

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

APPROVED MEETING NOTES – DECEMBER 6, 2005

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

Community Plan Committee Attendees: Doug Adema, Mary Carr, Thomas Claxton, Nancy Delo, Kim Giannelli-Calos, Paul Iskalo, Pastor Timothy Madsen, Todd Nelson, Victor Paquet, Carolyn Schlifke, Wesley Stone, Walter Pacer, Edward Zabel

Absent: Kevin Lester, David Sutton

Village Trustees: Mary Lowther, Basil Piazza, Rich Sweeney

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

Village Residents: Brian Kulpa, 81 Milton Street; David Vitka, 103 Lake Ledge Drive; Thomas Frank, 325C Evans Street

MINUTES

A motion was made by Victor Paquet, seconded by Kim Giannelli-Calos, to accept the notes of the October 25th, 2005 meeting.

Nancy Delo and Ed Zabel abstained from voting.

Motion Carried.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS FROM COMMUNITY MEETING #1

Jocelyn Gordon reviewed the Community Plan Progression flow chart for the project. She would like to review the draft vision statement tonight and approve it in draft form. From there, the consultant will go on to develop a conceptual Community Plan for the Village. Any decision made in the plan should be backed by the vision statement.

At the Community Meeting, participants were given a work book, as well as a map for the table. Ms. Gordon reviewed the priority issues from the meeting (see Public Meeting Summary document). She felt that there was a good representation of various ages at the meeting. There were several young people from the high school; however, the majority of the participants had lived in the Village for 15 years, and most were homeowners.

INTRODUCTION OF DRAFT VISION STATEMENT

Jocelyn Gordon then reviewed the Draft Vision Statement. She asked for any initial thoughts and comments on this, and noted that any recommendations should lead back to this statement in the plan.

Todd Nelson thought this was a very attractive vision statement, but asked how the Community Plan Committee felt about development. What do we want to see in terms of development in the future? The Committee discussed development and Jocelyn stated that she would incorporate this into the statement.

Pastor Madsen liked the use of descriptors in the statement, with the exception of “linked assets”; he felt this could be more descriptive and seemed more like jargon. Jocelyn replied that there are a lot of great things scattered everywhere that need to be connected. We need to create more of a story of what’s here and make it more of an all-day event to be here. This gives people a reason to be here, to go from shopping to dining, to taking a walk, and makes them aware of what’s here through signage, walkways, etc.

Victor Paquet liked the balance in the statement of Main Street and off-Main Street. He feels this will be well received by both residents and the business community. It seems the planning process has a huge emphasis on Main Street, but much of the Vision Statement talks about things that are outside the Main Street corridor. He feels there are many complicated issues to plan. Some are in the Vision Statement now, but he understands the planning process will have a large emphasis on Main Street. He thinks it should be better balanced.

Kim Gianelli-Calos stated she thinks there is a lot of room to go back to recreation if they need to.

Ed Zabel talked about the Niagara on the Lake area and posed the question of whether or not the Committee wants the Village to attract so many people. He sometimes feels we’re trying to promote the Village to bring people in, but will we overtax the Village? Where will we put all the cars? He doesn’t want to see too much commercialism, but doesn’t want to be limited to only the residents of the Village either. How do you balance this? He doesn’t want to see the Village become another Niagara on the Lake. Walter Pacer commented that he *would* like to see it become another Niagara on the Lake. Nancy Delo felt the issue is the commercialism. She would like the attractiveness and gentleness of the atmosphere, but without the commercial aspect of it. Paul Iskalo felt there was not an issue with Niagara on the Lake being too commercial or too crowded.

Nancy Delo felt that walking and bike paths would be a great idea to provide a safe environment; like the Amherst bike path but more comfortable and enjoyable. Jocelyn stated that they don’t want to promote tourism, but do want to allow the residents to interact with the Main St. district more than they are now. The people on Main Street need business. People are not banging the doors down to shop. She wants people to understand that there’s a different way to access and interact with Main Street.

Doug Adema wondered if removal of the toll barrier should be part of the Vision Statement. Jocelyn responded that the Vision Statement should be timeless. Reducing traffic on Main Street could be included, but she didn’t feel that something as specific as the toll barrier was appropriate.

Discussion then centered on the design guidelines for residential structures, as well as how to encourage home owners to keep up their properties. Jocelyn suggested educating and informing people. Paul Iskalo felt this speaks to preserving the quality of the residential area, as well as the business district. The Village is a sum of all those parts. Jocelyn advised that design standards could turn into code for commercial properties, but probably not for residential properties. Paul

Iskalo felt that as good renovation examples occur, others try to mimic them. More things then spin off of that.

Dan Howard returned to the discussion of the Committee's position on growth. Where does Williamsville stand in the context of the Town? If it has a role, what is it and what do we want it to be? The vision needs to speak to the role of the Village in context of the larger community, be it the Town of Amherst, Erie County, etc.

Todd Nelson asked what kind of growth do we want - Business? Residential? What do we want to protect? How do we want the village to grow and what is the perception out there of what the Village should be? Paul Iskalo commented that if you use this Vision Statement as a sales tool, the first sign of success is that you will have more people wanting to live here. This will not necessarily result in more people living here, but housing values will go up and people will come in, buy older housing stock and renovate. The more attractive the area is, and the more amenities are here, the more you are confirming that the Village doesn't get passed by in the future. Mary Carr stated that there were many kinds of socio-economic people living in the Village when she was growing up. This made it unique. If the interest is in raising the prices of the houses, that would eliminate this. She would not like to see Williamsville become Clarence with \$200,000 and \$300,000 homes. She'd like to see various priced homes, with residents of different income levels. These are the people that add diversity to the area. Paul Iskalo stated that's the balance that you're trying to strike; that's the key. Pastor Madsen stated he feels the pull of the Village and Main Street as pretty strong. It exceeds the geography of the Village proper. He likes the smallness of some of the restaurants and shops. There is a personal connection there. The village already has a pull to draw people here because it's special.

David Vitka, 103 Lake Ledge Drive

Mr. Vitka commented that there are always a couple of populations that get overlooked when a committee is made up of only Village residents. One of these is the daytime population of employees. What are their needs? They spend a lot of time and money in the Village. They may not have as much access to the information or meetings. The other is the elderly population, which has a harder time responding to these issues. The families who come in to visit a family member who needs care should be invited in. Their needs and desires should be anticipated and accounted for as well. Mr. Vitka is a Village resident with young kids who are from another country, living in a 98% white village. He also represents 142 seniors at St. Francis Home through his work on Reist Street, and 150 employees, some whom only make \$8.50 per hour and need transportation to get to work. He loves living in the Village. He lives in a house that is sized for his children, but is not sized for his family unit 20 years from now. He doesn't know where he would live then; the next step is assisted living. All the pieces are here, but they need to be balanced.

Jocelyn asked if the Village functions as part of the Town, or more independently? Paul Iskalo views the Village as the business and commercial center of the Town. Todd Nelson sees Main Street at Ellicott Creek as the center of the Town. Everyone agreed that they felt the Village is the center of the Town.

Paul Iskalo suggested looking at the many town centers around the country. There are many things the Village is lacking: a town square (with a small park, ice skating rink, Christmas tree, etc). It seems like this would be something to be included in a vision for the future. You need something that's visible from Main Street. There is usually a park in the center, cafés, a book store, an art shop, etc. Parking is hidden behind the buildings, and it all ties together.

The Committee discussed whether or not they were ready to release the Draft Vision Statement. They determined that there was enough refinement to be incorporated that it should be held until the next meeting. Jocelyn will revise the Draft Vision Statement based on tonight's discussion, and it will be sent out through Lynda Juul to the Committee Members via e-mail (if available), or regular mail for those who do not have e-mail. In the mean time, the consultant will start preparing very conceptual design alternatives.

A new meeting schedule was handed out for meetings through June 2006. The Committee agreed to keep the next meeting on January 24th at 7 PM.

CLOSE OF MEETING

A motion was made by Ed Zabel, seconded by Wes Stone, to close the meeting.

Motion Carried.