



MEETING SUMMARY

Village of Lancaster NY Forward LPC Meeting #4

Tuesday, August 15, 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)
 - Ms. Kim 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. Matt Fischione, Code Enforcement Officer
 - Ms. Deborah Glowny, Vice President & Community Office Manager of Bank on Buffalo (Lancaster Branch)
 - Mr. Alan Kurtzman, owner of The New York Store
 - 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)
- Consultant Team:
 - Norabelle Greenberger, LaBella Associates
 - Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer, LaBella Associates
 - Edward Flynn, LaBella Associates
 - Gwen Howard, Foit-Albert
 - LaLuce Mitchell, Foit-Albert
- Members of the public



i. Co-Chair Introduction

The meeting began at 6:05pm. Mayor Ruda reviewed and read the Code of Conduct preamble. There are still 2 current recusals, no additional recusals.

ii. LPC Meeting Review

LaBella provided a recap of the previous meeting, discussed the goals for the current meeting, and previewed the next meeting.

iii. Planning Process & Engagement Updates

LaBella reviewed the final Goals & Strategies, noting the changes that were made to incorporate LPC feedback. LaBella and the Mayor reiterated the intent of these goals and strategies to be used as a guiding force beyond the NY Forward (NYF) initiative. The LPC had no further comments on the final Goals & Strategies.

LaBella provided an overview of the Downtown Profile and Assessment, which will get folded into the larger Strategic Investment Plan. This document provides an overview of existing conditions within the NYF area. LaBella summarized the key themes and concepts that will inform the selection of projects recommended for funding. LaBella encouraged the LPC to continue reviewing the document and reach out with any questions or comments.

LaBella conducted interviews with all stakeholders identified by the LPC and provided a summary of the feedback received. Notably, most people were very happy with the Village's development pace. People want the Village to become a place for a day-long excursion, not just for an Opera House event or an event like the Garden Show. People wished there were more events to attend. They also want more activity in the downtown core and want the downtown to be extended further.

LaBella provided an overview of Public Workshop #2 including attendance and general feedback received. The materials from the public workshop were made available online through the Lancaster NY Forward website, allowing the community to continue to give feedback on the proposed projects. Since it was posted, there have been 100 responses. This form will be open through the end of August, and all members of the public are encouraged to respond. The feedback from the workshop will be combined with the online feedback and provided to the LPC for review and consideration as they evaluate projects.

iv. Review and Discussion of Proposed Projects

LaBella provided an overview of the updated project list based on outreach and meetings with project sponsors, and further project development that has occurred since the last LPC meeting. The new total funding request is \$11.6 million. LaBella reminded the LPC that the goal is to arrive at a list of between \$6 to \$8 million in funding requests.



LaBella made calls to all of the projects that were recommended for the Small Project Fund since the last meeting and noted that one additional project had moved to this list (16 Central Avenue). The group discussed whether the LPC needed to approve the updated list; LaBella noted that the list was meant to simply demonstrate demand, which it does. Mayor Ruda expressed concerns about moving too many projects to the Small Project Fund because of the associated administration and capacity concerns.

The consultants provided presentations of all of the projects and requested feedback from the LPC on critical information needs or other questions about the projects. The LPC had the following feedback:

- 1 West Main Street:
 - Concerns over ADA compliance, advocating for better accessibility features.
 - Questioned the decision to include only one residential unit.
- New Mixed-Use Building at 75-77 Central Avenue:
 - Call for an update in the profile regarding parking regulations to reflect current codes.
 - Discussion about financial feasibility and potential discord with the urban fabric if the building's height doesn't match future development on Central Ave.
- Skoob's Village Grille:
 - Provided clarification that the upper outdoor deck was removed due to structural integrity concerns, urging a review of alternative options.
- 110 Central Avenue:
 - Expressed concerns about a shifting focus from a restaurant to a nightclub setup, which could change the project's impact on the community.
- Renovate the Boys & Girls Club and Create a New Teen Center:
 - Questions about the possibility of adding more residential units.
 - Discussion on whether Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds could be viable for additional/matching funding.
- Connection at 11-19 West Main Street:
 - Commented that the total funding request exceeded the usual 50% threshold, prompting a financial review.
- Expanded Interior & Exterior Space for 32-36 Central Avenue:
 - Concerns that the proposed mural might not align with Historic Preservation Commission's standards on unpainted brick, recommending scope alterations for compliance.
- Lancaster Village Center along West Main Street:
 - Requested a rendering of the front of the building.
 - Questions about patio access, specifically whether it will be public and how access will be managed.
- Lancaster Pocket Park Transformation:
 - Mayor commented on how this is a crucial Village project
- Former Masonic Temple into a Wellness Center:
 - Concern about the total financial ask for the project, suggesting a possible scope reduction.



- New Senior Housing along Plum Bottom Creek:
 - Concerns about site feasibility, floodplain issues, and additional village requirements for street improvements.
 - Requested a permitting, environmental review, and traffic analysis timeline.
- 43 Central Avenue:
 - Same comment about the concerns of locating a mural on unpainted brick.
 - Question about the future ground floor tenant
- Lancaster Historical Society Museum:
 - Encouraged the project sponsor to leverage additional funding, suggesting a broader financial backing.
- Lancaster Opera House and Town Hall:
 - Requested a more focused project scope to reduce the total financial ask.
 - Raised the issue of inadequate signage in front of the building.
- Free Downtown WiFi:
 - Questioned the project sponsor's operational capacity for long-term WiFi network administration.
- Central Avenue Corridor:
 - Noted that the project could also tap into other funding sources, thus not solely dependent on NYF.
- Comprehensive Wayfinding:
 - Questions about the operational management of the proposed smart signage, gauging long-term feasibility.
- Mobility Hub:
 - Suggested that investing in bike racks could offer better utility compared to bike lockers, promoting a change in investment focus.

V. Project Evaluation Process

LaBella will provide the LPC with the tools to evaluate the projects. Objective consultant evaluations and recommendations will be completed after public feedback has been submitted, and then an online evaluation form will be provided to the LPC to complete. The online form for each project will include links to the updated project profiles, LaBella project assessments, and public feedback. The LPC requested that concerns related to code violation, etc. be included in the assessment. The LPC should provide the consultant team with any information they have on matters such as this that might be relevant to the evaluations. LaBella discussed how the results of the evaluation will be presented. The projects will be divided into overarching buckets that will help the LPC select projects to remove from NYF funding consideration and will not be ranked individually.

VI. Next Steps

LaBella will be providing the LPC with updated draft project profiles (addressing the information needs noted by the LPC), the consultant objective assessments, the LPC project evaluation forms, and a summary of public feedback on the projects before the next LPC meeting.



Mayor Ruda requested an additional online workshop for the LPC to review the projects and better understand how to complete the evaluation. This will happen after the project feedback form closes at the end of August. The LPC selected a time and date for this working session. The working session will not be open to the public as confidential financial information will be discussed, but the working session will be summarized at the next LPC meeting.

LPC Meeting #5 will be on 9/19 at the Lancaster Municipal Building, and it is anticipated that a sixth meeting will be needed to vote on the final slate of projects.

vii. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

viii. Co-Chair Closing Remarks

Mayor Ruda thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:27pm.

