
Town of Esopus Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Update
Waterfront Advisory Committee (WAC) Meeting #4
April 28, 2021
7 pm to 9 pm via Video Conference
Summary Meeting Notes – FINAL

Participants:

Waterfront Advisory Committee: Members: Margaret Phelan, Co-Chair; Shannon Harris, Town Supervisor; Eli Schloss, Carol Carson Tomassetti, Dale Wolfield, Marion Zimmer, Vincent Coq, Chet Allen, Kathie Quick, Town Board Liaison; Diane Dintruff, Cynthia McVay, Environmental Board Liaison; and Alex Dean, Community Outreach Coordinator.

Laberge Group: Matthew Rogers, Senior Planner, Laberge Group.

Meeting Discussions:

1. Margaret called the meeting to order at 7:02.
2. The Waterfront Advisory Board reviewed the NYSDOS referral dated April 7. The WAB agreed that Margaret would reach out to the Town Board on this issue and then draft up a formal response using Chet Allen's drafted response as a guide.
3. **Greenway Trail Grant Opportunities.**
 - a. Matthew explained the Town Board is interested in moving forward with seeking funding through the Greenway Grant program. Carol walked Sleightsburgh Park and identified necessary trail improvements and a new trail connection to the south cove.
 - i. The trail work could be completed by volunteers and town staff. The trail work would not be funded by the grant and might be used as in-kind match – this will be confirmed with the Greenway.
 - ii. The grant could be used to obtain funds for interpretive materials and kiosk for Sleightsburgh, Freer and Lighthouse Parks.
 - iii. Carol recommended installing an interpretive panel identifying locations of the brick factory, barges, etc. for the south cove.
 - iv. Matthew clarified that the new kiosk should be placed near the fishing platform instead of the current location which is difficult to access when the parking lot is full.
 - v. Margaret recommended including information about the lighthouses (Sleightsburgh and Lighthouse Park) on the kiosks or interpretive panels.

- vi. Matthew clarified that the intent of the meeting is not to agree on all interpretive materials but to get a general understanding of the content. The different committees would work on actual content at a later date.
- vii. Cynthia recommended adding information about sea level rise, including a visual reference of where the water level might be in the future. The Committee continued discussing possible content ideas.
- b. The Committee discussed alternative kiosk designs. There was agreement to go with consistent design across all waterfront parks – the Hyde Park design, either two and three panels depending on cost.
- c. Matthew requested that Cynthia coordinate with the Env. Board to identify general ideas (bullet list) of what they would like to address at each park.
- d. Matthew will be obtaining cost estimates for the kiosks and interpretive panels.

[Editor’s Note: The Town Board subsequently decided not to submit the Greenway Application this spring and will reconsider the application for the fall submission deadlines of September 10 and November 8.]

4. Design Guidelines Framework Document:

- a. Matthew reviewed the DG framework document which outlines the major components of the future DG manual. A PowerPoint Presentation was used to guide the discussion (attached).
- b. The DG may address Utility-scale solar farms. Matthew described utility-scale solar systems which are generally systems established for the primary purpose of generating electricity for off-site sale/consumption. The Committee discussed specific concerns which included a preference not to allow clearcutting/large scale clearing to install solar farms. Matthew discussed the pending zoning regulations which would prohibit clearcutting of 20,000 SF for the purposes of siting a utility-scale solar system. In addition, the draft regulations require applicants to consider the recommended siting locations, with a preference for brownfields, transfer stations, closed landfills, sand and gravel mines no long in operation and open fields that are not considered the most valuable or productive farmland. Matthew recommended the Committee review the draft regulations on the Town’s website for additional information.
 - i. Matthew stated that the DG will provide basic guidance on siting and screening for utility-scale solar systems.
- c. Port Ewen: Matthew described the existing development pattern along Broadway in the Broadway Commercial District which is the style of development that will be encouraged in the Rondout Gateway District. Key will be to avoid the development style of the old Dollar General.
- d. General Commercial south of River Road: This area would have a different DG treatment as it is more auto-oriented with larger lots, but would still look to locate parking lots to the side or back if sufficient room. In addition, the scenic view along the western side in the vicinity of Mt. View Gardens will be highlighted and guidance will be provided on how it can be protected. However, the DG would not prohibit the owner from building in this location.
- e. Cynthia asked how the DGs would address grandfathering – if a use ceases, would the new owner have to come into compliance with the DGs? Matthew explained that the owner would not have to come into compliance with site and architectural styles if there is no proposed

construction. Matthew clarified that the majority of the DGs would only apply to new construction and would be a combination of requirements and voluntary measures.

- f. Going forward, the first internal draft of the DGs would address the Eco/Agritourism corridor.
- g. Waterfront Commercial: Primary areas would include Kosco, Smith, and Connelly Marinas with a focus on architecture and preserving the waterfront character.
- h. Waterfront Residential: The majority of and DGs for waterfront residential would not be mandatory.
 - i. Carol discussed concerns about DGs for residential shoreline areas which may conflict with property owners' preferences on the type of shoreline they would like to have and which may not be practical in all situations. The DGs could be contrary to what may be necessary to keep a shoreline from eroding and they should not restrict a property owner's ability to preserve their shoreline. Margaret agreed with Carol's concerns.
 - ii. Cynthia asked if property owners would need to seek approval to deviate from the guidelines. Matthew explained that would not be the case. If the Town would like to include residential shoreline in the DGs, they would be considered "Best Practices." Matthew did explain that if for example there was a residential subdivision along the shoreline, the Planning Board could use the guidelines during the review process and would have the authority to impose conditions to improve the overall project. However, if the project did not need Planning Board approval, residential shoreline guidelines what not be mandatory – the owner would not be required to follow them.
 - iii. Cynthia raised concerns about new development along the shoreline that requires large amounts of grading and engineering (earth movement) to allow for construction along with concerns about large amounts of impervious surfaces along the shoreline. Matthew discussed how the proposed zoning regulations do include limitations on steep slope development, land clearing and grading. The DGs would provide additional guidance for the Planning Board and there may be situations where certain DGs become requirements through a zoning update process.
 - iv. Matthew explained that the process of preparing the DGs will be a step-by-step process and the Committee will have to decide what should be a standard and what should be a guideline. The next draft of the DGs will begin to address specific recommendations and regarding residential waterfront, the draft will address all locations, both rural and urban. The Committee can then review and refine them.
 - i. Diane stated that she hopes the Kingston Equitable Internet Solution will become available to Esopus since we pay into the Kingston School District. The towers may be located on 9W. Matthew explained that the proposed zoning regulations do include detailed requirements for siting towers and limiting aesthetic impacts.
 - j. Parks and Preserves: Based on the Committee's earlier discussion, there was agreement to have consistent style kiosks and buildings. Matthew asked if the DGs should apply to only Town parks or all parks and preserves. There was no desire to apply the DGs to other parks and preserves. Margaret suggested that the Town should borrow some of Scenic Hudson's architectural styles and designs as they do a great job. There was no disagreement on this recommendation.
 - k. Rt. 9W and Rt. 213 Corridors: Matthew briefly described both corridors. The first draft of the DGs will focus on the 9W Eco/Agritourism Corridor.

- i. DGs for these corridors will seek to protect scenic views, natural features, stone walls, vegetation, site layout and maintain a consistent architectural theme (not “cookie cutter”) and will take into consideration some of the architecture along the corridor to preserve and encourage desired character.
- ii. Matthew asked about the Committee’s preference for screening new development along the corridors. There was agreement that certain uses should be screened and discussed the recently built self-storage business just north of TEVAS. There was agreement that a project like that should not have happened. Matthew explained that self-storage uses are now only permitted in the Heavy Industrial district and no longer allowed along 9W.
- iii. Maintain the Ag. theme along the corridor is key and Mary Moore will be providing recommendations.
- iv. Not all development will need to be screened, especially in the GC-2 zoning districts which are intended to accommodate commercial uses and would be out of character to require full screening.
- v. Matthew asked if there were any additional issues that the Committee would like to address/protect along the corridor? Cynthia asked if the DGs can require the use of an architect for designing projects. Matthew clarified that the Town cannot mandate who applicant’s use, but NYS Building Code and related regulations will need to be complied with and this may require licensed engineers and/or architects. There were no additional recommendations from the Committee.
- vi. The discussion then addressed franchise-style architecture and how the DGs could address this issue. Cynthia referenced commercial development in Woodstock and Stone Ridge which uses low-profile, dark wood, setback from the road but with an attractive feel. These are good examples and could be used in the DGs. Matthew further discussed how the DGs could seek to prohibit standard franchise architecture and promote better designs. Margaret referenced a new Stewart’s in New Paltz which is a good design.
- vii. The Committee asked for additional information about the potential developer at the Sister Cabrini Site. Matthew explained that the current plan calls for an upscale hotel that will utilize some existing buildings and new construction. The details are currently limited as the developer is in the acquisition and financing stage. Alex clarified that Six Sense is the hotel operator/developer and also described how the owners would control land on both sides of 9W and would also seek to establish a ferry service from NYC. Matthew discussed the property on the west side and how the Town alerted the developers that future development in this area, especially the steeper slopes should be minimal and should also not be highly visible. Matthew also discussed the potential for the project to assist with the implementation of the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail which is proposed to run through the western property.
- viii. There was additional discussion on how the LWRP should identify the preferred type and style of development for the Cabrini property even though there is a current developer looking at it.

5. Potential Projects and Policies/Sites

- a. Kosco Site: An important site but due to current legal situations, the site may not be a priority site for consideration. There are efforts to establish a dialogue with the owners. Matthew stated that a concept plan should not be prepared at this point. If dialogue can be established, the goal should be to identify the owner's long-term plans, discuss the deed restrictions and seek a mutually-beneficial outcome.
- b. Smith Site: Potential location for a concept plan – general agreement by the Committee. Will seek permission to access the property. The idea of a Creekside trail between Smith and Kosco was briefly discussed.
- c. 9W bridge pedestrian/bicycle improvements: Matthew discussed the issues with the bridge and that CLA site may do a rendering. There was general agreement about the idea and Carol identified a concern regarding the expansion joints and that improvements need to address safety.
- d. Callanan Property: Site visit recommended and will require permission. Recognized as a challenging site and safety concerns for reuse of reclaimed area. Cynthia asked about the Feeney Shipyard and Matthew explained that this use is exactly what the Town would like to see in this area. The area was reclaimed and improved by Feeney and should continue to be used for water-dependent uses. Matthew clarified that the key area is in the upland section that has been reclaimed. The original LWRP recommended that the quarry be evaluated for future reuse and Matthew suggested that this LWRP address the issue and make a final recommendation on its future use and related policies.
- e. Central Hudson Gas and Electric Property: CHGE has previously indicated that public access will not be permitted. Matthew recommended that the LWRP provide a definitive recommendation that the site could provide public access in the future if CHGE were to divest the property.
- f. Perrine's Bridge Park: Matthew summarized the existing conditions and recommended that the LWRP provide a long-term recommendation. Marion stated that several people kayak from New Paltz to the Park. Cynthia observed that many people may not be aware of the Park and that the LWRP could highlight the park and get the word out. Carol recommends not investing too much money there but to evaluate and identifying options for general improvements. Due to its limited size and the fact that the park is located a long distance from the major hamlets, it is not a major economic benefit. There was agreement to keep on the list but improvements may be modest.
- g. Water Treatment Plant Site: This is a long-term issue as there are no plans to decommission the plant. Based on past Committee discussions, the LWRP should include recommendations that future use remain water-dependent and the Town should retain it, but if they sell it, the property should be for waterfront use and not residential. The exact details of the recommendations will be decided later in the LWRP process. Margaret agreed with Carol's suggestion of small waterfront dining. Cynthia expressed concern about increased traffic on River Road. Matthew clarified that the long-term plan is not to seek large increases in traffic due to River Road being narrow and that it is not intended to be the next major boat launch.
- h. Access to Non-Tidal Rondout: There is no publicly-owned property in Esopus along this stretch. The Rod and Gun Club owns a large amount of land along the Rondout and there is a DEC boat launch across the creek in the Town of Ulster. The LWRP could include a recommendation that if property were to become available, public access could be

considered, although given the current ownership patterns and other access options, it is not a priority. The Committee was in agreement.

- i. John Burroughs Black Creek Trail: Discussed the missing trail link between Black Creek Preserve and the Gordon Property which is in the WRA. Matthew recommended reaching out to Scenic Hudson and John Burroughs to identify what is needed to make these connections.
 - j. Matthew asked if there were additional Sites/Projects to Discuss:
 - i. No rendering for Freer Park is being recommended. The bulkhead is being evaluated and next steps for the Park are likely to include stormwater improvements and then shoreline improvements. The LWRP will include recommended next steps for Freer Park. Future LWRP grants will be available to implement the improvements.
 - ii. Sleightsburgh Park: Matthew recommended the LWRP address the anticipated loss of wetlands and access.
 - iii. Matthew will reach out to the various Town departments to identify concerns related to flooding and sea level rise.
 - iv. Matthew asked the Committee to consider other locations, projects and issues that could be addressed in the LWRP.
 1. Carol asked what the final decision on the Wurts Street Bridge. Matthew summarized the current plan detailed in a recent Daily Freeman article. Margaret stated that the funding has been allocated and is a \$37M project.
 2. No additional sites or projects were identified by the Committee.
 - k. Matthew stated he will prioritize the list of site and projects and provide them back to the Committee for review and confirmation.
6. Future Public Meetings: Matthew summarized the first two public meetings will be based on progress with the projects and sites. Cynthia asked if the meetings would address the design guidelines and recommended that the meetings discuss and highlight the benefits of the design guidelines. There is a concern that many people would have a negative view of design guidelines. Matthew agreed and will address the benefits at the outset of the meetings.
 7. Zoning Amendment Referral: Matthew discussed the current state of the draft regulations and there was no further Committee discussion.
 8. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Meeting Notes Submitted by Laberge Group June 22, 2021