Village of Hamilton - NY Forward Local Planning Committee Meeting #2

Meeting Notes

Date/Time:	July 11, 2023 / 5-7pm
Place:	The Hub - 20 Utica Street
LPC Attendees:	**Mayor Ruth Ann Loveless**, Co-Chair **Kipp Hicks**, **CNY REDC/ County IDA,** Co-Chair **Joanne Borfitz**, Colgate University **Bill Butler**, Five Trees HOA **Reverend, Brooks Cato**, St. Thomas Episcopal Church **Jeffrey Coakley**, Community Memorial Hospital **Julie Dudrick**, Colgate Upstate Institute; Village Trustee **Jocelyn Gavitt**, Partnership for Community Development (PCD) **Henry Howard**, Arts at the Palace **Brian Marks**, Hamilton Fire Department **Samantha Martinez**, Madison Lane Apartments; Village Trustee
LPC Not in Attendance:	**Suzanne Collins**, Hamilton Food Cupboard **Bill Dowsland**, Hamilton Central School **Dan Foust**, FOJO Café and Beans **Britty O'Connor**, Hamilton Business Alliance; Business Owner
State/Consultant Team Attendees:	**Lissa D'Aquanni**, New York State Department of State (NYS DOS) **Steve Kearney**, Stantec **Phil Schaeffing**, Stantec

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The Village of Hamilton's second NY Forward Local Planning Committee meeting took place on Tuesday, July 11, 2023, at The Hub. The meeting's primary purpose was to present progress on the NY Forward Initiative and public engagement plans, review current Downtown profile & assessment highlights, and discuss & update the draft vision and goals. Phil Schaeffing (PS) from Stantec presented the attached slideshow and Steve Kearney (SK) helped facilitate the LPC discussion.

Welcome

- LPC Co-Chair Kipp Hicks welcomed LPC members and reminded them of the LPC code of conduct to always act in the public interest.

NY Forward Planning Updates & Public Engagement Plan

- Phil Schaeffing presented progress made on the NY Forward program since the first LPC meeting on June 2, 2023 which include:
    - The setup and launch of the Village Website with links to the Open Call for Project, meeting presentations, and program updates.
    - The creation of a Public Survey open until August 25, 2023

- The Call for Projects form was released on June 16th on the Village website and promoted via emails, flyers, and at the public meeting. The consultant team hosted drop-in "office hours" on June 30, 2023, at The Hub for project sponsors with questions about the form.
- The selection of a "Thursday on the Village Green" concert as a pop-up event for consultant team members to engage with community members and solicit their input while sharing project information and promoting the general survey and upcoming public meetings.
- The refinement of the NYF boundary area primarily along Utica, Eaton, Lebanon, and Broad Streets.

- Phil Schaeffing discussed the draft public engagement plan (PEP) for the NY Forward planning process. One primary focus is hearing from hard to reach groups (such as Colgate University students and staff, hospital employees, Village employees such as DPW & first responders, seniors) and members of the public as key resources for input in the development of the NYF program.

LPC Questions and Comments

- Have any proposals for the Open Call For Projects been received yet?
  - No proposals have been received yet, but this is normal as most proposals are received the last week before the deadline.
- The Open Call for Projects period is short, is it possible to extend the deadline?
  - The Open Call for Project submittal period is about five weeks. This allows the consultant team more time to work with sponsors to strengthen proposals after the deadline, and more time for the LPC to review and consider proposals. It's best to keep the deadline as is.
  - It was noted the short timeline was concerning to some members of the LPC.
- Is it possible to make sure wording around the project form submittals highlight that forms can still be submitted without all the requested information filled out?
  - Yes, the consultant team will create a reminder flyer/notice that highlights the July 23 deadline. The notice will clearly state that sponsors should provide as much information as they can, and that forms can be updated in the weeks after the deadline. The notice will be sent to LPC members to share with their networks.
- Has the Village survey provided information on how to best address hard to reach groups?
  - The survey is currently open but has not been highly promoted yet to avoid confusion with the Open Call for Projects. No new information is available yet.
- It was noted that first responders (ie. firefighters, nurses, police, etc.) should be included as a key group to hear from.
- It was noted that getting many voices of input was of key importance.

First NYF Public Meeting Recap

- Phil Schaeffing recapped the first Public Meeting held on Thursday, June 29, 2023 at The Hub. Themes from public input included a vibrant Downtown environment, housing diversity, physical accessibility, and community + university connection.

LPC Discussion

1. **Hamilton NY Forward Downtown Profile & Assessment Highlight**
    - The aim of the Downtown Profile is to tell a story of the Downtown and its opportunities, strengths, and challenges.
        - It was noted some data points are skewed by the large student population (classified as "Group Quarters" in the population count). Median age, median household income, and other figures are skewed lower because of that.
        - Is it possible to get snapshots of data without "Group Quarters" population included, to get a better sense of permanent Village residents?
            - The consultant team is working to parse that out but it may be difficult for statistics due to data limitations.
        - The vacancy rate seems high for the Village.
            - This may be another example of the large student population having an effect on the Village data. The consultant team is working to better understand that figure.
    - LPC members were asked to identify "What is important to highlight in the story of Hamilton's Downtown?" and "What would a profile of Hamilton's Downtown be incomplete without?"
        - Hamilton Central School Renovation Project, Community Memorial Hospital's recently completed and ongoing construction projects, Colgate's Third-Century Plan, and cultural projects in the Village should be highlighted.
        - The Village has a national and international visitor base which should be highlighted.
        - The Town and Village of Hamilton have mature infrastructure and significant resources such as the hospital, airport, and Colgate University in comparison to other towns and villages of its size.
        - The student population inflates the Village population relative to the small year-round population.
        - Who are the Village's major employers and where do their staff live? How many are living in the Village?
        - It was noted the golf course east of Downtown attracts a large visitor base which should also be noted.

2. **Vision Statement & Draft Goals for the Village**
    - LPC members were asked to review the revised vision statement and consider if the vision statement provides a 5-7 year guiding framework for the Village's Downtown.
        - It was noted that the Village's original vision statement was strong and succinct, and the revised version aims to keep that structure.
        - What does "accessible" mean in the statement - does it include diversity, income, mobility, visibility?
            - The original focus was on physical accessibility. It can be left more general if desired to capture more elements of "accessible".
        - It was noted the Village of Hamilton has a unique built environment which could be of interest to highlight.

  - It was suggested that ‘destination’ is a word which should be used to describe the Village.
  - It was noted the vision doesn’t state the connection between the Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods and area.
  - It was mentioned the Village has a historic charm which could be part of the vision.
- LPC members were asked to discuss the draft goals and determine if the goals address the appropriate topics for the Village.
  - The importance of the Village being a destination for visitors was noted from the vision. Should tourism be a separate goal for the Village? After discussion, the fourth goal should include “visitors” to capture that element.
  - It was noted “physical” should be removed from the third goal to keep the general nature of the word “accessible” as discussed in the vision statement.
  - The word "accessible" in the third goal should also entail an accepting and comfortable environment.
  - The phrase “full range” in the first goal was discussed. While a broad and challenging goal to aspire to, the Village does need all types of housing for residents.

3. LPC Logistics

- Next meeting dates:
  - Future LPC meetings have been scheduled and are posted on the Village website.
  - The third LPC meeting will take place on August 1, 2023 at the Hub.
  - The second public meeting is scheduled for September 14, 2023 at the Hub.

- Reminders:
  - Open Call for Projects closes July 23, 2023.

4. Public Comments

- One member of the public was in attendance.
- No public comments were made.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05pm.

Please send questions, comments or corrections regarding the meeting notes to Phil Schaeffing (philip.schaeffing@stantec.com).

Stantec Consulting Services Inc.

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