LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES OF MEETING NO. 18
April 11, 2018

Members Present:

(x)  Jim Sharpe, Chairman
(x)  Paul Leuchner, Parks & Recreation
(x)  Beverly Kinney, Planning Board / Councilwoman
(x)  Peter Coppola, Citizen-at-Large
(x)  Sharon Osgood, Citizen-at-Large
(x)  Marion Fabiano, Zoning Board of Appeals
(x)  Martha Ludwig, Citizen-at-Large
(x)  Eric Fiebelkorn, GI Chamber of Commerce
(x)  Betty Harris, Transportation and Safety Advisory Board (TSAB)
(x)  Mary West, Economic Development
(x)  Dave Bruno, Planning Board
     Mike Madigan, Councilman

Members Excused:

(x)  Diane Evans, Conservation Board

Members Absent:

(x)  Deborah Billoni, Citizen-at-Large
(x)  Dr. Brian Graham, Superintendent of GI Schools
(x)  William Koch, Preservation Board member
(x)  Dan Drexilius, Citizen-at-Large
     Stephen Birtz, Agricultural Group

Guests:

     Brian Kulpa, Clark Patterson Lee
     Melanie Anderson, Clark Patterson Lee
     Sharon Nichols, Visitor/Resident
     Martin Goss, Resident

X indicates voting members

I.  CALL TO ORDER:  7:10 p.m.
II. MINUTES

A motion was made by Peter Coppola / Paul Leuchner to APPROVE the March 14, 2018 LRPC “Draft” minutes as written.

Ayes: All in favor. Motion carried.

Jim turned meeting Chair over to Brian Kulpa, CPL

- Brian stated that the agenda tonight is to wrap-up the plan and review next steps

III. NEXT STEPS

- Assuming that this committee votes to send the plan to the Town Board, or refer with changes, the Town Board will then schedule a public hearing, then put a resolution before themselves to adopt the plan.
- When the Town Board gets the plan they could refer it out to the Advisory Boards for review and comment.
- Need to schedule a photo session for the members of this committee

IV. REVIEW of WORK SESSION WITH TOWN BOARD

- Brian had the first, of what will be a few, work session with the Town Board

- Review of the Town Board’s comments:

  - Graphs for school census data, it showed class enrollment and class sizes increasing, is that really the case. We need to talk to the school to verify that.

  - Page 15, CPL used an outdated graphic for the proposed West River Parkway Trail.

  - Page 23, CPL is referring to a policy when they say Buffalo Billion Phase I and Phase 2 – 2013 – 2017, that is a budgetary policy, so the plan should reference The Regional Economic Development Council’s Regional Growth Plan, which is the framing element for all of Empire State Development, the plan will list The Regional Economic Development Council Growth Plan which is an existing document.

  - Page 28, graphic of people walking, the background shows a dense urban background, request the graphic be changed to one with less density.

  - Page 29, land trust implies easements and property acquisitions, the sentence will be shortened to: “Work with land trusts and property owners to protect natural areas”.

  - Page 29, the use of reusable shopping bags is not a municipal regulation, change “such as” to “including, but not limited to”, will remove shopping bags and include fertilizer use that doesn’t impede water ways.

  - #12 on page 29, add language: “strategically aligned building mass parking lots”, we are now talking about clear cuts or property already disturbed. Bev doesn’t want to limit it, we have a commercial piece of property being developed now that could be asphalt and a large building, but it is actually going to be a solar farm which can revert to natural land at some
time in the future. Brian stated that one of the issues with solar farms, it’s a single use of that land, and the thought is that solar panels are good for about 20 – 30 years, it is very important to set up trust accounts to have money in place for removal of those depleted solar arrays after their lifecycle has ended. If you use solar farms in place of industrial development, what you get is a solar array and no benefit of building development, if you put them on top of buildings, you get two for one. Bev stated that our Local Law has a provision for a Special Use Permit, which is when the Board would look at the potential piece of property and determine if it can be developed. The current project is on old farmland.

Brian asked the committee if they were supportive of our Local Solar Law, and the committee responded in the affirmative. CPL will review this section in a future work session with the Town Board and the Local Solar Law will remain in the plan.

Dave stated that when the Planning Board reviewed the Solar Law, the attorney told them it was illegal to set up a trust, and there is also the legal issue of going onto privately owned land to remove panels. Brian stated that the goal isn’t to tell someone they have to remove it, the goal is to give the Town a funding source that years from now can be used if there isn’t another way to remove the solar. Brian added that The Association of Town Governments best practices states to set up a trust for solar farms.

Councilman Madigan left the meeting at 7:32 pm.

Page 41, Melanie and Brian used a graphic of a town center design from Suwanee, Georgia, it is too large and over scale for what we are doing here, so the graphic will be changed to the graphic of Dublin, Ohio.

Page 49, change to partners from lead partners, in that same column with reference to the zoning regulations, the plan lists the partner as GI Parks, it should be the Town Board.

Page 52, removal of commercial vehicle restriction.

Page 53, Ensure services for youth and seniors are available to attract young families, change to: Ensure that there is an adequate amount of community services for all residents. Partners, GI Parks & Rec and Advisory Boards.

Page 54, remove “Bridging the Gap” and replace with this plan.

Climate change task item priority level left “blank”. Becoming a “Climate Smart Community” is already in progress and should be labeled ongoing with the Town Board as the appropriate Partner.

Pull out after page 59, near new hotel, trail labeled existing trail location, it is not existing, and will be edited.

Nike Base - #4, building addition- should be listed as new construction, not new commercial.

#8, enhance hiking trail and connection, either zoom graphic out or show trail head connections. There will be a list in the top corner of where the trails are connected. CPL will send email to Paul for review.

Survey Summary – Councilwoman Baney mentioned that the survey results clearly state that 75% of the respondents felt that new commercial development should be located on Grand Island Boulevard between Fantasy Island and Whitehaven Road, so how do we get from there to having these nodes spread across the Island. Brian replied that we already have
commercial development elsewhere and what we are looking for in the nodes is not massive development but, rather, some targeted redevelopment. We are not looking to create a new commercial pocket.

The question that has lingered throughout this process is how do we create a community center if we are not going to have major population shifts or density? The solution we have listed in the implementation portion is that we have a community center which we were not very aggressive with but that is because we are not looking to create a clustered mass, but rather, focus on the nodes. If the committee is comfortable with that, then CPL won’t make changes.

Otherwise we need to talk about how 75% of respondents want commercial growth in the center of town, but the plan focused somewhat on the center but more so on the four nodes. Martha stated that nodal concept evolved over time and many conversations and when the people were completing the survey, they were not privy to those conversations. If the survey participants had knowledge of the prior conversations, they may have answered differently.

Brian stated that you don’t want to forward a plan to your Town Board and say here is our data and evidence, but we did something different, without submitting an explanation. When we send the plan to the Town Board for review, pending the changes discussed above, we should include an executive cover letter stating why we are ready to refer the plan to you.

The nodes already exist, they are just being embellished. If we have design standards that apply to the nodes, we can have some management of what is there.

What does scale, mass and density of community center really mean. A true community center may not be a single community center, but more spaced out. The question regarding where you would like to see more commercial development restricted answers given.

Brian stated that as a planner, he would like to thank everyone, and that this committee has been wonderful to work with and it has been a great comprehensive planning effort.

A **motion** was made by Jim / Paul to **REFER** the Comprehensive Plan to the Town Board, with comments made at this meeting and contingent upon the inclusion of a cover letter this board will see prior to submission to the Town Board.

**Discussion:**

-Jim stated that the cover letter should include why / how there was a seeming deviation from the 75% preference to commercial expansion in town center and to explain what a hamlet is.

Brian composed the following:

> While this Comprehensive Plan seeks to address improvements in our Town Center and commercial districts, the plan simultaneously acknowledges needs to improve and foster growth in already established commercial realms throughout the Island.
Ayes: All in favor. Motion carried.

-Jim stated that we aren’t going to be adjourning as a group because the LWRP is on our doorstep. We are currently finalizing the agreement with the State Department and we are awaiting final approval.

-In closing, Jim thanked everyone and stated it was fantastic working with everyone and it was an honor to have been their chairman. Considering we finished this plan in 13 months, and not 8 years which is the length of time the first Comprehensive Plan took to be approved. This group has been so engaged with the process.

-Pete asked what the next steps will be, he is concerned with design standards. Jim stated that the next step is for a motion to be presented to the Town Board establishing the LRPC as a standing committee which will overlook planning efforts on a long term basis, therefore, this document would be implemented by this group which engages all boards.

-Bev asked about design standards from the last plan, which was the only part adopted, they were limited to town center and north business district, the town center business district and south business district, we also need to apply the design standards to the nodes. Brian stated that you could create a neighborhood, mixed use zoning for the nodes, then create a single general business zoning, then do a graphic form based zoning code. Eric asked how the form based zoning would be applied, Brian replied that the Town Board would decide to hire a consultant to do a project.

V. COMMITTEE COMMENTS

-Paul requested that Strawberry Island not be referred to as a State park, it actually belongs to Tonawanda. It must be a GIS file set issue.

-Paul also stated that Big Six Mile Creek is a marina not a State park – page 16, again most likely a GIS issue.

-Jim stated that one thing that was overlooked in the last Comprehensive Plan was industry carbon footprint. Melanie stated that there is a goals and object that refers to carbon emissions.

-Bev inquired about referencing the section about energy and reiterated that all of the current phrasing will be removed after sustainability, and the Local Solar Law will be referenced and Brian agreed.

-Eric requested that a final PDF with the edits be made available to committee members prior to submission to the Town Board. Melanie will make updated PDF available.

-Dave asked when the zoning would be updated and Brian stated that the master plan will give you the legal foundation to update zoning, Dave said that within the past few months, it would be helpful to have architectural design review. Brian strongly suggested giving Architectural review capacity to the Planning Board.

-There would need to be an RFP to bring in a consultant to work on the zoning portion. Brian stated that from an RFP to implementing a new zoning code, the time frame would be approximately one year.

-Jim added that it is very beneficial to the Advisory Boards and therefore, to the Town, to have all the advisory boards meet and be able to work together. Currently the Conservation Board is struggling with writing an RFQ or RFP – the other boards could offer assistance if we had a regular meeting.
Dave said that the Conservation Board just brought a tree law to the Planning Board, which they didn’t have anything to do with. They had a work session with the Conservation Board to understand what they are looking for. Dave said they need the boards to connect more.

Brian stated that the City of Tonawanda did after finishing up their LWRP and Comprehensive plans, which haven’t been adopted, but they wanted to move right into zoning, is they put a planner under a term agreement and pre-qualify the rates. You can actually put a couple planners under term agreements. Could RFQ planner term agreements, there is no retainer.

Jim stated that the number one plan that needs to be put in place is zoning, it’s the foundation. If we go to form based zoning it is a major shift in what the advisory boards do and the structure of the code enforcement department. Brian stated that design standards should be codified, become law, not just a suggestion.

Bev stated that the Planning Board stated as a committee under Peter McMahon. The Town Board then adopted the committee as an advisory board. Once an advisory board is established you appoint a chair person, a number of members with length of terms, a purpose. As the Boards change the members will change.

First step is to adopt this board as a permanent advisory board, then issue an RFP for a planner to start with the zoning review.

VI. NEXT MEETING:

- No meeting planned for next month

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Paul / Bruno to ADJOURN at 8:45 pm.

Ayes: All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline McGinty

Jacqueline McGinty
LRPC- Recording Secretary