

**ALGONQUIN DOWNTOWN PLANNING STUDY
STEERING COMMITTEE**

**Meeting Minutes
Historic Algonquin Village Hall Second Floor
September 13, 2012
6:00 p.m.**

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

Present: Debby Sosine, Ed Mudra, John Breugelmans, Tony Bellino, Jim Dawson, Ed Wolowiec, Gabriele Reego, Sara Mason and Howard Brinn.

Absent: Glenn Schilke, Richard Worzala and Wade Merritt.

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

Village Staff Present: William Ganek, Village Manager; Russ Farnum, Community Development Director; Katie Parkhurst, Senior Planner; and Ben Mason, Senior Planner.

***AGENDA ITEM 2:* Request Approval of June 28, 2012 Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Ed Wolowiec made a motion to approve the June 28, 2012 minutes. Mr. Tony Bellino 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 Phase 2 of the Algonquin Downtown Planning Study is in-progress. In general, Phase 1 of the study involved analysis of existing physical and market conditions downtown. Land Vision and the project's sub-consultants—Business Districts, Inc. and Sam Schwartz Engineering—have subsequently developed two conceptual improvement alternatives.

Draft recommendations have been categorized geographically into four Sub Areas and an overview of the proposed improvements was recently distributed to the Steering Committee for review and comment. Overall, the preliminary recommendations include both a minimum approach (Min) and maximum approach (Max) to illustrate potential redevelopment and enhancement opportunities at different levels of scale.

AGENDA ITEM 4:

Draft Downtown Improvement Alternatives

a) Planning Workshop Summary

Mr. Adam Rak, Land Vision provided an overview of the July 19 public workshop. He noted that approximately 65 people attended and explained that workshop participants were shown a total of 106 concept preference images divided into several categories, including: mixed-use; commercial; residential; signage; parking; bicycling and waterfront recreation. Images were ranked on a scale of 1 to 5 to assist in identifying desired use, style, type, and intensity of preferences. Overall, the survey results revealed the most desired characteristics, which included the following:

- Mixed-use structures – two story buildings of traditional masonry with ground floor storefronts and well-defined entrances
- Multi-family residential – pitched roofs, stoops fronting the street, and a variety of materials and details
- Parking – landscape islands, pedestrian-oriented amenities, sustainable design features, as well as a preference toward diagonal parking
- Bicycle and waterfront recreation – connectivity to the Prairie Trail Bike Path and opportunities for kayak/canoe rental in the Downtown

Mr. Rak stated that workshop participants were later divided into eight working tables to discuss, identify and graphically depict desired improvement opportunities throughout the study area. The input and comments collected from each table were summarized into 6 categories: land use; vehicular circulation; bicycle and pedestrian circulation; wayfinding and signage; recreation; and miscellaneous. Below are some of the main findings:

- There is a desire to make Downtown a “true” destination through a mix of uses (commercial, residential, institutional, recreational) and activity improvements
- Existing historic structures are viewed as an asset to be preserved (where appropriate) in Downtown
- Strategically located shared parking lots would help to support area business demands
- Severe traffic issues along Main Street and Algonquin Road have created a negative perception of Downtown
- Prairie Trail Bike Path is a key Downtown asset
- There is a sense of pride in the existing identity elements (e.g. clock tower)
- Desire to enhance and coordinate wayfinding
- Consider active waterfront amenities (e.g. kayak/canoe rental) to enhance spaces

b) Draft Framework Advisory Recommendations

Ms. Stacey Meekins provided an overview of the study’s transportation-related goals and recommendations, including: reducing vehicular speed on downtown streets; increasing pedestrian connections to surrounding residential neighborhoods; enhancing IL Route 62 crossings, potentially via the installation of pedestrian islands or bulb-outs; and creating

new bike facilities such as designated lanes and paths throughout downtown that would also connect to the Prairie Trail Bike Path.

Ms. Bridget Lane, Business Districts, Inc., presented a summary of the study's marketing component. She noted the importance of attracting destination businesses that offer high quality goods and services that will bring in customers from outside the community. Ms. Lane also recommended publicizing the completed Downtown Planning Study to the real estate community and establishing a new organization of downtown property owners and developers that would meet quarterly to identify ways of recruiting new businesses and residential/commercial development downtown. She also encouraged reaching out to local civic and private organizations to encourage them to consider holding small events downtown, such as youth sports leagues and church groups that might have a desire in using the parks downtown for activities (e.g., walking groups, Little League parade).

Mr. Lanz gave an overview of the study's four geographic downtown Sub Areas: Northwest & Northeast of IL Route 31/62 as well as Southwest & Southeast of IL Route 31/62. He asked for feedback from the Steering Committee on the study's draft recommendations and suggestions/comments offered by committee members included the following:

- Attempt to increase the daytime office population downtown, in order to help support retail and restaurant businesses
- Install public boat slips on the north side of the dam, along Riverfront Park
- Potential future commercial redevelopment at highly visible intersections should have parking located away from the property's frontage, toward the rear of the lot instead
- Develop a creek walk, extending from Towne Park to Cornish Park
- Consider increasing the promotion of bicycling, possibly through a rental program where bikes could be picked-up and dropped-off at various locations around downtown
- Define the future use and purpose of Towne Park, which will become more visible and accessible once a new parking lot is constructed at the west end of Washington Street
- When considering future landscaping along Main Street, take into account winter conditions when snow and salt may impact the viability of certain types of plantings

AGENDA ITEM 5: Questions and Next Steps

Mr. Lanz gave a brief overview of the project's upcoming meetings: Thursday, October 11 draft plan presentation to a joint meeting of the village's commissions and Tuesday, October 23 project update at the Committee of the Whole meeting to the Village Board.

Ms. Sara Mason inquired about the potential for incorporating a whitewater park feasibility analysis into the Downtown Planning Study, to which Mr. Lanz mentioned that

it would likely require a separate study to focus on the particular logistics of such a recreational opportunity.

AGENDA ITEM 6: Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Benjamin A. Mason". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Benjamin A. Mason, Senior Planner