



MEETING SUMMARY

Village of Lancaster NY Forward LPC Meeting #1

Tuesday, May 30, 2023
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Lancaster Municipal Building
5423 Broadway
Lancaster, NY

Attendees:

- Local Planning Committee (LPC):
 - Hon. Lynne Ruda, Mayor of the Village of Lancaster (Co-Chair)
 - Mr. Paul Brown, President of the Buffalo Niagara Building & Construction Trades Council (Co-Chair)
 - Ms. Kimberly Beaty, a resident of the Village.
 - Mr. Luke Borkowski, a resident of the Village.
 - Mr. Joseph Crumlish, President of the WNY Mountain Biking Association.
 - Ms. Jennifer Eichenseer, a resident of the Village.
 - Mr. Matthew Fischione, Code Enforcement Officer for the Town of Lancaster.
 - Ms. Deborah Glowny, Vice President & Community Office Manager of Bank on Buffalo (Lancaster Branch).
 - Ms. Nicole Gunsher, Program Coordinator for the Town of Lancaster Youth Bureau.
 - Mr. Alan Kurtzman, Owner of The New York Store.
 - Mr. Paul Leone, Chief Executive Officer of the Lancaster Industrial Development Agency.
 - Mr. Michael Meyer, Chair of the Village of Lancaster Historic Preservation Commission.
 - Ms. Kirsten Shelly, Member of the Village of Lancaster Climate Smart Task Force.
 - Mr. Daniel Sundell, Owner of Dark Forest Chocolate.
 - Mr. Thomas Van Nortwick, a resident of the Village
- State Partners:
 - Ginger Ursitti, NYS Department of State (DOS)
 - Ben Bidell, NYS DOS



- Erin Corrado, Empire State Development Corporation
- Leonard Skrill, NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR)
- Consultant Team:
 - Norabelle Greenberger, LaBella Associates
 - Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer, LaBella Associates
 - Ed Flynn, LaBella Associates
- Members of the public

The first Lancaster NYF LPC meeting began with an introduction from the NYS DOS, including introducing the State agencies and the two co-chairs. Attendees were urged to actively participate in the process and invite more community members to engage in the future. Public attendees were reminded that the meeting was a working LPC meeting and questions/comments should be held until the end.

LaBella Associates provided an overview of the Code of Conduct. Mayor Ruda read the Code of Conduct preamble, and all LPC members signed the Code of Conduct.

LaBella provided background information on the NYF program, reviewing its goals and objectives and its plan-then-act approach. The components of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) were reviewed. LaBella noted that after projects are awarded, they are expected to begin construction within the next two years.

LaBella provided an overview of the types of projects eligible and ineligible for NYF funding. LaBella highlighted that the aim of this initiative is to curate a final list of projects amounting to \$6-\$8 million, of which \$4.5 million are selected by the State for funding.

LaBella reviewed the Village's NYF application, which serves as the foundation for the revitalization process. The LPC agreed with the application's Vision Statement. The study area and projects from the application were reviewed.

LaBella and DOS addressed questions about the accuracy of cost estimates over time, the study area coverage, and whether the projects that were included in the application were definitely going to be in the SIP.

Two alterations to the study area were proposed following a community tour led by the Mayor: extending north on Central Avenue to include a railway overpass gateway project and extending to Palmer Avenue's north side, where a business plans to relocate. The LPC voted to move forward with the updated study area. It was noted that modifications could be made in the future if transformative projects are identified outside the current study area.

LaBella reviewed the Open Call for Projects process. Outreach methods were discussed to maximize public participation, emphasizing broad press releases. It was noted that both public and private projects would be required to complete the Open Call for Projects form. The Mayor noted that the municipal projects that would be submitted were not yet finalized.



The LPC discussed the small project fund. DOS and LaBella clarified that all interested property owners/developers should submit a form and the consultant team could help determine if the project would be more suitable for a small project fund. If a small project fund is included, letters of interest could also be collected after the July 14 deadline. Accessibility was marked as a priority. It was mentioned that \$300,000 would be the maximum for the small project fund with no set minimum or maximum request for any individual project. Outside consultant assistance is required for administering NYF/DRI funding, reducing the burden on the municipality.

There were also discussions about promoting walkability, green spaces, and bike-ability, and introducing new community elements such as teen and wellness centers.

LaBella presented an overview of the NYF schedule. Work on the downtown profile and assessment, focusing on parking needs, has begun.

For community engagement, LaBella is preparing a public engagement plan identifying specific components and methods. LaBella provided an overview of the general components. Mayor Ruda stressed the importance of community engagement, particularly among hard-to-reach populations such as youth, seniors, and tourists. The Rotary Club, Lions Club, and Chamber of Commerce were recognized as key stakeholders.

LaBella also outlined the plan for a public survey to inform project vision, goals, and strategies and noted the survey working session to be held on June 5. The first public workshop is scheduled for June 15 at the Lancaster Opera House.

During the public comment session, concerns were raised about coordination with Town staff regarding work related to the Town-owned Opera House and Historical Museum, the nature of the Opera House's tenancy, and questions about the guidebook. Also discussed were concerns about the timing of the public workshop and ways to increase community engagement. The need for collaboration between the Town and Village was emphasized.