

**ALGONQUIN DOWNTOWN PLANNING STUDY
STEERING COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
Historic Algonquin Village Hall Second Floor
December 13, 2012
6:00 p.m.**

***AGENDA ITEM 1:* Call to Order**

Present: Debby Sosine, Ed Mudra, Tony Bellino, Jim Dawson, Ed Wolowiec, Gabriele Reego, Sara Mason, Howard Brinn, Glenn Schilke, and Wade Merritt.

Absent: John Breugelmans and Richard Worzala.

Consultant Members Present: Ron Lanz, Land Vision; Bridget Lane, Business Districts, Inc.; Stacey Meekins, Sam Schwartz Engineering.

Guests Present: Richard Hoferle, Algonquin Planning & Zoning Commission and Elizabeth Miller, Algonquin Public Arts Commission.

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

***AGENDA ITEM 2:* Request Approval of September 13, 2012 Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Tony Bellino made a motion to approve the September 13, 2012 minutes. Ms. Debby Sosine seconded the motion to approve the minutes as presented. The voice vote noted all ayes and the motion carried.

***AGENDA ITEM 3:* Project Status**

Mr. Ron Lanz, Land Vision stated that the consultant team has concluded the second phase of the Downtown Planning Study involving development of draft improvement alternatives. The consultant team is in the process of beginning the third and final phase regarding the development of implementation priorities.

AGENDA ITEM 4: Phase 2 Recap: Draft Downtown Improvement Alternatives

a) Reality Check Forum – meeting overview

Mr. Lanz explained that a meeting was held recently with various public agencies and local private developers to share the study's preliminary recommendations and obtain their thoughts and comments on the plan. Representatives from McHenry County DOT,

McHenry County Conservation District and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning attended and offered suggestions for improvements to downtown, including:

- The creation of partnerships between different users and stakeholders in Downtown
- Consider signal upgrades, zebra striping, or other visual enhancements to raise pedestrian visibility and safety
- Recognize the potential value and benefits that pedestrian/eco-tourism may provide to Downtown and the community at-large

b) Planning Workshop #2 – table discussion summary

Mr. Lanz provided an overview of the November 28 public workshop. He noted that 60 people attended and were invited to provide input and feedback on the study's Draft Recommendations. Workshop participants were encouraged to comment on each of the plan's four Sub Areas at group table discussions, and below is a brief summary of the comment received:

- Consider narrowing lanes to reduce traffic speeds in Downtown
- Bump-outs along Route 62 may further enhance pedestrian safety
- Paddling activities along the Fox River would serve both recreational and exercise/health-oriented participants
- Explore potential to relocate above ground utilities underground
- Enhanced pedestrian access to Arrowhead Subdivision is desired
- Preserve views of the river from the bluff through character appropriate development
- Consider sidewalk improvements along Route 62
- Evaluate the possibility of expanding Fox River walkway improvements south to Cornish Park
- Consider the provision of additional power boat landings near Port Edward Restaurant
- Designate a location (north of Riverfront Park) where a stand-up paddler can safely enter the water
- Consider parking restrictions to limit long-term employee parking in front of businesses
- Evaluate restrictions on temporary sign permits to allow people to display signs that promote events further in advance
- Evaluate the feasibility to incorporate kayak/canoe activities along Crystal Creek
- Work to attract a Kayak Outfitter to Downtown to open up a shop on Main Street and offer transport for kayakers down to the river

Overall, Land Vision noted that the vast majority of comments and suggestions received were consistent with the draft recommendations of the study.

Mr. Russ Farnum, Community Development Director, mentioned that the Steering Committee should keep in mind the study seeks to present a long-term vision for

Downtown and it is therefore important to look toward the future and consider bold plans.

The committee discussed the draft recommendations as well as some policy issues related to the study. Mr. Jim Dawson recommended distributing a copy of the draft plan to Algonquin residents to obtain further public comment. Ms. Sosine raised concern about whether the study's conceptual renderings were compatible with the historic character of downtown and whether historic buildings would be lost through redevelopment.

Mr. Lanz stated that Land Vision would post the study's Draft Recommendations on the project website and Mr. Mason indicated that Village Staff will do additional outreach to obtain public input, through such methods as a notice in the water bill, press release, email blasts to various groups, and a link in the village's monthly e-newsletter.

Mr. Mason noted that the Steering Committee members themselves should take the opportunity to provide their own comments and suggestions on the draft recommendations, as the committee was formed with the goal of having various stakeholders in downtown offer their individual perspective. He also mentioned that regarding the sites the study identified for possible redevelopment, those particular properties are mainly comprised of under-utilized parcels that would not involve the loss of significant architectural buildings in downtown as the goal of the final plan is to achieve some level of balance between historic preservation and future development.

Several committee members offered their personal opinions of the new Riverside Plaza development under construction downtown at the Rt. 31 & Rt. 62 intersection. Some members saw a conflict between the height and massing of the building and the overall scale of existing structures downtown while other members viewed the development as consistent with the type of land use redevelopment that will help revitalize downtown through additional residents within walking distance of restaurants and shops.

Mr. Lanz noted that the proposed redevelopment sites in the study are conceptual in nature and would require a willing property owner and review by the village's Planned Unit Development process. In general, he explained that the study's Market Analysis revealed that more residential "rooftops" are needed downtown to support the existing core commercial "footprint".

Ms. Bridget Lane, Business Districts, Inc., stated that the draft recommendations include both a minimum approach (Min) and a maximum approach (Max), and that such alternatives will ultimately provide the village with a range of options to refer to under various market conditions.

Mr. Ed Mudra, inquired as to whether the Steering Committee would still have an opportunity to participate in guiding downtown improvements and redevelopment once the study is complete. The Land Vision consultant team explained that one of the study's recommendations will be to organize a Task Force Committee to help implement the plan.

The Steering Committee discussed other components of the study and offered a few suggestions. Mr. Dawson suggested that a large employer should be recruited downtown, to help increase the daytime population and that the village should consider providing financial incentives to new business and development. Mr. Bellino stated he supports the overall goals and scope of the planning study and recommended beginning to implement some of the small improvements outlined for downtown once the plan is complete (e.g., signage, bike lanes, etc.) in order to help prepare for and attract new development downtown.

A couple general questions were posed by the Steering Committee as well. Concerning the process whereby existing private property might be redeveloped in the future, a question arose from the Steering Committee as to whether the village would consider eminent domain, to which Mr. Farnum noted that the village would not use eminent domain for economic development purposes and stated also that Illinois state law prohibits the taking of private property for land development and that it may only be used for a public works project such as water, sewer, or road infrastructure. The Land Vision consultant team also clarified that the study is not proposing any changes to the N. Harrison Street cross-section and that the recommended "bulb-out" for Algonquin Road is proposed to help control westbound traffic, and prevent those vehicles wanting to head north on Main Street from queuing-up in the right turn lane until after they pass Harrison Street.

AGENDA ITEM 5: Questions and Next Steps

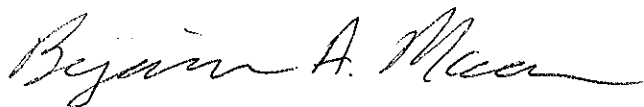
Mr. Lanz explained that the study's Draft Recommendations will be posted on the project website and Village Staff will publicize it over the next few weeks to encourage additional public input.

A final draft of the complete study is tentatively scheduled to be brought before the village's Planning and Zoning Commission and Village Board for review and consideration in late winter. A final Steering Committee meeting is tentatively planned for the project at the end of January.

AGENDA ITEM 6: Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

Benjamin A. Mason, Senior Planner