

MINUTES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN COMMITTEE

HELD: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 – 3:00 p.m.

ATTENDING: Mayor William Aiello
Ron Richardson
Eric Maurouard
Tom Buttafaro
Dr. Genelle Morris (via Zoom)
Adam Jester (via Zoom)
Meme Yanetsko (via Zoom)
Jeff Belt
Lenny Liguori
Reed McElfresh
Keri Kerper
Tiffany Taylor
Robert Thompson
Jennifer Forney
Paula Snyder
Robert Forness

Project Team: Emma Phillips
Dan Riker
Tanya Mooza Zwahlen
Patrick (Highland Planning)
Molly Vendura

1. Reintroductions

Mr. Riker explained he is the Project Manager with C&S Companies. Ms. Zwahlen explained she is with Highland Planning and is the Outreach Lead for Stakeholder Engagement. Ms. Vendura explained she is a Landscape Architect, and Emma Phillips explained she is the Deputy Project Planner with C&S Companies. The remainder of attendees introduced themselves.

2. Points of Contact

Mr. Riker explained the slide handout includes contact information for team members as well as City of Olean contacts. He explained if the committee has any feedback to contact the project team and explained they hope to hear back in the next week. He explained any feedback on engagement ideas and things that can be improved upon in the future can be directed to Ms. Zwahlen, while feedback regarding the project process and deliverables can be directed towards himself or Ms. Phillips.

3. Task Force Committee Responsibilities

Mr. Riker explained the project team would love to have the committee members involved and explained the more involved they are, the better the project will be. He explained when they plan engagement the committee members should let others know and explained they really want to hear from the member's various organizations. He explained when the committee comes to meetings they should come with ideas, talk to friends about what the committee is talking about, and let the project team know what everyone is feeling about the project and what to include. He explained they want to hear how the committee wants this to go as this is the City of Olean's document in the end, and they are just the medium putting it on paper.

4. Comprehensive Development Plan Overview and Schedule

Mr. Riker explained the document itself is a committee-driven process. He explained part of the document includes what is happening now, what we like about Olean, and what we can improve. He explained the document contains anything that the committee thinks will happen in the future and how the City can take advantage of these things. He explained they create the document to locally, regionally, and statewide take advantage of trends that can make the community a better place. He explained they need a vision and need to figure out where the community wants to be and to create strategies and goals that work towards that. He explained the plan includes implementation and how to go about projects including strategizing and how to find funding.

Mr. Riker explained the Comprehensive Development Plan is a blueprint for the future and will guide actions for the next ten to twenty years for the City, where we will spend money, and where we will feel projects will have the most benefit. He explained short-term and long-term capital investment should all be designed to reach the vision in the Comprehensive Development Plan. He explained it is a great way to get the community excited about projects that will come forward. Mr. Riker explained the Executive Summary of the Plan summarizes the entire document. He explained the introduction sets the stage for where we are now and why we are doing this. He explained the Public Participation section details what we did, what we heard, and how we went about obtaining public participation to create the plan. He explained the Existing Conditions are what we see now, gaps, strengths, and trends. He explained the Visions, Goals, and Strategies provide a twenty year outlook as well as goals for that outlook and ways to achieve those goals. He explained the Implementation Plan includes actions, responsibilities, and funding sources.

Ms. Phillips explained at the prior meeting, some committee members expressed it was still not clear what the planning document will encompass, and she hopes this as well as an outline previously sent will help give committee members a better idea. She explained they will start piecing parts of the document together as the committee and City approve them. She explained at the last meeting it was indicated they would begin getting the existing conditions going and now the public outreach is beginning. She explained this information will be used to start to develop a vision and goals. She explained in the Winter they will start identifying policy preferences. She explained they hope to have a draft Comprehensive Development Plan ready by Spring in order to be utilized for the Consolidated Funding Application. She explained they want this document to be ready for the City to start moving initiatives forward and after the document is finalized in the Summer or Fall, it will need to be formally adopted by the City.

5. Updates on Outreach

Ms. Zwahlen explained they developed a Stakeholder Community Participation Plan, which is posted on the City of Olean's website. She explained tonight is the first public meeting and the draft plan will be published for the second public meeting. She explained they also opened the survey in advance of the public meeting and included information on the survey in all marketing communications and press releases. She explained the survey will remain open until the end of the year and to date there are 48 responses. She explained they have pages with a QR code for the survey to hand out to the public tonight as well as paper surveys. She explained the survey is a really great tool to get people involved and talk about issues and opportunities at the start of the process. She explained in the future they will have a popup event in the community somewhere and will be discussing what event makes sense for a pop up where there are a lot of people and the survey can be promoted to get people involved at the beginning of the process. She explained they do ask for the survey participant's name and email, as well as if they want to be informed about future meetings. She explained when the second public meeting comes around it will be advertised to anyone who signs in tonight or who indicates they want to be contacted when they complete the survey.

Ms. Zwahlen explained during tonight's meeting, they will encourage members of the public who attend to take a note pad and pen and answer each of four questions on response boards to be shared. She explained these questions are what do you love about Olean, what are the most important characteristics about Olean to enhance and celebrate, what are the main aspects or areas of the City that need improvement, and what is the biggest opportunity for the City. She explained for the first thirty minutes of the public meeting the public can come in, have some snacks and answer the questions, and then at 5:30 p.m. they will have a presentation much like the one the committee is seeing now. She explained after that, they will have an exercise called World Café which focuses on visioning. She explained during this exercise, people will choose three tables to visit for ten minutes each and will talk about what their vision is for neighborhood, transportation, housing, economic development, parks and recreation, and enforcement and sustainability. She explained they will have a small group discussion with whoever is at the table, and at the next table they will review what is discussed during the first session and then add to it. She explained if they agree with something they will star or check this, and then add to and build onto it. She explained facilitators will stay at the tables to ensure some continuity at each table. She explained that will take up about the last 45 minutes of the meeting and will help create a very detailed meeting summary.

6. Review and Discussion of Existing Conditions

Ms. Phillips explained she is going to review the existing conditions with the committee and explained what she is presenting are high level notes about all the existing conditions on the PowerPoint presentation, and explained she wants to go through this to get insight on anything they may have missed. Mr. Buttafaro explained the document should specify we are in the southern region of Western New York. Ms. Phillips explained if there are any grammatical issues to send her an email, and she is looking to see if she missed a facility or an issue like work needing to be

done on an existing facility. She explained this section sets them up to identify trends, opportunities and challenges so down the line priorities and actions for priorities can be determined.

Ms. Phillips explained the City of Olean has a declining population of -5.2% since 2010 and is expected to continue to decline by -3.2% by 2028. She explained the median age of Olean is 40.3 which is on par with New York State and Cattaraugus County. Mr. McElfresh explained the report states the expected decline by 2028 is -2.6% and Ms. Phillips explained they will look into that. She explained 44.1% of the population is represented by those under 18 and those between 35 and 54 which shows there are many families within the City. She explained there is a continued increase in homeownership in the City and there are low home values but they are expected to increase. She explained the housing vacancy has remained stable and trends show a demand for all types of housing. Mr. Belt explained he sees there is a one sentence concluding statement on the draft Existing Conditions document and asked if we can build on that. He explained he questions why the total number of households are declining but owner occupancy is rising, and explained there are some interesting observations and he would like the last paragraph to explain what is going on. Ms. Phillips explained this will be done when we get to the section at the end about challenges, opportunities and trends. She explained this is a base level explanation and once this is fact checked it will be used to create and expand on what is written.

Ms. Phillips explained 29% of Olean residents have completed some college and 27% have received a college degree. She explained Olean is a commercial and employment center within Cattaraugus County and has a 23.5% poverty rate, which is 10% higher than the New York State average. She explained the unemployment rate in 2023 is 6.6%, which is higher than both Cattaraugus County and New York State. She explained 79% of workers drive to work and roughly 15% carpool, take public transit or bike. She explained health care and social assistance, manufacturing, educational services, and retail trade make up almost 59% of Olean's labor force. Mr. Belt explained to go along with the average disposable income, he would like to see a qualifying sentence about cost of living because New York really is two states, and the cost of living downstate is much more than upstate. Ms. Phillips agreed this is a good idea. Mr. Thompson explained we should include the poverty rate for the County as well as the State. He explained without mentioning the County, it looks like we really stand out. Ms. Phillips explained it will vary in the presentation whether both the County and State are used, but she will pull the County number to ensure both the County and State are represented here as well. Mr. Buttafaro asked if there is a way to eliminate the statistics from downstate, and Ms. Phillips explained we could look at just a tri-county area.

Ms. Phillips explained sometimes the City sounds shoeless, but the numbers are good for grant applications. She explained she also understands the committee would like this document to be representative of what the City of Olean really feels like. Mr. Belt explained a company might want to move here but say no because of the market presented. Ms. Phillips explained she loves the idea of pulling maybe a few counties of Western New York counties to see what that disposable income is. Ms. Kerper explained it is not just difficult for companies, but also developers. She explained we look attractive in some lights but unattractive in others. She explained it would be great to have a breakdown on all those aspects. Ms. Phillips explained maybe the Executive

Summary should contain some of those glowing numbers to sell Olean and what it really is, and then in the nitty gritty include some of these details. She explained in the 2005 Comprehensive Development Plan, the Existing Conditions section was huge and people don't really read those. She explained she had a discussion with Ms. Kerper and the City and we can keep this a little more high level and a little more comprehensive. She explained this may seem why it is wider and lighter than the 2005 document.

Ms. Phillips explained we should probably talk to the Chamber of Commerce about getting other numbers for the section regarding Olean's labor force. She explained she will discuss this with the Chamber and others who might have more information about other major employers in the City. Mr. Belt explained a paragraph in the document explains there are 5,972 workers and 13,106 employees, which makes it sound like only half are working. Ms. Phillips explained the wording "with available data" could be included and explained there were 5,972 workers who tell us how they get to work. She explained they could also call them both employees. Mr. Belt explained the number seemed low and explained when he did the Brownfield Project he was told the total number of employees was 13,000. Ms. Phillips explained she will look into this and explained there was a lesser number that responded to the Census and the American Community Survey who let us know how they get to work. Mr. Belt explained he believes Olean has a large number of manufacturing employees and explained it might be interesting to have a comparison to other benchmarks. Ms. Kerper explained they did have a brief conversation about needing to figure out what percentage is government workers. Ms. Yanetsko explained she can get that information and explained she works with someone at the Department of Labor in Buffalo who can help get some particulars. Ms. Phillips explained she will connect with Ms. Yanetsko and let her know what she has so far to see if we can obtain more accurate numbers moving forward.

Ms. Phillips explained Olean maintains 17 parks with 73% of residents living with a ten minute walk to a park. She explained they included items that are recreational resources that are not City-owned, such as the YMCA. Mayor Aiello explained the William O. Smith Recreation Center is not listed, and Mr. Belt explained he believes the table he is looking at is park space only. Mr. Thompson asked if she is saying 27% of residents are a greater than 10 minute walk from a park and Ms. Phillips explained this is correct, according to parkscore.com. She explained if we feel this is inaccurate we can try to do something with the GIS to get more accurate statistics. She asked if it would be appropriate to identify public areas that may be missing park space, and Mr. Thompson explained not unless we want to acquire park area but he does not believe that is our plan. Mayor Aiello explained if we want to include the YMCA we should include public school recreational facilities as well. Ms. Phillips explained the team will do their own math on the statistics and figure that out, although she thought 73% was good. Mr. Thompson explained he thought it would be higher. Mr. Jester explained it would not be difficult to get to the high 80's by increasing the walk time to 12 to 15 minutes. Mr. Belt mentioned the Bartlett Country Club and that it is interesting that there is an 18 hole golf course within the City. Ms. Phillips explained it would not hurt to include a sentence about that.

Ms. Phillips explained there are numerous designated historic and archeological sources in the City, and there are two Historic Districts as well as two eligible Historic Districts. Mr. Belt

explained he felt St. Mary's Basilica could be included in this section. Mr. Buttafaro explained St. Bonaventure should never have "Saint" spelled out. Ms. Phillips explained the City has natural resources such as the Allegheny River, Kings Brook, Pratts Brook, and Johnson Brook flowing within the City limits and flood plains and flood zones within the City are mostly vacant or contain minimal development. Mr. McElfresh asked what flood plain is listed and Ms. Phillis explained there is not a name for it, but it is the 100 year flood plain. Mr. McElfresh explained he knows Seneca Heights is within the flood plain. Ms. Phillips asked if this should be included and Mr. McElfresh responded it should be. Mayor Aiello explained the City currently is having issues with the levees and there may be a lot more issues if the City does not raise areas of them. Mayor Aiello explained the City is currently getting a project going for this and Ms. Phillips asked that he reach out with details such as what the project includes and the outcomes so they can be included in the document. Mr. Thompson explained he would aid in providing this information. Mr. Thompson asked about including in this section City land not developed but that might have potential, like the South Olean hill. He explained there is a whole lot that the City could do down the road there and Mr. Maurouard explained it contains 106 acres. Mr. Belt explained they are referring to the northern face of Mt. Herman.

Ms. Phillips explained there are emergency services and health care facilities available within the City. She explained the Olean Public Library has limited capabilities, and Mr. McElfresh asked what qualifies as limited capabilities. Ms. Phillips explained they have limited parking and explained apparently parking there isn't sufficient sometimes for what they host and provide, and people have issues. Ms. Vendura explained they should clarify parking, and Mr. McElfresh explained he would remove the wording "limited capabilities" as it is a co-central library for two counties and is capable, although without large meeting rooms. Ms. Phillips explained this was included in case funding is sought down the line to aid with improving the meeting room limitations. Mr. McElfresh also noted this is not a part of the City, and is a school district public library. Ms. Phillips explained JCC is a significant part of downtown Olean and is a workforce development partner. Ms. Snyder explained the document should state degrees in addition to the wording for certificates currently included.

Ms. Phillips explained a majority, or 38%, of the City's land use is residential, and vacant land is at 19% which is a high percentage. She explained the lowest percentages of land use include recreation and entertainment, industrial, and wild, forested, conservation lands, and public parks. She explained even though we talked about having abundant parks, it is actually on the lower side of the land use acreage.

Mr. Maurouard asked if St. Bonaventure doesn't have a paragraph dedicated to it, and Ms. Phillips explained it is technically not in the City of Olean. She explained that it is important that we note that in the document, and we can include a paragraph if the committee feels it is appropriate. She explained even though it is not in the City of Olean, if it is important to the committee and the City we can include it in the document. Mr. Jester explained there are a number of private employers who have more employees than those listed in the document, and Ms. Phillips explained she would love that feedback. Mr. Jester explained Cutco and Intandem are two that he thinks of and explained if we want to include some private employers in the list, there may be some opportunity

there. Ms. Phillips agreed and explained she will work with Ms. Yanetsko about private employers as well. Ms. Yanetsko explained she has a list of private employers and an industrial guide she will send out. Mr. Forness explained it might be worthwhile to include information about the Brownfield as well, and Ms. Phillips explained she would look into that.

Ms. Phillips explained there are ten zoning districts with residential zoning covering 59% of the City and industrial zoning covers 18% of land area. She explained once the team hears more from the committee and the community they will address zoning and if any updates or changes need to be made. She explained in New York State any major zoning changes affecting over a certain acreage need to be supported in some way by the Comprehensive Development Plan, so if there are zoning issues she asks that the team be made aware so they can include this under trends, opportunities, or challenges. She explained this will allow the City to utilize the document if going through a zoning change.

Ms. Phillips explained Olean is dissected by two state routes and has two exits as a part of Interstate 86. She stated OATS provides four types of ongoing regular transit services, and there is abundant parking located through Olean. She noted there are also marked bike lanes on major corridors. She asked if they are wrong to say there is abundant parking through Olean and Ms. Kerper explained she doesn't think so. Mr. Belt explained the Form-Based Zoning Code took away downtown parking minimums and Ms. Phillips asked if this eliminated parking minimums for new developments in those zones. Mr. Belt explained this is correct and Ms. Phillips explained this is crucial knowledge to include. Mr. Belt explained he thinks Olean has too much downtown parking with a little over half of the built up downtown in Olean demolished in favor of built up parking lots. He explained the goal for the Olean Urban Renewal Agency was to infill some of that with buildings again. Mr. Jester asked if Ms. Kerper or Mayor Aiello have a count of the parking downtown and Ms. Kerper explained she walked the downtown with the City Assessor prior to the North Union Street project and she made a crude map of private and public parking areas. She explained she can provide the exact number, and Mr. Belt explained he seems to recall it was a large number. Mr. Jester explained he thought it was a surprising number that answered the objection to the project due to parking issues, and explained he heard there was nowhere to park but there was an impressive number of spots within one mile of the City Centre. Ms. Kerper explained with zoning she believes there should be an updated prototype project of zoning based on when it was last done based on variance use or otherwise Zoning Board of Appeals reviews. She explained they have language for solar, but she believes this needs to be updated and we really need to protect some of the vacant land in Olean that is left and developable. She explained we need to think about zoning what is left and what is the highest use and value to ensure it is done properly. Ms. Phillips explained she will look during the next two weeks, and provide feedback for this section.

7. Visioning Session

- i. What is your vision for parks and recreation in Olean?

Mayor Aiello explained he would like to have a more functional Bradner Stadium, with a turf field that can be useful more seasons with different sports such as football, softball, baseball, soccer, and lacrosse where weather is not a hindrance.

Ms. Kerper explained she would like to see updated equipment in all the parks that is safe and inclusive.

Mr. Belt explained he would like to see more trail keys including Mt. Herman. Ms. Forney explained she would like to see that area developed and also bring forward some history about what was up there. Mr. Maurouard explained it would be great to tie in the trails and Mt. Herman with the kayak launch and bike trail to Gargoyle Park. Mr. Belt explained a trail on the levee would be a dream come true. Mr. Thompson explained this would be great, but there are a lot of issues with that. Mr. Jester explained he wonders if there is opportunity for public and private collaboration on the topic of parks and recreation. He explained there are sizeable parks and recreation facilities strictly maintained by the City, and there are some players in parks and recreation on the private side that would make it interesting to see if there is a collaboration opportunity there and what it might lead to. He explained the YMCA and school district, for example, have projects similar to what the City is currently undertaking, and parks and recreation space could be enjoyed by the entire City and entire area so if we have a public-private team working together it might be a positive. Mr. Belt explained it is an interesting idea to essentially leverage parks and recreation as a branding statement and as a tourism attractant to Olean to foster growth in tourism economy. Ms. Kerper explained we have the Allegheny River Public Access and Recreation Plan, and a committee created a whole planning document that would be great to execute. She explained those priority projects would help connect communities.

Mr. Forness explained an indoor recreation space would benefit the City. He explained a lot of people with kids drive to Buffalo two or three times a week during the winter for an indoor field for four season recreation. He explained something like this would allow us to have tournaments like the Gus Macker all year. Mayor Aiello explained this is one project that could be done with private and public collaboration. Mr. Forness explained he doesn't want to get lost in the Gus Macker part, but that's 150 teams that come in and spend money in the City. Mr. Buffamante explained soccer tournaments could be held as well. Mr. Thompson explained this is revenue for restaurants and hotels, and Ms. Kerper explained this could also encompass a new community center.

Ms. Forney explained at some of the parks there is no place to sit so even small improvements like picnic tables with shade could add a gathering spot to neighborhoods. Mr. Buffamante asked if more lighting is needed, and Mr. Richardson explained security cameras are what he was thinking. Mayor Aiello explained there is an RFP out for those now. Mr. Forness explained he thinks every idea we have needs to come with a maintenance sustainability plan. He explained we tend to build and then need to figure out what to do twenty years down the road when it wears out. Mr. Thompson added we need to consider staffing as well, and Ms. Kerper added budget for upkeep.

- ii. What is your vision for housing in the City of Olean?

Mr. Thompson explained one of the first things that will come up on this topic is homelessness and how we address that. He explained it is affecting the use of parks, causing vandalism and affecting quality of life.

Ms. Kerper explained we have done a good job in a partnership with the Land Bank demolishing homes that are unsafe. She explained we need to think about the point that we don't want to go too far and explained we need to consider how to protect homes that could be salvaged and how we get them before they go for taxes or are placarded because they can't be saved. Mr. Belt explained people who live in a lot of those homes are strapped and can't keep up with capital maintenance, or just want a new home and walk away. He explained he would like to see a grant program for homeowners to improve their houses. Mr. Thompson explained on the other side, we need to address areas of blight and structures that need to come down and are too far gone. He explained we need to remove a lot of buildings, too.

Ms. Kerper explained she doesn't know if it's going to be popular or legal to put legislation in place to have slumlords who are not insuring their home and not being a good steward to the people in the neighborhood unable to purchase additional homes in the City. She explained a couple offenders will buy a single family home and chop it up into as many units as they possibly can. Mayor Aiello explained they will rent out the house, the shed out back, and the garage out back.

Mr. Buffamante explained every time we lose a house we have empty land, and then low income housing talks about developments. He explained he looks at a lot of problems Jamestown had and it was after a massive development tore down a block of old houses and put up developments. He explained he feels it is better to keep people in small houses so we don't run into the same issues Jamestown did. Ms. Kerper explained when we demolish homes, the lots are typically not buildable according to zoning, so zoning needs to be looked at. She explained we need to determine if we want tiny homes here and determine if there is enough room for a driveway and tiny home. Mr. Buffamante asked when the last house was built on 12th Street and explained a lot of people just aren't going to rebuild. Mr. Belt explained that is a risk of taking a house down that it is never coming back. Mr. Thompson explained with that in mind, he wonders if there is any way to encourage repurposing of properties and redevelopment as housing. Mr. Belt explained he is for this idea, but these houses need too much capital maintenance and improvement. He explained people that live in these places that need the maintenance and improvement don't have the money. Mr. Thompson asked if there is some financial incentive to encourage this, and Mr. Belt explained we should redirect money towards grants to rebuild and renew homes within the municipality.

Mayor Aiello explained one thing the Land Bank ran into, but not in Olean, was they fixed up and repurposed homes, one in particular in Franklinville that they spent \$200,000 to rehab. He explained they sold it for a little over \$100,000 so that is what you are going to get. He explained you put all this money into a home, and you are not able to recuperate the money. He explained it could be worth it, though, if we get people in there and get a commitment for them to stay there. Mr. Belt explained it is also cheaper to give a homeowner a grant and have them do the work rather than have the government do it. Mr. Thompson asked if a lack of public transportation is hurting neighborhoods and Ms. Kerper explained this goes great into the RAISE grant application with connecting communities. She explained it is not just public transit, it is also accessibility for

neighborhoods to where the transit is now. Mr. Thompson explained we could broaden the public transportation system to encourage people to live in other areas. Ms. Kerper explained a solution can be had if the State changes some of their home programs. She explained we are not New York City and will never fit into that criteria, as it doesn't work here. She explained she would also like to see less State funding go into the modular home program. She explained there is a lot of money in that program and they could revamp and really look at Western New York and the Southern Tier to create a housing rehab program that could work for us here.

8. Next Steps

Ms. Phillips explained she has some work to do to update and revise the Existing Conditions. She explained from those existing conditions, and what they hear in the meeting tonight, they will be creating trends, opportunities, and challenges. She explained she is going to work on the creation of a draft vision and goals, and will report out the online survey when it is closed in December. She explained the next committee meeting will be in January 2024 and they plan to meet virtually.

9. Additional Questions & Discussion

Mr. Thompson noted he thinks one big thing missing here in the City is a venue for indoor events. He explained we have a recreation center, but that won't bring a convention here.

Absent additional discussion, the meeting adjourned at approximately 4:30 p.m.

MINUTES PREPARED BY TIFFANY TAYLOR