Village of Hamilton - NY Forward Local Planning Committee Meeting #4

Meeting Notes

Date/Time:	October 3, 2023 / 5-7pm
Place:	The Hub - 20 Utica Street
LPC Attendees:	**Mayor, Ruth Ann Loveless**, Co-Chair **CNY REDC/ County IDA, Kipp Hicks**, Co-Chair **Joanne Borfitz**, Colgate University **Bill Butler**, Five Trees HOA **Reverend, Brooks Cato**, St. Thomas Episcopal Church **Julie Dudrick**, Colgate Upstate Institute; Village Trustee **Dan Foust**, FOJO Café and Beans (via Zoom) **Jocelyn Gavitt**, Partnership for Community Development (PCD) **Henry Howard**, Arts at the Palace **Brian Marks**, Hamilton Fire Department **Samanthi Martinez**, Madison Lane Apartments; Village Trustee **Britty O'Connor**, Hamilton Business Alliance; Business Owner
LPC Not in Attendance:	**Jeffrey Coakley**, Community Memorial Hospital **Suzanne Collins**, Hamilton Food Cupboard **Bill Dowsland**, Hamilton Central School
State/Consultant Team Attendees:	**Lissa D'Aquanni,** NYS DOS **Phil Schaeffing**, Stantec

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The Village of Hamilton's fourth NY Forward Local Planning Committee (LPC) meeting took place on Tuesday, October 3, 2023 at The Hub.The meeting's primary purpose was to present progress on the NY Forward initiative, and review and discuss progress on potential projects being considered for NY Forward funding. Phil Schaeffing (PS) from Stantec presented the attached slideshow.

Welcome

Mayor Ruth Ann Loveless welcomed LPC members and reminded them of the LPC code of conduct to always act in the public interest and to announce and disclose any potential conflicts of interest as projects are beginning to be reviewed and discussed.

Conflicts of Interest

- **Britty O'Connor**, Sponsor for Flour & Salt Expansion
- **Jocelyn Gavitt**, Sponsor for Hub Community Room
- **Joanne Borfitz**, affiliated with Hamilton Initiative (Madison/Utica Façade project)

LPC Questions and Comments

- Does the Village need to announce itself as having conflicts of interest?
    - Village officials are not personally benefiting from public projects and therefore do not need to note a conflict of interest or recuse themselves.

NY Forward Planning Updates

Phil Schaeffing presented progress made on the NY Forward planning process since the third LPC meeting on August 1, 2023 which include:

- Public survey results collected from June through August 25, 2023
    - 114 responses
    - Key findings:
        - Resturant/ Takeout, Errands, and Recreation are the three main reasons respondents visit Downtown Hamilton
        - Housing Opportunity, Pedestrian & Bycycle, and Business Growth are high priorities for respondents
        - Small Apartments, Affordable Housing, and Senior Housing were housing needs expressed by respondents
- The second Public Meeting was held on September 14th at the Hub. 19 people attended to learn more about the projects being considered for NY Forward funding.
    - Attendees completed a worksheet asking their opinion about the projects. The same worksheet was available online after the meeting as a survey. A total of 30 individuals provided their feedback.

LPC Questions and Comments

- Regarding chart for “Highest priorities for Downtown Hamilton”, what does the purple column indicate?
    - “Developing vacant and underutilized sites”

Project Development and Evaluation

The potential projects referenced in this section can be viewed in the attached presentation under, “Project Development and Evaluation”

- Project Updates:
    - Build 10 Townhouses at Milford Depot
        - Original property will most likely not be option for Project. Sponsor is currently in talks with other property owners in the NYF area to develop project.
    - Transform Community Memorial Hospital Entrance
        - Application was revised from orthopedic office improvements to main hospital entry renovation to align with NY Forward schedule.
- LPC Comments and Questions
    - In regard to the Miflord project, how soon will the sponsor be able to find another site?
        - The sponsor has quickly pivoted to address this issue and will hopefully have a new site soon.

- Who is the sponsor for the Milford project?
  - Anne Clauss
- In regard to the Hub Community Room project, if a delay is to arise during construction of the building which pushes the fit-out project out of the two-year time frame [projects awarded NY Forward funding expected to break ground within two years], what happens to the NYF funding?
  - The state will work with the project sponsor on the timetable. If it appears that the project may not progress, the funding would be re-allocated to another project from the LPC's recommended list.
- In regard to the Community Memorial Hospital project, comment was raised on whether the hospital really needs the funding since it's just 2% of project cost.
- Can we ask sponsors to lower their NYF request?
  - Yes, we can inform sponsors of the LPC concerns; the sponsor determines the level of NYF they need to complete the project.
- In regard to the Community Memorial Hospital project, the $31.44M is the total for all 5 phases the hospital aims to complete. The entrance remodel which the hospital is asking NYF funding for is only $1.2M in total.
- Did the hospital project have the lowest community support [from the worksheets/survey, 30 responses)
  - Yes
- In regard to building energy-efficient housing on Eaton Street, does the sponsor own the site?
  - Yes
- The state does not prefer to fund single-family housing through DRI/NYF because it does not fully align with State housing goals for downtowns, which would be a challenge for the proposed housing project on Eaton St.
- In terms of the 'Expand local business and add housing 'project, doesn't the property to be acquired already have housing?
  - Yes, but the units are currently not in great condition. The project proposes to acquire the adjacent property with these units, renovate them, add at least one more unit, and on the ground floor expand seating for the existing restaurant.
- Is it possible to get the 'expand local business and add housing' sponsor to lower their NYF request to 40%?
  - We can bring this to the sponsor and see how their finances currently stand.
- In terms of projects which are buying properties, acquisition cost can be included with total project costs but NYF funds can not be used to purchase the property.
- The winery and tasting room project was noted as a good project to attract people to Hamilton.
- When it comes to private projects the State prefers project sponsors to leverage NYF funds with other sources of funding.
- In terms of the Village Green project, the NYSDOT 12B project will likely include the proposed plaza space shown at the north end of the green.
- In regard to the Welcome Center and EV charging station, the State typically does not fund stand-alone parking, so it might be necessary to find an additional funding source to cover those costs.

        - The focus is primarily the Welcome Center aspect and EV charging, not additional parking. The concept shown will be revised to reduce non-EV parking.
    - The Welcome Center and EV charging station may be able to use potential NYSDOT TAP funding to cover some or all of project cost.
    - Is a grant administrator included with the small project fund?
        - Yes, 10% of the fund is reserved for hiring and paying a grant administrator.

1. **LPC Logistics**
    - Next meeting dates:
        - The fifth LPC meeting will take place on October 24, 2023, at the Hub.
        - The LPC will hold a working session via Zoom on October 12 to hear project updates. This session is not open to the public, but the discussion will be summarized at the next LPC meeting.

2. **Public Comments**
    - Three members of the public were in attendance.
    - One member of the public advised LPC members to also consider locational impact of project in addition to NYF requirements and Village goals and strategies.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10pm.

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

Stantec Consulting Services Inc.