we shouldn’t be talking stories, but mid-rise buildings. David Vitka talked about a proposed proportion between the street and the building height. Lawrence stated that the High Density Residential land use category covers a lot of areas in the Village. Dan Howard asked if the use for that area should be something different. Maybe there should be another land use designation. He felt the discussion is interesting, because of the role

of the park and the park land there. People want to maintain the amount of green space, but it doesn't have to be exactly configured the way it is now. Paul Iskalo felt he had a simple solution. He is comfortable with High Density Residential and three stories. The existing DPW garage is located in the "red" area, which is the Village Main Street area. This allows the higher development at two to four stories. Dan suggested pushing the yellow residential areas into the industrial area, so that it must stay consistent with residential. The yellow could be pushed over across California. This would help the transition to stay at the same scale.

Kate Waterman-Kulpa discussed the third paragraph on page 17. This section discusses potential rehabilitation of the mill as a working mill. David Brody suggested changing the wording from "mill" to "the area where the mill currently is"; the rest of the committee was not in favor of this. Lawrence will back off on very specific uses of the mill. Future use may not be for public use; it could be private down the road. The committee hasn't discussed future use. The wording "working mill with a waterwheel" will be removed. Kate also asked that the word "rehab" be replaced with "restoration".

Carolyn Schlifke talked about page 19 and thought that the parking lot was recently repaved and reconfigured. She questioned the use of the photos on that page. Wes Stone stated he was there today and the walkway is there.

Kate Waterman-Kulpa discussed page 17, and felt that some of the use is residential – this is too broad. Lawrence will clarify. Also, on page 18 in the second paragraph, Kate wondered what larger scale commercial was classified as. Dan Howard stated that he has a planning newsletter with information on the size of shopping centers (enclosed). Lawrence will get more specific. Kate is concerned over having medium-box retail.

David Brody wondered if on pages 19 and 21 where parking is discussed as being located at the rear should say "or below"? Lawrence suggested "so as not to breakup the street wall" (this point should be clarified).

Chuck Rizzone asked where section 2.5 is; it should be referenced – he couldn't find it.

Lawrence asked the committee about the question on page 23 regarding Village Mixed Use (VMU). Should automotive uses and/or drive-thru's be permitted in VMU areas? Paul Iskalo suggested separating them; car sales and gas stations are different than drive-thru's. Since drive-thru's have to be in the back, he is okay with that use; he is not necessarily okay with automotive uses. The committee agreed that automotive uses are not okay, but a drive-thru in the back is okay. Dan Howard warned to be careful when you put the driveway in the back, because people typically exit through the side street. Lawrence commented that you can have zoning regulations to regulate this. Paul Iskalo felt some of this needs to be left to the discretion of the Planning Board.

David Brody discussed page 24 and the need to be careful about pathways being proposed to use public property. Lawrence will clarify this area.

David Brody also discussed page 29. There is a path along the creek that's easy to follow. The kids hang out and it would be shame to build that up and take away the area for the kids to hang out. He thought a connection at the end of N. Cayuga would be an ideal connection to the Amherst State Park.

David Vitka talked about signage. The plan talks about public signage throughout the Village. He feels "no animals in the park" is an outdated concept. The signs with rules outside the parks give all the negatives first. It should be flipped around. Lawrence can work this in a little more.

Paul Iskalo talked about connectivity between the parks across Main Street. Did we talk about how to do it, or just that we want it to be done? He feels we should state that we want access under the bridge for connectivity to the parks. Lawrence will add this.

Chuck Rizzone asked where the term "group home" comes in on page 32. Should it be addressed? David Vitka stated that the term "aging in place" pertains to aging wherever you reside. Things are changing into more of a group home setting. This provides more opportunity for institutions to reinvent themselves. He felt this section is pretty well written.

Dan Howard brought up the re-use of churches that are located within the neighborhoods. For example there is an Episcopal church and a Russian church located within residential areas, does the committee want to make a statement about re-use of these buildings if their use as churches would change? Do we want to make a statement about re-use, especially in residential neighborhoods? The committee was flexible on this.

David Brody asked about the priority of the objectives at the end of section two. He suggested getting rid of "such as Spring" at the top of page 20.

NEXT MEETING

David Brody suggested starting the meeting at 6:00 PM on the 16th. This would allow the committee to get further into the document, since they only covered sections 1 and 2 tonight. The rest of the CPC was in agreement.

The next meeting will be October 16th 6:00 PM.

CLOSE OF MEETING

On motion by David Brody, seconded by Kate Waterman-Kulpa, the meeting was closed at 9:27 PM.

Unanimously carried.