

## TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MEETING SUMMARY

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**Date of Meeting:** April 15, 2008

**Attendees:**

**STEERING COMMITTEE**

- Daniel Ulatowski
- Mary Holtz
- Anthony Sisti
- Andrew Kulyk
- Arthur Beaman
- William Pugh
- James Boy
- Tom Adamczak
- Kevin Schenk

- Linda Hammer, Depew
- Stanley Keysa, Lancaster
- Richard Leimbach, Amherst
- Marie Pieczynski, ECDEP
- Richard Olday
- Patrick Allaire
- William Stalker
- Allita Steward, City of Buffalo
- Bill Parke, City of Buffalo

**CONSULTING TEAM**

- Drew Reilly
- Wendy Salvati
- Ellen Parker
- Jacob Needle
- Suzette Goldstein, HOK
- Colin Greene, HOK
- Elaine Van S. Carmichael
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Location: Alexander Community Center

Time: 4:15PM

Minutes Issued: April 17, 2008

### I. Welcome and Introductions

Welcomes and introductions were done to reacquaint the committee with the consultants. Wendy Salvati introduced Ellen Parker, a senior planner with Wendel, who will be assisting on the project. The agenda for the meeting was reviewed.

### II. Summary review of Project Status

#### Inventory of Existing Conditions:

Wendy Salvati handed out a summary outline of the information that will be gathered and assessed under the inventory and analysis section of the Comprehensive Plan. The following was discussed:

- It was noted that a map of existing land use has been prepared using real property service (RPS) data. Dan Ulatowski said that RPS data is typically about 80 percent accurate. In addition, the project team is assembling a map that shows the location of the various neighborhoods in the Town. Dan will provide the team with a map that the building inspection office uses that provides more information on neighborhoods (based on fire districts). The Supervisor mentioned that at the Public Information Meeting an area was referred to as "Walden Village". She would prefer that this area just be identified as the Walden area.
- It was noted that the land use map does not show the new golf course (it is shown as vacant land).
- Demographic data for the plan will depict the entire Town, including the Villages. In certain cases, the data will be broken out to show the entire Town, the Villages within the Town and the Town outside the Villages. The Town has information on low-to moderate income areas, which they will get to Wendel. Dan mentioned that the RFP for this project also requires data on businesses, which Economic Stewardship (Elaine) will handle.

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- It was mentioned that all the trees that are being planted under the Re-Tree Cheektowaga program are being entered into a database.
- The Town has conservation easements along some of the creeks. Dan will get the mapping data for this to the project team. It was also mentioned that there was a study done for the Buffalo Creek watershed and its tributaries. The project team will also work with Dan to get this information.
- The Town's Open Space Plan identifies significant forested communities.
- Brownfield and brownfield redevelopment was noted as being important and these sites should be included in the report. Available data will be gathered from the DEC and EPA.
- Existing sanitary sewer capacity was identified as an issue. Dan said that the Town is under a consent order from the DEC to address inflow and infiltration (I&I) problems. Therefore, Clough Harbour is doing a study for the Town. He will get information on this for the project team. It was mentioned that the former wastewater treatment plant in the Town is now a pumping station and that wastewater is now pumped to the City of Buffalo, where it is treated at their plant. There are also two overflow retention facilities for surcharge waters. It was mentioned that the area of Walden Avenue, between Harlem and the Thruway, experienced wet weather (I&I) issues. A capital improvement project has been designed to mitigate these issues, but has not yet been implemented.
- Dan will get the project team an updated GIS layer with the correct boundaries for the sewer districts.
- The location of cell towers should be mapped in the report (Dan will get this information to the project team). Dan also mentioned that there are aesthetic issues along Dick Road in the vicinity of where the utility company has a huge overhead distribution corridor. Although lines in the area were consolidated, certain older lines were not removed.
- Transportation is a big issue and the study should look at the need for improved walkability in the Town. It was asked if an inventory of sidewalks would be performed. Such a study is outside the scope of the Comprehensive Plan, but it will take a look at critical gaps in the system where linkages could provide better connections to bus stops, schools and other pedestrian traffic generators.
- Dan said that it is important to look at the inventory of paper streets. The Town has a vested interest in these areas and they have the potential to provide linkages between neighborhoods.
- Richard Olday noted that the NFTA did a strategic assessment of transit in the late 1990's, which is currently being updated. Previously, the only feasible transit route was to the airport area. He said that he will provide information on this study and the update to the project team. The NFTA noise pollution study that was done in the airport area was also discussed.
- Dan will provide the project team with a map of the fire districts in the Town. The Town also has listings of historic and cultural resources and archaeological sites.

The maps that were brought to the meeting were provided to the Town for review and updating. Dan said that the maps should be placed on the Sharepoint site for the committee to view.

## **SEQR Process:**

Wendy noted that as part of the scope of services for this project, the comprehensive plan must go through the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process. At this time we must initiate the review by notifying all of the involved and interested agencies and designating the Town Board as the "Lead Agency" for administering the process. Involved and interested agencies include governmental agencies, school districts, adjoining communities, etc. The project team will provide the Town with the necessary documentation to commence the process, including the lead agency notification form, an environmental assessment form and a sample resolution for the Town Board for the formal lead agency designation.

Kevin Schenk stated that we need to make sure that we are coordinating our efforts with the scope and schedule outlined in the Department of State grant work program.

## **III. Update on the Public Participation Process**

Wendy Salvati discussed the Public Information Meeting that was held on April 8<sup>th</sup>. It was a successful meeting with about 73 people in attendance, including some of the committee members. The meeting

provided a variety of issues and opportunities that are highlighted in the meeting summary that can be viewed on the Comprehensive Plan website. The information that was brought to light made the meeting useful as an official scoping meeting for the SEQR process. The importance of this first stage in the public participation process is to clearly identify the issues, assets, opportunities and problems.

The next step in the public participation process is Stakeholder Meetings. A total of five meetings were included in the scope of services for this project. Two of those meetings will be held in late May or early June. Dan expressed his concern that we must have the inventory far enough along, particularly Elaine's work, prior to these meetings to provide useful information for discussion.

The groups that should be considered for the stakeholders' meetings were discussed. Concepts include the following:

**Business Group:** The Chamber of Commerce and other non-member businesses, as well as business associations, were considered important for one of the meetings. Jim Boy will help coordinate this. The importance of bringing the bigger entities to the meeting, such as Benderson, DDR, Ciminelli, Bella Vista, etc. was also mentioned.

**Taxpayer groups** were identified as a possible choice for another group meeting. Bob Stalker noted that a large umbrella group has been formed known as the Cheektowaga United Taxpayers' Association.

**Schools:** There are eight school districts within the Town of Cheektowaga. We need to reach out to the district representatives, the PTA's, parents, students, etc. It was suggested that perhaps an activity could be planned in conjunction with a stakeholders' meeting that would provide activities for children. This may be a way to get more of the parents and younger people out. It was mentioned that the Cheektowaga Central School District is involved in a clean up/revitalization effort for the west side of Town. Many students will be participating in this effort.

**Governmental entities and agencies** were seen as another important group (DOT, NFTA, Erie County, GBNRTC, fire districts, Thruway Authority, etc.). Service groups could be included in this category, such as St. Joseph's Hospital, St. Vincent DePaul, Hospice, etc. The Niagara Frontier Radio Reading Service was also mentioned. Alternately, service groups could be invited to the Taxpayer group.

It was decided that Wendel will prepare a draft list and circulate it to the Committee for review and approval. It was agreed that the fifth group would be chosen later in the process as the issues and opportunities emerge. A formal letter of invitation will be drafted and printed on Town letterhead to be mailed or otherwise distributed to the groups.

Because the consultant is limited in the number of meetings that can be held, it was noted that the Committee and other Town representatives can conduct outreach on their own. It was suggested that this is an opportunity to get the AdHoc Committee more involved. The project team could prepare a short PowerPoint presentation and a "script" that could be used by others for local meetings to gather public input. This presentation could be done at events such as a local Chamber luncheon (Jim Boy and the Supervisor will consider this).

Wendy mentioned the visual preference survey. At present, Wendel is working internally to get the mechanics of this site set up to make sure it will function properly. The idea is to provide an interactive site for the public to view photographs of different types and styles of development and provide their input on what they prefer from a visual and aesthetic standpoint. This will be helpful with our future planning efforts. This site will become active later in the process, when we get more involved in focusing in on the issues (likely late summer).

## IV. Visioning / Goals and Objectives

Wendy explained that one of the next steps in the planning process will be the development of goals and objectives. We will take the comments gathered through public outreach, and in concert with the Advisory Committee, shape out draft goals and objectives. They will be oriented around the key elements identified in the RFP (transportation, economic development, neighborhood revitalization and zoning/land use regulations). Wendy handed out a draft outline that contained the comments gathered at the Public

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Information that were organized under the key elements categories.

General discussion was offered about the Town's heritage and cultural history. The Supervisor stated that Cheektowaga is a hard working, blue collar Town with good schools, decent and affordable housing, and a good place to do business. It was also noted that the Town is a "point of entry" to the City and surrounding towns, with transportation being one of the greatest assets.

### V. Other Business / Next Steps

Coordination with the Ad Hoc Committee was discussed. Wendy reviewed the groups that currently have representation on the committee. This committee is important as a resource for the Steering Committee and we need to identify folks who are proven leaders and can provide assistance. Dan noted that the Ad Hoc committee members have access to the Sharepoint site so they can review project materials and keep up to date on everything. It is important to find ways to benefit from their enthusiasm to be involved and assist with the project. Dan said that he will call a meeting of the committee to let them know that we want them involved and that they have a voice in this process. Bob Stalker spoke again about the Cheektowaga United Taxpayers' Association and will speak with one of their representatives to see if she would be will to take a leading role on the Ad Hoc Committee to help coordinate efforts.

As the inventory of existing conditions evolves, sections will be placed on the Sharepoint site for the committee to monitor progress.

The next steering committee meeting will be held in early June. Wendy will coordinate this with Dan. At the next meeting, the findings of the data analysis will be discussed. Draft goals and objectives will be provided, as well. The meeting will include discussion of the upcoming Focus Meeting and a review of the results of the meetings with Stakeholders.

Dan spoke with the Committee about utilizing the Sharepoint site to review up to date information on the project. The website will also be kept up to date as new information becomes available. Dan also mentioned that the Town is having a problem and cannot send emails to anyone that has a "roadrunner" address.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Wendy E. Weber Salvati, AICP