Village of Hamilton - NY Forward Local Planning Committee Meeting #5

Meeting Notes

Date/Time:	October 24, 2023 / 5-7pm
Place:	The Hub - 20 Utica Street
LPC Attendees:	**Mayor, Ruth Ann Loveless**, 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 **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:	**CNY REDC/ County IDA, Kipp Hicks**, Co-Chair **Suzanne Collins**, Hamilton Food Cupboard **Bill Dowsland**, Hamilton Central School
State/Consultant Team Attendees:	**Lissa D'Aquanni,** NYS DOS **Phil Schaeffing**, Stantec **Steve Kearney**, Stantec

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The Village of Hamilton's fifth NY Forward Local Planning Committee (LPC) meeting took place on Tuesday, October 24, 2023 at The Hub. The meeting's primary purpose was to review and discuss progress on potential projects being considered for NY Forward funding and create a recommended list of projects for the State to consider. 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)
- **Jeff Coakley**, affiliated with Community Memorial Hospital project

Project Updates & Discussion

The potential projects referenced in this section can be viewed in the attached presentation under, "Project Updates and Discussion"

- Project Updates:
    - Build 10 Townhouses at Milford Depot
        - Sponsor has found a new site in NYF area and is working with property owner to secure ownership
        - Due to change in site, NYF request may vary from $500-900,000.
    - Build Out and Furnish The Hub's New Community Room
        - Sponsor reduced NYF request by $100,000 for total request of $500,000
    - Build Energy-Efficient Housing on Eaton Street
        - Sponsor is leaning towards townhomes which will be able to fit 8 – 10 units on the property
        - Require sewer extension for the site has presented a financial hurdle for Sponsor.
    - Expand Local Business and Add Housing (Hamilton Eatery)
        - LPC asked if Sponsor could lower NYF request at the last meeting. At this time Sponsor can't lower request amount due to project unknowns
        - Building planned for acquisition is currently part of ongoing bankruptcy proceeding.
    - Renovate Utica and Madison Rear Facades to Enhance Planned Courtyard
        - Sponsor reduced request to 40% of project cost at request of LPC
    - Transform Community Memorial Hospital Entrance
        - Sponsor reduced request by $200k (25% of total cost) at request of LPC
    - Create a NY-Focused Winery & Tasting Room
        - No major updates
    - Renovate Building Into New Housing (Flour & Salt)
        - Property planned for acquisition is currently part of ongoing bankruptcy proceeding.
    - Renovate the Village Green
        - No major updates
    - Improve Walking & Bicycling Conditions
        - No major updates
    - Improve Eaton Street Park
        - Project cost and NYF request increased ($285,000 total cost/ $255,000 NYF request) due to updates to cost estimates
    - Create a Welcome Center with EV Charging Stations
        - Site plan revised, but no change to NYF request or project cost
    - Establish a Small Project Fund
        - No major updates

- LPC Comments and Questions
    - Would the "Build 10 Townhouses at Milford Depot" project create rental or for-sale units?
        - The townhouses would be for-sale not rental
    - What will the sale price be for the "Build 10 Townhouses at Milford Depot" project?

    - Due to the change in site the current cost for units is not fully known, but consultant team will work with sponsor to get a more clear answer
- If there are 10 or more units of housing in a project, does a percentage of them need to be affordable?
    - Consultant team will confirm NYF requirements
- In general when it comes to projects, are we able to identify which projects will still go on even without the requested NYF funding?
    - At the moment we don't have a full sense of which projects would continue without NYF funding.
    - One aspect the State will be looking at when evaluating projects presented to them is which projects could continue without NYF funding.
- In terms of housing projects it is important that projects should add affordable/ workforce housing to the market.
    - The PCD partners met recently and workforce housing need was discussed – for entry-level Colgate employees, hospital nurses and staff, local business employees
- It was noted the "Build Energy-Efficient Housing on Eaton Street" project is working to demonstrate financial capacity. LPC members also asked about the potential price of the housing units.
- Will the housing units in the "Expand Local Business and Add Housing" (Hamilton Eatery) project be affordable?
    - Yes, the sponsor has been committed to providing housing affordable to local workers.
- In terms of total cost for the "Expand Local Business and Add Housing" project is building acquisition cost also included in the total project cost?
    - Yes, an anticipated sale price is. Acquisition cost can be included in the total project cost but cannot be reimbursed by NYF funds.
- Would the expansion of the restaurant space in the "Expand Local Business and Add Housing" project allow for the business to stay open year-round instead of seasonally?
    - Currently unknown, but consultant team will check with the sponsor.
- What happens if the LPC recommends the "Expand Local Business and Add Housing" project and the ongoing bankruptcy does not allow them to acquire the needed property?
    - The State would not award NYF funding without site control or a clear path to it within a short timeframe. If it was awarded but not completed for any reason, the State would select another project from the list submitted by the LPC to re-allocate the funding.
- A question was asked about the financial capacity of the NY-focused winery project.
    - The consultant team has requested financial information from all sponsors to verify their capacity.
- It was noted the E. Broad St. section of the "Improve Walking & Bicycling Conditions" project may not be part of the Village's TAP grant application to NYSDOT.
- In regards to the "Improve Eaton Street Park" how much of the property is used by the University?

    - The baseball field and restrooms are utilized by the University, but the majority of the site is for local use.
- Since the State does not like supporting parking in projects how will the "Create a Welcome Center with EV Charging Stations" be presented to the State?
    - Even though the project has parking, it is only a small component of the project which supports many other features that the State would support.
- For the "Establish a Small Project Fund to Support Mixed-Use and Commercial Property Improvements" project is there a timeframe in which the allocated money must be spent by?
    - Currently it's unknown, but the consultant team will request clarity on this.
- Would temporary signage for businesses be an acceptable use of the small project fund during NYSDOT's Route 12B project?
- Can the consultant team send out the guidelines for the small project fund so that the LPC can better understand what is allowable for business assistance?
- Can the Village Green project be the match for the TAP project?

Recommended Project List Discussion

The project list referenced in this section can be viewed in the attached presentation under, "Recommended Project List Discussion"

- LPC was in favor of including a small project fund
    - Question was raised on whether the funds could be held in a growth account until they are allocated to support more projects
        - It was noted that State requirements would not allow this.
- Can we add a project to the list after the final submission?
    - No, once the list is submitted no changes can be made
- The LPC determined there are still too many outstanding questions to decide on a final list of projects. The consultant team will ask sponsors the questions raised tonight and request a prompt response.
- DOS and the consultant team recommended a brief online poll for LPC members to complete before the next meeting to rate each project on several criteria: transformational, alignment with local goals, catalytic/synergy, project probability/sponsor capacity, and contribution to a vibrant downtown. Results will be shared at the final meeting to help members reach decisions about which projects to recommend to the State for funding consideration.

LPC Logistics

- Next meeting dates:
    - In order to discuss the sponsors' answers and finalize the list of projects to recommend for State funding consideration, the LPC will hold a 6th meeting via Zoom. Like all LPC meetings, it will be open to the public to observe/listen.
    - LPC members will receive a scheduling poll and a meeting date/time will be announced and publicized shortly. Dates the week of 11/6 and 11/13 will be considered.

Public Comments

Six members of the public attended.

- Downtown housing and public improvements are important and could be catalytic
- The NY-focused winery sponsor has solid financing. He was able to purchase the site from the Village within the past few years.
- New housing projects create housing that is too expensive for local workforce

The meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.

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

Stantec Consulting Services Inc.