

## TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MEETING SUMMARY

**Date of Meeting:** August 13, 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
- 
- 

Location: Town Hall – Supervisor's Office

Time: 9:00AM

Minutes Issued: August 13, 2008

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the status of the project. The following was offered.

- Drew Reilly noted that the project team has been working on the comprehensive plan but has failed to communicate their progress with the Town. He reviewed a list of action items to ensure that the project gets back on track. It was noted that Wendel (WD) has experienced some issues with the subconsultants, but things are working out and the project is now moving forward. Wendy Salvati stated that stakeholder meetings were delayed because WD was waiting for information from the economic subconsultant (ESI). They received a report from ESI in June but requested summary information that explained the pages of data that were provided. The summary report was received on August 12<sup>th</sup> (and provided to the Supervisor and Dan Ulatowski at this meeting).
- Drew noted that we have fallen behind in the schedule and will do what we can to recover some time; however, the project has been delayed and meetings will be pushed out. The project schedule will be updated and provided to the Town. The Public Focus meeting will be held in mid to late October or early November at the latest. This is the meeting that the “clickers” will be used at. Wendy will notify the contact person at Buffalo State College to let her know this.
- It was decided that WD would provide the Town with a status report on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Wendy provided a copy of a status report prepared on August 12<sup>th</sup> to be posted on the Town's Sharepoint site. (A copy of this report was emailed to Dan on August 13<sup>th</sup>).
- Wendy stated that the project website has been updated and the maps have been added to the site. The Supervisor asked WD to post a status summary on the home page of the project website that is updated regularly so that viewers are provided an understanding of where we are with the project.
- Drew asked if WD could be provided copies of various meeting minutes from the Environmental Advisory Committee, the Traffic Safety Committee and others. Dan said that he will get WD what he can. He will also said that he would provide copies of planning board agendas and minutes for 2008.
- Drew asked about the committee that handles code review. The Supervisor stated that this is the Petitions committee, which includes her and Dan. Dan said that he will provide information for that committee, as well as information on the Buffalo Crushed Stone litigation.
- The Chamber of Commerce Stakeholders' Meeting was discussed. Wendy noted that she had some

## Cheektowaga Comprehensive Plan Meeting Summary

Page 2 of 4

concern that attendance may not be high. She also noted that two taxpayer groups had signed up. Wendy sent an email to Pat Allaire to advise him of the meeting and ask him to pass information on to business associations he is familiar with. Dan said that he had requested a copy of the Chamber's mailing list but had not yet received it. He said that he notified all of the business associations and sent press releases to the Cheektowaga Bee and Buffalo News. He also sent notification to the Advisory Committee and the AdHoc Committee members. The Supervisor wanted to make sure that larger businesses, such as DDR, were contacted and that she would assist if necessary. Dan said that he had contacted a number of the larger entities and he felt that we should have a good turn out next week. Wendy said that Elaine from ESI would be in Town for this meeting.

- Wendy said that she is working with Bob Stalker to set up a stakeholders' meeting with the taxpayer associations. Bob is active with the Cheektowaga Taxpayers' United group and he said that he would contact the presidents of the various taxpayer groups to determine a good date for the meeting. It will be held in early September (after Labor Day). Wendy will work with Bob and Dan on securing a location and advertising for this meeting.
- Dan stated that he wants to get the school participation program going ASAP. He wants a meeting with all the principals before the end of the month. He also said that we need to contact JoAnne Bolles from BOCES. BOCES wants to increase their presence in the community and should be involved with this effort. Wendy asked about the various school districts and if the ones that have a smaller presence in the Town should be included. It was decided that the opportunity would be provided to all high schools to be involved, with emphasis on the Cheektowaga, Cheektowaga-Maryvale, Cheektowaga – Sloan and Cleveland Hill districts. If the others choose to not participate, that is their option, although teachers who do government affairs classes may want to be involved. Dan said he would get the contact names for the different high schools, including St. Mary's, and Wendy would make the calls and set up a meeting.
- Drew noted that WD wants to include the Supervisor's Youth Advisory Council in the school outreach effort. Wendy thought that they would provide a good core group to work with. Supervisor Holtz said that Ellen Fisher, at the Town's Youth and Recreations Services Dept., should be contacted for this.
- Drew noted that the visual preference survey is set up internally at WD, we just have to insert photographs. Dan said he would like to include samples of roadway corridors, particularly George Urban Blvd. and Union Road. He will get pictures to Wendy to use in the survey. Drew noted that WD is assisting the Town of Amherst with a context sensitive design project and that certain information from that project would be useful. Certain traffic areas and concerns were briefly discussed and it was noted that the Aero Drive/Holtz Drive intersection is a prime location for a roundabout.
- Dan mentioned that the Town of Amherst had recommenced their efforts on the Harlem/Kensington/Cleveland overlay district. Emphasis is being placed on treating that area as a traditional neighborhood. He will provide WD with more information on this effort.
- Dan mentioned that he still has not received a status report from Clough Harbour on the I&I issues. He will follow up on this.
- Supervisor Holtz noted the importance of rail in the Town and that this must be noted in the Plan. She also reference the GO-21 plan. Wendy said that she will have Fred Frank at WD look at a new concept called Freight Villages to see if it would be applicable for this planning effort.
- Wendy said that the inventory section of the report was 90-95% complete. She still wants to have some areas improved, such as sewer infrastructure and rail, and the discussion about neighborhoods. She also said that the newly received information from ESI has to be included in the inventory. Once this draft is finished, it will be shared with the Committee. Dan said that we wanted to make sure that the Plan focuses on sustainability/Green issues.
- Wendy clarified with Dan that he ultimately wants to have all the maps converted to a "geopdf" format so that they are more user friendly when he posts them on the town's website. He said that he will critique the maps that have been posted to the website and then coordinate with Heather Lewis at WD. Wendy mentioned that the newly acquired federal wetlands information has been mapped and that the new map is on the website.
- The Supervisor noted her concern about the aesthetic quality and economic viability of the Garden Village Plaza, which is owned by Benderson. It was noted that if dilapidated areas such as this cannot be revitalized they should be demolished and turned into greenspace. She also mentioned other City-line neighborhood problems. Creating greenfields is a way to remove such eyesores. Dan said that

## Cheektowaga Comprehensive Plan Meeting Summary

Page 3 of 4

the Town lacks the ability to forego back County taxes on such dilapidated vacant properties. The Plan needs to investigate avenues for evaluating and addressing the vacant home issue.

- Dan said that WD needs to contact Gladys Gifford regarding the desire for light rail rapid transit to the airport. Gladys is affiliated with the Citizens Regional Transportation Committee (CRTC). Wendy said that she will have Fred Frank contact her.
- Wendy asked about the conservation easements along the creeks and if Dan was able to get the mapped data. He said that he asked Connie in the Town's legal department to pull the information together. It was decided that Dan would provide WD with a map that illustrates the general location of the conservation easement areas with asterisks. Dan mentioned that the Town offers tax breaks for property owners that allow easements on their land. This is a way for the Town to protect open space along the creek corridors.
- Wendy asked about cell towers in the Town. It was noted that they should be mapped, but the map she reviewed only showed one tower. Dan said that there are about 15 towers in the Town and he would provide the mapping data for them. He said that the Town is gathering information on towers to gain an understanding about the ability to expand or collocate equipment. He said they also want regular inspections. He has noted that most requests that they receive today are for increasing capacity rather than filling service area gaps, so they using more scrutiny. Dan said that the Town has an interim law for cell towers and in another month or two they will have their law finalized.
- Dan said that the Town is working with a firm from Toronto that wants to install digital billboards in the Town. He said that their regulations are strict and do not allow much latitude with these devices. He noted that they Town might consider allowing one board in exchange for the removal of two other billboards elsewhere in the Town. Dan will provide WD with a copy of the Town's sign law and interpretive language that was provided to the ZBA for digital signage.

Meeting adjourned at 10:10AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Wendy E. Weber Salvati, AICP