

Watkins Glen

Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Meeting Notes

Date: October 31, 2017

Project Name: Watkins Glen Downtown Revitalization Initiative
Subject: Local Planning Committee Meeting #2

Meeting Location: Watkins Glen Village Hall
Meeting Date: October 25, 2017

Participants:

Local Planning Committee
Hon. Laurie DeNardo, Trustee, Village of Watkins Glen (co-chair)
Judy McKinney Cherry, CECd, Executive Director, SCOPED (co-chair)
Jon Beckman, Watkins Glen International
Hon. Dennis Fagan, Chair, Schuyler County Legislature
Brittany Gibson, Greater Watkins Glen Chamber of Commerce
Eric Hollenbeck, Hollenbeck Film + Experience Company
Peter Honsberger, Owner, Great Escape Ice Cream Shop
Keith Klug, Plant Manager, Cargill Inc
Tim O’Hearn, County Administrator, Schuyler County
Hon. Gary Schmidt, Village of Watkins Glen
Amanda Smith-Socaris, Seneca Physical Therapy
Kristin VanHorn, Director, Schuyler County Planning
Ken Wilson, Resident

New York State
Julie Sweet, Office of Planning and Development, NYS DOS
Andrew Griffin, Office of Community Renewal, NYS HCR

Consultant Team
Sarah Yackel, Principal, BFJ Planning
Simon Kates, Associate, BFJ Planning
Larisa Ortiz, Larisa Ortiz Associates
Nur Asri, Larisa Ortiz Associates

The purpose of this meeting was to debrief from the first public engagement event and discuss potential changes and additional details to include in potential project ideas. Approximately 20 members of the public attended the meeting, in addition to members of the local planning committee, Village staff, the consultant team, and New York State agencies.

- **Welcome and Introductions**

- Introductions given by co-chairs Judy McKinney Cherry and Laurie DeNardo
- Sarah Yackel, BFJ Planning, introduced members of the consultant team
- Larisa Ortiz, Larisa Ortiz Associates, described LOA’s role in analyzing downtown retail trends and the impact this analysis could have on development of potential projects.

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- **Project Status and Timeline**
 - BFJ provided an overview of the project timeline, including public workshop status, upcoming meetings, and deliverable due dates.
- **Public Engagement Update**
 - BFJ provided a recap of the first public engagement event, which was held on October 18, 2017. The meeting presentation and summary will be posted on the Watkins Glen DRI website.
 - The second public engagement event is scheduled for December 13, 2017 from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm at the Watkins Glen Community Center. This workshop will be formatted as a roundtable design workshop to identify project details for potential DRI projects.
 - A public survey will be released in early 2018 to test potential DRI project ideas.
- **Open Call for DRI Projects**
 - The LPC reviewed a draft of the Open Call for DRI Projects and provided comments.
 - The Open Call is a way for the LPC to solicit potential DRI projects on private property so that all members of the community have an opportunity to submit and potential projects can be vetted in the open.
 - The LPC provided comments and revisions, which BFJ incorporated before releasing the Open Call on October 27.
- **Preliminary Project Ideas—Discussion**
 - BFJ reviewed the potential DRI projects that were presented at the first public workshop for discussion by the LPC.
 - The goal of this discussion was to hear the LPC's perspective on the projects included so far, potential details, and any ideas that are missing.
 - The LPC provided feedback on potential project details, which will be incorporated into a working draft of potential project profiles.
- **Next Steps**
 - BFJ to finalize the Downtown Profile and Assessment
 - Open Call for Project Ideas was released on October 27. Responses are due on November 20.
 - Dates set for upcoming committee meetings and public workshops
 - Committee Meetings:
 - LPC Meeting 3: November 29, 2017
 - Public Workshops:
 - Public Workshop #2: December 13, 2017 at the Community Center
 - Public Workshop #3: early February – date and location TBD
- **Public Comments**

The following comments were provided by the public before the conclusion of the meeting.

- It should be a priority to explore a partnership with institutes of higher education. Examples given include the Cornell Agriculture program in Geneva and a potential hemp research institute.
- Correction on the address of the Ferry building.

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- Provision of affordable housing should be a priority, including zoning that allows town house or semi-detached homes.
- Support for seasonal housing developments, while accepting the need for balanced regulation. Some developers have purchased vacant properties that were not occupied and converted into seasonal housing.
- Note about upper floor renovations—there are not many such vacant units that have on-site parking, so any projects that create new residential units in vacant upper floors will have the challenge of providing parking.
- Housing in Watkins Glen is income-segregated, so any new development should include some percentage of subsidized housing.
- Buildings on the west side of Franklin experience flooding in the rear parking lot due to rainwater runoff from upland.
- Note that expanding the number of businesses on Decatur Street would also potentially reduce the number of residential units.