



MEETING SUMMARY

Village of Lancaster NY Forward LPC Meeting #2

Thursday, June 22, 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, WNY Regional Economic Development Council (Co-Chair)
 - Ms. Kimberly Beaty, resident of Lancaster.
 - Mr. Luke Borkowski, resident of Lancaster.
 - Mr. Joseph Crumlish, President of the WNY Mountain Biking Association.
 - Ms. Jennifer Eichenseer, resident of Lancaster.
 - Mr. Matthew Fischione, Code Enforcement Officer for the Village of Lancaster.
 - Ms. Deborah Glowny, Vice President & Community Office Manager of Bank on Buffalo (Lancaster Branch).
 - 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, resident of Lancaster
- State Agencies:
 - Ben Bidell, NYS Department of State (DOS)
 - Erin Corrado, Empire State Development (ESD)
 - Leonard Skrill, NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR)
- Consultant Team:
 - Norabelle Greenberger, LaBella Associates
 - Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer, LaBella Associates



- Members of the public

The second Lancaster NYF LPC meeting began with opening remarks by Co-Chair Ruda and a reading of the Code of Conduct preamble by Co-Chair Brown. There are no current recusals.

LaBella Associates started the meeting by providing a review of the previous LPC meeting, the goals of the current LPC meeting, and next steps with LPC Meeting #3.

LaBella provided an update on the Open Call for Projects, the information session that was held on the Open Call, meetings with project sponsors, and the Project Forms that were submitted to date. This led to a discussion of the Small Project Fund. LaBella provided additional information on the program that had been developed by HCR, including the requirement to complete a Project Form, opportunities to tailor the program to meet LPC priorities, and the process that would be followed if the Small Project Fund was selected for funding. LaBella reviewed the types of eligible and ineligible projects with the LPC and the LPC requested additional information and/or examples of projects completed through previous DRI Small Project Funds be provided.

LaBella provided a summary of Public Workshop #1, including turnout and feedback. A summary of the feedback received for each activity station was provided. LaBella and Mayor Ruda also provided updates on the other local engagement that had taken place since the last LPC meeting to engage with students and visitors, including presentations to high school students and distribution of flyers in the Lancaster Opera House programs and during the Sip & Shop event.

LaBella presented a preliminary list of key stakeholder organizations and explained that stakeholders would be contacted early in the process to inform the vision, goals, and strategies, and involved throughout the process as projects are developed. The LPC suggested the following additions to the list: the Lancaster Merchants Association, the local Elks and other social clubs, emergency response (police, fire, EMS), and the local post of the VFW.

LaBella provided an update on the survey, which was developed with targeted questions for the general population, students, and visitors. LaBella reiterated the July 14th deadline and encouraged LPC members to continue sharing the survey with their networks.

LaBella discussed the Downtown Profile & Assessment, which is currently under development, and presented preliminary findings on two key topic areas identified by the LPC: the market analysis, which included the housing and restaurant/retail markets, and the parking analysis. The market analysis showed a demand for new renter- and owner-occupied housing, strength in retail, which attracts outside visitors, and demand for restaurants. After presenting the market analysis findings, LPC members reiterated the struggles that many in the community face related to housing affordability, particularly for those with very low



incomes. The LPC also discussed misconceptions around the word “affordable” and stressed the local need. The LPC suggested adding information to the Lancaster NY Forward website or Village website to provide additional information on what “affordable” means.

LaBella reviewed the preliminary parking analysis findings, which shows the Village has adequate parking to meet current demand. However, demand is not evenly distributed, with high parking utilization rates in some areas and low utilization rates in others, even during peak times. The LPC noted that several privately-owned lots essentially function as public lots and should be added to the analysis. The LPC reiterated the importance of improving signage at the parking lots to better distribute demand.

LaBella reviewed the next steps to be undertaken before the next LPC meeting and the general topics to be covered at the next LPC meeting and noted that the second public workshop would be scheduled for August.

During the public comment session, several questions came up about the market analysis and parking analysis, which were addressed by LaBella. LaBella provided additional detail on the market analysis methodology and parking analysis methodology. One member of the public noted the high parking demand on West Main Street during daytime hours.