



MEETING SUMMARY

Village of Lancaster NY Forward LPC Working Session

Wednesday, September 6, 2023
3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Zoom

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
 - 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:
 - Ben Bidell, NYS Department of State (DOS)
 - Quinn Bushen, NYS Chamber
- Consultant Team:
 - Norabelle Greenberger, LaBella Associates
 - Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer, LaBella Associates

The LPC working session began at 3:00pm. The purpose of the meeting was to review the following materials that were provided to the LPC:

- Full draft project profiles for the 18 projects under consideration for NYF funding;
- Consultant objective assessments of the 18 projects; and
- A summary of the public workshop #2 and online public feedback form on the 18 projects.

The meeting was closed to the public as sensitive information was discussed including confidential financial information.



The LPC provided the following questions and comments on the 18 projects:

1. 1 West Main Street:
 - a. Concerns that the ADA access component of the project was removed.
 - b. Noted the small residential component (1 unit) compared to other projects.
 - c. Concerns about the project sponsor's capacity and ability to secure funding.
 - d. Noted that the project is less transformational than at the time of the Village's original NYF application; at that point, Fattey Beer Co. had not yet improved the first floor retail space.
2. 75-77 Central Avenue:
 - a. There was a question about whether the LPC had any concerns about the demolition of the existing structures on the site. No concerns were raised.
 - b. Question about whether the restaurant use on the ground floor was a guaranteed use. Consultant team noted that there is no secured tenant. DOS indicated that, while the project envisions a restaurant use, the funding, if awarded, could be used for a another commercial use.
 - c. Discussion around the building height and if the LPC had any feedback on the 2-story proposal, versus a higher (potentially 3-story) development. Consultant team noted the additional costs that would be associated with adding a story, and the LPC did not have any concerns with the proposed building height.
3. Skoob's Village Grill:
 - a. LPC noted the importance of this local business.
4. Boys & Girls Club:
 - a. Discussion around the difficulties nonprofits face in providing funding up-front for reimbursement-based grants, as they do not have the funding reserves that for-profit project sponsors do. Suggested they reach out to an philanthropic organization for a possible loan.
 - b. Noted the importance of the service the Boys & Girls Club provides. While not a high visibility impact, the project would have a transformational impact in terms of equity and service, providing a safe space for teens.
 - c. Discussion around alternate funding opportunities, such as a capital campaign or other options outside of typical bank financing.
 - d. Discussion about opportunities to reduce scope to the Teen Center and immediate needs (potentially removing the residential component) so that the ask could be reduced.
5. 11-19 West Main Street:
 - a. Question about cost, which was clarified as including both the alleyway/stairway and ADA doors. The doors are the high-cost item.
 - b. Noted that while the ADA component is about accessibility, the stairs would not be ADA accessible. In addition, they would divert pedestrians in a way that could reduce foot traffic in front of businesses.
6. 32-36 Central Avenue:
 - a. Noted that the site is limited, and the project is maximizing what could be done on the space. Suggestion to change the cover image in the project profile to the rear improvements, which better showcases these the main project components.
 - b. Discussion around project sponsor's capacity and history of code violation issues.



- c. Noted changes in project scope and that the project cost does not have the level of detail that other projects have.
7. 20 West Main Street:
 - a. Discussion around the project sponsor's need for the funding. Noted that this same question could be posed to all project sponsors.
 - b. Noted the importance of the project, the funding it would leverage, and amount of housing that would be introduced.
 - c. Discussion around the bid process and cost estimates that were provided. Pro forma has also been provided. Amount of information provided by the project sponsor is above what was provided for all other projects.
8. Pocket Park:
 - a. Noted that public projects do not have a minimum match requirement.
 - b. This is a high priority Village project.
9. Masonic Temple:
 - a. Interest in seeing the scope reduced to minimize the funding request.
 - b. Alternate funding sources that could be used as match were also discussed.
10. Senior Housing:
 - a. Noted the importance of housing and the project's role in supporting downtown businesses. Question was raised about whether seniors frequent downtown businesses. Consultant team will review the survey responses.
 - b. Discussion around public feedback on this project and potential push back from neighboring property owners. Noted the importance of the project and the few properties that are vacant and developable.
11. 43 Central Avenue:
 - a. Question about whether NY Main Street funding could be used for this project instead.
 - b. Consultant team noted that some of the project components (exterior parking and site work) would not be eligible for NYF funding.
12. Historical Museum:
 - a. LPC noted the minimal public support for this project and that it is not as transformational as the other projects.
13. Opera House:
 - a. Noted that the project sponsor did as the LPC requested at the last meeting, reducing the overall project cost.
 - b. LPC emphasized the importance of the Opera House, which is a huge draw to the community.
14. WiFi:
 - a. Question about the number of local businesses that have public WiFi.
 - b. Suggestion that a chamber of commerce might be better suited to operate a public WiFi network as it will require ad revenue and chambers have stronger businesses connections.
15. Mobility Hub:
 - a. Question about whether the mural was part of the project. Consultant team indicated that the mural shown in the rendering is part of the neighboring 32-36 Central Avenue project.
16. Wayfinding:



- a. Noted that this project supports everything within downtown and is the highest priority Village project.
 - b. Noted the importance of the project to improve parking utilization.
17. Streetscape:
- a. Described this project as a project that supports the future.
 - b. Noted that a meeting was held with NYS Department of Transportation (DOT) to discuss the project and that the decision was made to keep the project under consideration for NYF funding.
18. 110 Central Avenue:
- a. Concerns about project readiness and ability for a restaurant project to secure a bank loan.

LPC members agreed the working session was helpful in better understanding projects and potential issues as they prepare to begin their individual evaluations and consider projects to recommend for funding.