

NY Forward – Capital Region - Coxsackie

Subject	MEETING SUMMARY LPC Meeting #5	Date	Wednesday, October 25 th , 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 Bob Irwin Michael Rausch Toni Carroll Ryan Palmer Sarah Gray Miller Bob Phibbs Sam Pigeon Alexandra Tighe Brittany Parks	<u>State Team</u> Matthew Smith, DOS Heidi Pasos, ESD <u>Consultant Team</u> Ian Nicholson, Buro Happold Yara Eliyan, Buro Happold Joe Giambri, Interboro <u>Public</u> Bjorn Thorstad Damion Johnston B. Rinderman Scott Johnson Pat Maxwell [3 other people]	

Meeting Summary:

Please see "CX_LPC Meeting 5_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

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

Submitted Projects: Updates and Amendments

Review of projects under consideration – general summary, amendments and updates, benefits, and challenges/risks. (see slides)

Final Vote on Slate of Projects

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

LPC is advised that the slate of projects is already in the target range of \$6-7.5m, but that the LPC may cut any projects it feels are weaker than the others, in order to exercise more control over the slate before State funding decisions. Floor opens for discussion.

- A. Develop Affordable Artists' Housing at the Public Works Site
 - a. No substantive comments.
 - b. **LPC agreed to recommend this Project for funding, as proposed.**
- B. Create a Downtown Marketing and Branding Campaign
 - a. Concerns raised:
 - i. Direct mail campaigns are outdated and expensive
 - ii. Scope is still too generic
 - iii. Questioning if funding includes ongoing maintenance and operations involved with physical marketing materials, website, and social media.
 - b. Support for project
 - i. Mayor feels that this grant funding is the only opportunity to make a concerted push on re-branding and marketing – the Village Board would not approve this level of funding, especially if the project was intentionally removed from the slate for this grant – believes that ongoing maintenance would be an easier lift, especially with the grant funding the initial push.
 - ii. An RFP would be put out down the line to make sure the campaign is in line with what the community wants – nobody is being held to what's in the consultant proposal received.
 - c. **LPC agreed to recommend this Project for funding, as proposed.**
- C. Improve Pedestrian Infrastructure Downtown
 - a. Some reservations expressed regarding the amount of parking lost in the presented concept sketches.
 - b. Discussed the process for taking these concept sketches through an RFP process, a public input process, a full design process with retained engineers, and finally construction – many future opportunities to shape this project.
 - c. **LPC agreed to recommend this Project for funding, as proposed.**
- D. Transform 14 S. River St into Visitor's Center and Museum
 - a. No substantive comments.
 - b. **LPC agreed to recommend this Project for funding, as proposed.**
- E. Create an Art, Food, and Music Venue at 1 Reed St.
 - a. No substantive comments.
 - b. **LPC agreed to recommend this Project for funding, as proposed.**
- F. Revitalize 5-7 Mansion St for Mixed-Use

- a. Observation made that this is one of the most “shovel ready” projects of the group, with a capable Sponsor behind it.
 - b. **LPC agreed to recommend this Project for funding, as proposed.**
- G. Install Equipment to Improve Cell Service in Downtown Coxsackie
 - a. Many in LPC express strong support for this Project, but concerned that State may overlook it compared to others – Heidi (ESD) reports that digital infrastructure is a priority at the State and opines that this project is a strong contender for funding.
 - b. **LPC agreed to recommend this Project for funding, as proposed.**
- H. Transform Mansion St Townhouses into a Hotel
 - a. No substantive comments.
 - b. **LPC agreed to recommend this Project for funding, as proposed.**
- I. Rehabilitate 7 Ely St for Hudson Valley Writers Residency
 - a. No substantive comments.
 - b. **LPC agreed to recommend this Project for funding, as proposed.**
- J. Make exterior improvements to 10 Mansion St
 - a. Noted that the scope of this Project is proposed to be incorporated into another project, pending awards from the State. It could be folded into the Village’s pedestrian infrastructure project (C), since the nature of the work and the intended goals are quite similar – would only require a public access easement. Alternatively, it could be folded into the 2-4 Mansion St project (H), since that is the same Sponsor.
 - b. **LPC agreed to remove this project from the slate, with the understanding that the scope will be reallocated to either (C) or (H).**
- K. Restore Dolan Block for Mixed-Use Redevelopment
 - a. No substantive comments.
 - b. **LPC agreed to recommend this Project for funding, as proposed.**
- L. Expand the Heermance Memorial Library and Make it Accessible
 - a. Concerns raised:
 - i. Limited transformative impact of library funding – agreed that it improves the library’s operations, but observes that the facility is already fairly accessible and serves the community’s needs.
 - ii. Library Board has not done enough to secure funds - can apply for bond, can raise taxes, can apply for other grants - no strategic plan in place to secure remaining funds.
 - iii. Too high of a price tag for one single project, could take away funding from multiple other strong projects.
 - iv. Frustration that the cost estimate increased significantly right at the end of the process, resulting in only a slight decrease in the NYF grant request coupled with a major decrease in the scope that the grant is funding (only Phase I instead of whole thing).
 - b. Support of project:
 - i. Library serves all of the community.
 - ii. If library removed there isn't much padding to the slate if another project falls through in the future – only projects on the slate recommended for funding can be considered for potential re-allocation if money becomes available.
 - c. Concerns about process:
 - i. State and consultant team propose a compromise option to include the Library in the slate of projects, but for a greatly-reduced amount – this reduces its competitive claim against the other projects being funded, but includes it in the slate and therefore eligible for future re-allocations, even if not initially funded.
 - ii. Many LPC members initially vote for this resolution, but some LPC members object that the process has been repeatedly described as resulting in a final vote on an up-or-down, all-or-nothing basis. Why is it suddenly being changed to accommodate this Project?

- iii. Ian (BH) opines that since this Project has the ability to raise funds via its taxing district, the logic of needing to respect a private sponsor's final determination of needed grant funding doesn't really apply – therefore, the LPC should feel free to set an amount that it feels appropriate.
- d. **LPC decided to remove the Library from the slate of Projects.**
 - i. After the discussion on the process, some LPC members observe that most of the conversation has been about the Library, and it seems that the committee has serious reservations about the project, and would be disappointed if it were funded ahead of the other projects – therefore, shouldn't they just remove this project so that other projects have a better chance of being funded?
 - ii. This framing of the decision leads a majority of LPC members to switch their vote in favor of removing the Library from the slate recommended for funding.

Public Comment

Concern with funding the high-cost library project will take away opportunity from other projects – expectation that State will look favorably on public institution like the Library, without detailed local knowledge of its comparative merits with other proposals.

Library is the only non-profit project being proposed, and it offers a public community space for everyone. The other projects are largely private enterprises or the municipality.

END OF SUMMARY