

**ALGONQUIN DOWNTOWN PLANNING STUDY
STEERING COMMITTEE**

Meeting Minutes

Historic Algonquin Village Hall First Floor

February 23, 2012

6:00 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 1: **Call to Order**

Present: Debby Sosine, Ed Mudra, Glenn Schilke, John Breugelmans, Howard Brinn, Tony Bellino, Jeffrey Kroeger, Jim Dawson, Ed Wolowiec, Gabriele Reego, Wade Merritt.

Absent: Sally Cope.

Consultant Members Present: Ron Lanz, Land Vision; Bridget Lane, Business Districts, Inc.; David Miller, Sam Schwartz Engineering; and Lynn Means, Sam Schwartz Engineering.

Guests Present: Jerry Glogowski, Village Trustee and Hala Ahmed, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Village Staff Present: Russ Farnum, Community Development Director; Katie Parkhurst, Senior Planner; Ben Mason, Senior Planner; and Bob Mitchard, Public Works Director.

AGENDA ITEM 2: **Planning Study Overview**

Mr. Russ Farnum, Community Development Director welcomed everyone to the first Steering Committee meeting for the village of Algonquin's Downtown Planning Study. He explained the study will help the village and downtown stakeholders develop a plan for improvements to Algonquin's central business district that will enhance its' viability once the IL Route 31 Western Bypass roadway is completed. Mr. Farnum noted that the Steering Committee will be looked to for comments and feedback throughout the planning process.

The Steering Committee members introduced themselves and identified their place of business and/or particular interest in downtown Algonquin.

AGENDA ITEM 3: **Consultant Team Member Introductions**

The village's planning consultant Land Vision, Inc. introduced their team members and organization. Mr. Ron Lanz, Principal Consultant at Land Vision, will serve as the project lead and Sam Schwartz Engineering and Business Districts, Inc. (BDI) will serve in sub-consulting roles.

AGENDA ITEM 4:**Steering Committee Role**

Mr. Lanz reviewed the role of the Steering Committee and explained the group will serve as a voice for downtown stakeholders, provide input on existing conditions and issues, as well as review and comment on draft evaluations and findings. He stated the downtown study will consist of a structured planning approach, involving an initial Discovery phase, Downtown Improvement Alternatives phase, and Implementation Priorities/Final Report phase. Mr. Lanz indicated stakeholder and public engagement would be an important part of the study and he gave an overview of both technology-based tools and traditional hands-on techniques for obtaining public input.

AGENDA ITEM 5:**Preliminary Discussion Items**

Mr. Lanz asked for general comments and feedback on a variety of topics, including: land use and aesthetics; market demographics; traffic, circulation, and parking; and safety issues.

Mr. John Breugelmans expressed support for reviving the center of downtown with new development and a revitalization of abandoned and vacant properties. He indicated a general desire for more office space and pedestrian activity downtown and cited traffic on Algonquin Road as a disruptive force that acts as a physical barrier. Mr. Breugelmans also recommended the study acknowledge the difference between short- and long-term goals and objectives.

Mr. Ed Wolowiec noted the difficulty for pedestrians to cross Algonquin Road and suggested the study explore options for improving connectivity between park spaces on the north and south sides of Algonquin Road.

Mr. Tony Bellino recommended examining and building upon the various amenities and natural features already existing in the downtown area, such as Towne Park, Cornish Park, and the Prairie Trail Bike Path. He suggested looking at ways for improving the connectivity of parks and open spaces and expressed support for increasing the visibility of existing facilities, for example, a gateway element for Towne Park.

Mr. Jim Dawson stated the Fox River could be utilized more as a draw for the downtown area, either for recreational or commercial purposes.

Mr. Ed Mudra recommended enhancements to the pedestrian network, such as improving linkages and reducing conflicts to create a more walkable environment downtown.

Mr. Jerry Glogowski suggested the study consider what age groups might be interested in visiting downtown and to attempt to plan for a variety of attractions that would serve as a draw, such as entertainment, food, and enjoyment of the natural features.

Ms. Debby Sosine recommended the plan consider ways of addressing the impact on businesses during the construction of the IL Route 31 Western Bypass roadway.

Mr. Lanz asked the Steering Committee if they had any initial thoughts about residential density. Mr. Breugelmans stated that more people living downtown would benefit the strength of the overall business district. Mr. Dawson noted that retention of smaller, vintage homes adds character to the downtown and should be taken into consideration when planning for any future development.

Ms. Bridget Lane from BDI provided an overview of the market demographic study her firm will be assisting with as part of the project. She explained the market analysis will include an online survey that local and area residents will be encouraged to take to provide feedback on downtown and their shopping preferences. Ms. Lane noted the goal is to obtain approximately 1,000 responses which will help the village, businesses, and downtown property owners understand how to better serve the needs of residents and other customers/visitors.

Mr. David Miller, Senior Vice President with Sam Schwartz Engineering, gave an overview of the transportation-related components of the downtown study including traffic circulation, bicycle and pedestrian features, access and parking. He noted the plan will attempt to identify opportunities for expanding bicycle and pedestrian networks as well as evaluate the existing level of parking and determine whether there is a need and potential for more parking availability.

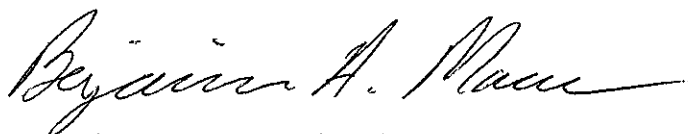
AGENDA ITEM 6: Project Next Step

Mr. Lanz stated the Land Vision consultant team will next begin their comprehensive analysis of downtown existing conditions, including public outreach and one-on-one interviews with stakeholders.

AGENDA ITEM 7: Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Benjamin A. Mason".

Benjamin A. Mason, Senior Planner