

TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MEETING SUMMARY

Date of Meeting: September 29, 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
- Rachel Chrostowski, 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, ESI
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Location: Cheektowaga Senior Center

Time: 4:30PM

Minutes Issued: September 30, 2008

I. Welcome and Introductions

Welcomes and introductions were done to reacquaint the committee with the consultants. It was noted that a few members of the Ad-Hoc Committee were in attendance. Wendy Salvati provided an overview of the agenda for the meeting. The following handouts were provided: Minutes from the meeting with the Supervisor's Youth Council (9/23/08), Public Notice for the Stakeholders' meeting with Cheektowaga taxpayers (10/7/08); notes from interviews with ESI and the Supervisor and Dan Ulatowski (8/19/08); notes from a presentation on the Challenges of Inner ring Suburbs given by Supervisor Holtz at a Congressional Task Force meeting (8/15/08); draft Table of Contents for the comprehensive plan; and preliminary draft goals and objectives for the comprehensive plan.

II. Review of Project Status, Scope and Schedule

Drew Reilly and Dan Ulatowski discussed the internal (Sharepoint) and external websites that have been set up for the project. Dan noted that the Advisory Committee and the AdHoc Committee should be accessing the internal site regularly. Dan handed out instructions on how to gain access to the site. The internal Sharepoint site has links to the City of Buffalo Comprehensive Plan and the Erie Niagara Regional Framework. All of the project documents that have been received from Wendel are on this site, as well. Wendy noted that the project website, which can be accessed through the Town's website, is updated with meeting notice and summaries, and maps. This site should be used more by the Committee over the coming months.

Wendy Salvati discussed the Inventory (section III of the comprehensive plan). Dan said that he had provided hard copies of this section to the Committee. The inventory section is about 80 to 85% complete. All of the subsections noted on the Table of Contents have been addressed. At this point Wendel and ESI are now adding information to this section in a more focused manner, strengthening the more important areas that are related to the focus areas outlined in the RFP. Drew noted that the inventory is being kept a "readable" document; a synopsis of important facts and information. This section

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of the report should not be too voluminous. It has to be centered around focus areas for the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis that will be performed later in the process.

Drew Reilly discussed the status of the project and noted that the schedule has slide out about 2 to 3 months. This is due to internal difficulties with sub-consultants and extra time with the data collection. Drew said that he revised the schedule and Wendel will be working hard to gain back some of the time that was lost. Wendel has worked things out with the subconsultants; ESI (Elaine Carmichael and her staff) has been working on the economic section of the inventory and was in the area in August for the stakeholders' meeting with businesses and area research. While Elaine was in Town she met with the Supervisor and with Dan Ulatowski (notes from these meetings were handed out). ESI staff will be back in Town in early October to do follow-up interviews with some of the prominent businesses and developers in Town.

Drew noted that HOK will be involved as we move forward with the analysis and public focus aspects of the project. They will be looking at 3 residential areas and one commercial area in the plan. It was noted that the project team would coordinate with the Town's study of the Walden Avenue/Pine Hill area, which is being handled by Jerry Gabryszak. Dan Ulatowski asked how the project team would go about selecting the specific neighborhoods that would be assessed as part of the comprehensive plan. Drew said that information that is received at the public focus meeting and input from HOK will be most helpful. Information from the inventory and analysis will also be factored into the decisions. Dan stated that the Bellevue area, in the vicinity of the quarry, should be targeted as one of the neighborhoods for study. The Como Park and Lossen Road areas, as well as the French Road neighborhood, were also suggested. It was noted that there is lots of historic information along Como Park Blvd. (former amusement park, street car stop, etc.); this area should have some historic recognition. It was decided that the selection has to be representative, with a variety of neighborhoods included in the plan. That way these plans could be utilized as starting points for other neighborhoods in the Town.

III. Update on the Public Participation Process

Wendy Salvati provided an update on the public participation process. Stakeholders' meetings are being conducted, which started with a meeting with local businesses in late July. With assistance from the Cheektowaga Chamber of Commerce, local business operators and local development interests were invited to provide their input on the comprehensive plan. This meeting was held at the Millennium Hotel and was fairly well attended. Quite a number of useful comments were gathered at that session. However, there were a number of larger entities that did not send representatives. Of the larger development interests in the Town, only Iskal Development sent someone. As previously mentioned, ESI will be back in the area in early October to meet with some of the companies that did not attend the stakeholders' meeting. Wendy noted that the meeting summary for this meeting is posted on the internal and external websites.

Taxpayer groups were identified as another group for a stakeholders' meeting. Wendy has been working with Bob Stalker, who is associated with a large umbrella group has been formed known as the Cheektowaga United Taxpayers' Association. After working out the various schedules, October 7th was selected as the date for this meeting. It will be held at 7:00 PM in the large room at the Cheektowaga Senior Center. It was noted that this meeting should be more than just the public information meeting, because many of the same people who attended the public information meeting will be there. Dan asked that Wendel prepare a summary of the inventory (what we know to date) and develop topic areas for discussion.

Wendy said that in an effort to gather input from younger segment of the Town's population, a meeting was held on September 23rd with the Supervisor's Youth Council. This is a group of 7 or 8 students that represent the four high schools in the Town (a summary of the meeting was handed out). The students agreed that the best method for getting greater involvement of youth in the planning process was to establish small groups of student leaders at each high school. These students would serve as liaisons to disseminate and obtain information from the larger student body. Wendy will follow up to ensure that this

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happens. It was noted that when asked, the students indicated that they thought the Town was a good place to live and all but one planned on staying in the area. When asked what they would like to see happen to improve the Town, they said they would like more activities and entertainment (movies, putt putt and skating) and more safe places for youth to "hang out".

The next step in the public participation process is the Public Focus Meeting. It is anticipated that this meeting will be held in late November or early December. The purpose of this meeting is to clarify what we have heard from the public and undertake a SWOT analysis of the information. Prior to this meeting, the visual preference survey will be initiated on the project website to gather input from the public on the visual quality of the Town and their preferences with respect to community character and architectural quality. The interactive site will allow 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. The public focus meeting will also involve the use of "clickers" to record public opinion. Dan Ulatowski has arranged for the project team to borrow these devices from a professor at Buffalo State College.

Wendel will also be working with Dan Ulatowski to organize a meeting with governmental agencies (Town departments, NYSDOT, NFTA, Erie County, GBNRTC, fire districts, Thruway Authority, etc.). The idea is to stage this meeting, wherein it would begin with a discussion with Town departments and officials. This session would then be opened up to include county and state officials and agency representatives.

IV. Visioning / Goals and Objectives

Drew handed out a preliminary draft listing of goals and objectives. He stated that the project team developed 8 big picture goals that are identified with one "theme" word each – Identity, Revitalization, Leadership, Creativity, Cooperation/Coordination, Quality, Mobility and Prosperity. Many of these were the major areas that were targeted in the RFP. For instance, it was made clear at the public information meeting that identity was important and that Cheektowaga wants to reestablish its identity. Each theme is followed by a goal statement and a listing of objectives. The objectives are based on what we heard at the meetings. Drew reviewed each listing with the committee. He cautioned that these lists are just preliminary; they are a place to get the thinking started and there may be overlap between the different categories. The goals and objectives are the foundation of the plan; everything that follows (analysis, recommendations, implementation) is related to or ties back into the goals. They set the direction for the future; they lend general guidance on how the Town should proceed in the future. Drew noted that we cannot address all the Town's problems through these goal statements, but that we have to have vision to undertake a proper analysis and develop recommendations.

Drew asked the Committee to review the preliminary goals and objectives during the following month and provide comments. The next committee meeting will focus on this review. We would like to have a final draft pulled together before the Public Focus Meeting.

V. Other Business / Next Steps

The date for the next Advisory Committee meeting was set for Monday, October 27th at 4:00 PM. The location of this meeting will be determined. A tentative date of Tuesday, December 2nd, was set for the Public Focus Meeting. Again, the time and location for this meeting will be determined. The planning for the meeting will also be discussed at the next Advisory Committee meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Wendy E. Weber Salvati, AICP