

## TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MEETING SUMMARY

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**Date of Meeting:** February 12, 2008

**Attendees:**

**STEERING COMMITTEE**

- Daniel Ulatowski
- Mary Holtz
- Anthony Sisti
- Andrew Kulyk
- Arthur Beaman
- William Pugh
- James Boy

- Linda Hammer, Depew
- Stanley Keysa, Lancaster
- Daniel Howard, Amherst
- Marie Pieczynski, ECDEP
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**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: Town Hall  
2008

Time: 6:00PM (commenced at 6:10)

Minutes Issued: February 16 ,

### I. Welcome and Introductions

Dan welcomed everyone and introduced the consultants from Wendel Duchscherer (WD). Wendy Salvati from WD introduced herself, her colleagues - - Drew Reilly and Jacob Needle. She noted that this project includes two sub-consultants - - ESI (Economic Stewardship, Inc.), who will be doing the economic development aspects of the project; and HOK, Inc., who will assist with the design and planning aspects of the project.

Wendy noted that this meeting was being attended by members of the Town's Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and the Comprehensive Plan Ad Hoc Committee. All in attendance were asked to introduce themselves and note their affiliation. There was good representation on behalf of both committees.

### II. Overview of the Comprehensive Plan

Cheektowaga's last plan was done in 1991. Drew Reilly provided an overview of the comprehensive planning process, describing that it involves three important components - - Where you are now, Where you want to be, and How you get there. "Where you are now" is the fundamental process of gathering data and other information on the various aspects of the community that reveal current conditions in the Town and how it got to where it is today. Drew stated that any good plan, like all businesses plans, must provide an understanding of where you are and the important trends that affect you. The "where you want to be" element involves the vision and goals for the Town. This is the where the public comes into the process. The consultant can't tell the Town where it should go, this has to come from the community. Finally, the "how do you get there element" is the most important element. This is the strategy for how you put the plan into action. It's putting good ideas in place - - putting them to work for the Town. These are the basics of comprehensive planning. One important legal aspect that should be noted is that if you rezone property, it must be zoned in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. This is the basic premise for zoning.

### III. Review of Scope of Services and Schedule

Wendy Salvati walked the committee members through the scope of services for the project and discussed the various tasks that would be undertaken by the project team. She also discussed the schedule for the project and the important milestones along the way. The entire planning process is expected to go through July of 2009.

### IV. Duties and Responsibilities of the Committees

Wendy Salvati discussed the fact that the Town set up the two committees, one to oversee the more specific elements of the project, and the other to provide important input and support. She provided an overview of the Steering Committee duties, including:

- Provide the project team with up to date information for the Town
- Assist in establishing a preliminary list of issues and opportunities for the Town
- Lend guidance for the public participation program
- Oversee the overall preparation of the Comprehensive Plan
- Function as liaisons for Town departments and outside agencies and organizations
- Work with the AdHoc Committee to assist in the planning process

The duties of the Ad Hoc committee where covered, including:

- Provide assistance to the Steering Committee
- Function as liaisons for their various community organizations
- Provide input on issues and opportunities for the Town
- Help build support for the Plan
- Assist steering committee with public participation efforts

### V. Data Collection

The consultant should not be earning their money recreating the wheel. We know there is a lot of important and valuable data out there and we look to the committees and others to help us get everything available to gain a solid understanding of the Town. We have some studies now, but we want to know if there are more.

Drew asked the group about what's going on now:

- Stan Keysa noted that Lancaster has a comprehensive plan and has traffic information for the southern part of the town (will be doing the northern part of the Town this year). He noted that tomorrow night (2/13) the Town of Cheektowaga is meeting with Lancaster to partner on an access management plan for Transit Road. Stan also has school census data for the Lancaster school district, which reaches into Cheektowaga. It does show that growth in Lancaster has tapered off.
- Western border communities have deteriorated housing (Pine Hill), etc. Need to find creative ways to address these problems. Some things were done previously by the Town Board, some demolition and construction of infill housing, but it was not in character with the neighborhood and it doesn't fit or work well - - typical suburban style. Abandoned housing is an issue. Need a creative way to replace this housing. Cheektowaga cannot be compared with Tonawanda or other towns that get larger sums of community development monies.
- We need access to the thruway from Broadway – there are lands that can be developed in the area (brownfields).

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- There are three hotels in various states of approval near the airport; parking at the airport is bursting at the seams. Traffic on Genesee Street is increasing. This is a very important part of the Town and should be planned properly. Uniland is constructing a large development in that area (Airborne Park).
- There are some churches that are closing – need direction as to what can be done with these facilities.
- Harlem Road will be redeveloped with roundabouts – we don't want this to result in vacant storefronts. Need to focus on economic revitalization.
- In the October storm, the town lost over 1,000 trees that need to be reforested.
- Student housing project – collegiate park (former Kendall apartments).
- Stone quarry and inactive hazardous waste site are issues that need to be addressed.
- Cedar Grove area – all zoning codes don't fit with this area and it has deteriorating housing. Need neighborhood revitalization in this area.
- Should consider combining some of the fire departments to save tax dollars – especially when some have very dwindling numbers.

## Neighborhoods:

Drew utilized a map that showed various neighborhoods and checked it out with the group to make sure we have enough and that we noted all important areas.

Dan Ulatowski said that the Building Office will get WD a map that is used by the housing inspectors that breaks the Town into 17 neighborhoods. Dan mentioned that the map he provided for this meeting was a quick overview of the larger areas. There are smaller sub-set neighborhoods in some of these areas.

## Critical Themes:

The comprehensive plan should not study EVERYTHING in the town. It should be focused and the Town initially identified four areas of importance:

- Transportation, Economic Development, Neighborhood Revitalization, and Zoning and land use regulations.

The towns zoning is likely not keeping pace with existing and new development and should be brought up to date to reflect appropriate patterns for future development.

## **VI. Public Participation**

Wendy Salvati provided a more detailed discussion of the public information meeting, including how the public should be notified - - newspaper articles/press releases; press releases to TV and radio; mailing notices to community groups and other organization; website; fliers and posters placed in strategic locations;

It was noted that we should send information to the Cheektowaga Times, the Cheektowaga Pennysaver, the Metro community news, and the Ampol Eagle. The mailing addresses for these publications, as well as other neighborhood organizations, will be provided to the project team.

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Jacob Needle provided an overview of the project website that will be set up, and how it will work:

- Website – this will be a means to keep the public informed on the whole process. Jake asked all in attendance for an email address to allow for communication and to provide them with access to a special section that will be set up on the Town's website. All types of information will be provided, including data summaries, meeting announcements (including steering committee meetings), maps, and vision/goals and objectives. As information is created, it will be posted on the site.
- An interactive on-line visual preference survey will also be set up. People can offer their input on visual choices, themes, etc., regarding what they would like to see in the Town.

Questions were offered regarding how to get comments and how to gather information from community blogging sites or other community group websites. Jake said that the committee and others can utilize an email address that will be posted on the on the website to enable those who cannot attend meeting offer comments to Wendel.

### VII. Next Steps

It was decided that the dates for steering committee would be on Tuesdays, in late afternoon, with a 4:00PM start and ending no later than 6:00PM.

The public information meeting will likely be set for 4/8, there may be conflicts, but it will be difficult to find a day when everyone can make it. To avoid dragging the process out too long, April 8<sup>th</sup> looks like the best date. The project team will work with Dan Ulatowski to get regular Town meeting schedules and other important dates in the community to avoid conflicts. A steering committee meeting will be scheduled a week or two after the public information meeting. Wendel Duchscherer will get started with the planning the public meeting right away because there is a lot to do. Dan will work with them to find an appropriate location, such as a school auditorium. This first public meeting will include a brief presentation and then open discussion.

We are hoping to have the website up and running in early to mid March.

The committee members were instructed to please use Dan Ulatowski as the point of contact to send information and other input to the consulting team.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Wendy E. Weber Salvati, AICP