

NY Forward – Capital Region - Coxsackie

Subject	MEETING SUMMARY LPC Meeting #4	Date	Wednesday, September 13, 2023
Place	Village Hall, 119 Mansion St	Time	6:00-8:00pm
In Attendance	<u>Local Planning Committee</u> Mark Evans, Mayor, Co-Chair Jeff Mirel, Co-Chair Nicole Bliss Robert Van Valkenburg, Jr. Jocelyn Lane <i>Bob Irwin (absent)</i> Michael Rausch Toni Carroll Ryan Palmer Sarah Gray Miller Bob Phibbs Sam Pigeon Alexandra Tighe Brittany Parks	<u>State Team</u> Matthew Smith, NY DOS <u>Consultant Team</u> Ian Nicholson, Buro Happold Caleb Mitchell, Interboro <u>Public</u> <i>Bjorn Thorstad</i> <i>[2 other people]</i>	

Meeting Summary:

Please see "CX_LPC Meeting 4_Slides_Record" for the presentation shared during the meeting, which parallels the discussion summarized below.

Action items are called out in **bold-italic highlight**.

Opening Remarks

The public website (www.CoxsackieNYF.com) and email address for comments and questions (CoxsackieNYF@gmail.com) is shared.

The Agenda for the meeting is reviewed briefly.

Mayor Evans (LPC) shares some opening remarks.

Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct preamble is reviewed. Recusals on file are noted and LPC is invited to submit any further necessary recusal forms.

Updates: Planning Process & Engagement Activities

Review of what's been done so far, and what is on the horizon.

Overview provided of local outreach activity held at the Rotary Club on 8/16 and the second Public Workshop held on 8/30, both of which focused on the submitted projects.

- Review of agenda, format, and participants.
- Overview of comments revealed particular public interest in the splash pad, cell service, and the visitors museum. Conversely, there were 8 projects that received 2 or fewer responses.

Submitted Projects

Review of agreed downtown vision and the evaluation criteria table that includes local goals, program goals, and effectiveness criteria.

Overview of projects provided, with summary analysis as well as tabular presentation of evaluation results.

Discussion of each project in turn, which included LPC evaluation results by criteria as well as LPC comments, public comments, and summary of updates provided by Sponsor.

- A. Develop Affordable Artists' Housing at the Public Works Site
 - a. Many LPC members express surprise that the proposal is for artists – do not recall hearing this at the last meeting or reading it in the application.
 - b. Consultant team, state team, and co-chairs assure all that this was discussed at the previous meeting, is included in the application material, and is not something the sponsor has changed.
 - c. What counts as an artist?
 - d. All agree more clarity is needed around the particular program that's being utilized, as well as the proposed % set-aside for artists vs. simple affordable units.
- B. Create a Downtown Marketing and Branding Campaign
 - a. Confirmed that signage outside the NYF boundary will be considered eligible at the three general locations proposed previously.
 - b. Discussion about marketing to people on the water (e.g., the Great Loopers)
 - c. Discussion about who will do the strategy and design for the campaign – observed that there is significant local talent that could be utilized cost effectively.
 - d. Mayor shares the name of the consultant that will be providing a proposal for the purposes of confirming a cost for the grant proposal, but clarifies that if awarded this would be subject to a competitive bid process.
 - e. All agree that more detail on scope of the proposal is necessary.
- C. Improve Pedestrian Infrastructure Downtown
 - a. Clarified what is meant by "bulb-outs" and "green infrastructure."
 - b. Discussion about pedestrian safety – the proposed green swales also include a standard curb that provides separation between auto and pedestrian the currently doesn't exist (asphalt swale blends from street right into sidewalk with no grade separation at all).
 - c. Discussion of parking lost to bulb-outs – agreed to quantify.
 - d. Emphasis on improving accessibility – curb ramps etc.
 - e. Question of 1-way streets raised – consultant team reports that they've heard this issue raised, but not a lot of consensus – this would require a full traffic study to determine the best course of action and raises many questions somewhat outside the scope of this grant – this project was therefore narrowed to specifically focus on pedestrian improvements.
- D. Construct a Splash Pad at Riverside State Park

- a. Observed consistent commentary from LPC and public that this amenity is desirable, but not necessarily a good fit for this location. Many comments suggest McQuade Park, which is well outside the NYF boundary.
 - b. State team observes that there are many other sources of funding for recreational amenities like this, so the Village could pursue a different source in the future if located elsewhere.
 - c. Discussion about kids swimming in the river and impact this project may have on that.
- E. Transform 14 S. River St into Visitor's Center and Museum
 - a. No substantive comments.
- F. Make Improvements to the National Bank of Coxsackie Building
 - a. No substantive comments.
- G. Create an Art, Food, and Music Venue at 1 Reed St.
 - a. No comments.
- H. Revitalize 5-7 Mansion St for Mixed-Use
 - a. Appreciation expressed for completeness and clarity of the project application – possibly the most viable and realistic project in the set. Much confidence expressed in the sponsor, who has recently opened a separate retail shop nearby.
 - b. Confirmed that the LPC is able to ask sponsors to modify their requests up until the 5th meeting, at which point an up-or-down vote will be held.
- I. Install Equipment to Improve Cell Service in Downtown Coxsackie
 - a. Discussed the cost estimate – Mayor reports that the AT&T representative confirmed that the proposal for \$300k is in the right ballpark.
- J. Restore the Historic Hubbell House
 - a. No substantive comments.
- K. Build Three Duplexes on Riverside Ave
 - a. No substantive comments.
- L. Transform Mansion St Townhouses into a Hotel
 - a. Clarity of proposal seems to be lacking – some lack of confidence that sponsor is ready to execute the project.
 - b. Rausch observes that this property has extensive historic material in place, would certainly qualify as restoration per NPS/SHPO.
 - c. State team observes that as a hotel, if there's 15 or more employees, the property will be subject to the Labor Peace Agreement.
- M. Rehabilitate 7 Ely St for Hudson Valley Writers Residency
 - a. Discussion about easements/agreements required from Library for parking, access, etc.
 - b. Supportive of this kind of artist inclusion.
- N. Transform 7 Ely into a Coffee Shop
 - a. Confirmed that sponsor is removing the coffee shop proposal and wrapping eligible capital improvements into HVWR project.
- O. Make Exterior Improvements to Babar's Vintage Guitars Building
 - a. No substantive comments.
- P. Make exterior improvements to 10 Mansion St
 - a. Committee generally supportive of the stormwater runoff issues, but do not see the public benefit in the other aesthetic issues.
- Q. Build a River St Artist Market Pavilion and Artist Housing at 26 Ely St
 - a. Committee expresses many concerns and reservations about the project – the topography is very steep and has experienced washouts, there is no parking available on River St for any gathering use, the pavilion would be subject to the same noise and other restrictions as the hotel. In general, a lot of concern about project viability.
- R. Restore Dolan Block for Mixed-Use Redevelopment
 - a. Discussion about amount of State money going towards this project – is it really necessary?

- b. Rausch observes that there is no restoration to be done in this building – it’s a total gut renovation job.
 - c. Excitement about all that retail space being re-occupied and re-invigorated.
 - d. Observed that sponsor is locally controversial figure and grant request is high, but also that the project is a key lynchpin for downtown.
- S. Renovate Former Cummings Hotel for Mixed-Use Development
- a. Observed lack of detail in project proposal.
 - b. Rausch observes that there is no restoration to be done in this building either – historic details and materials are long gone.
- T. Expand the Heermance Memorial Library and Make it Accessible
- a. Again observed that grant request is very high.
 - b. Mayor observes that the Library is a taxing district for the Town – couldn’t they issue bonds to cover a portion of this cost?
 - c. Committee is generally concerned with lack of flexibility presented – no matching funds identified or proposed, and no scaled-down or phased design considered.

Project Evaluation

Project summaries presented that lay out all the projects in tabular format with “traffic light” scoring against each criteria category: local goals, program goals, and project effectiveness. Projects are organized into “tiers,” with those projects receiving 2 or more green lights in Tier 1, those projects receiving 2 or more red lights in Tier 3, and others in Tier 2.

Committee discusses which projects can be dropped from consideration. All agree to drop all projects from Tier 3, except Project P (10 Mansion St), which is requested to re-focus the scope on the stormwater mitigation pieces. In addition, all agree to drop Project Q (Artist Pavilion) and Project S (Cumming Renovation).

Committee agrees to remove Project D (splash pad), anticipating controversy over the location despite support for the idea.

Discussed whether to include a Small Projects Fund – Committee agrees that this would be preferable and worth exploring in greater detail, including what entity might manage it.

Consultant team agrees to update the table with decisions made, for review and confirmation by the Committee.

Consultant team will organize further outreach and coordination with sponsors to further develop the projects for a final vote at the 5th meeting.

Public Comment

None

END OF SUMMARY