

NY Forward – Capital Region - Hoosick Falls

Subject	AGENDA LPC Meeting #2	Date	Monday, July 15, 2024
Place	Hoosick Armory, 80 Church St, Hoosick Falls	Time	3:00-5:00pm
Distribution	<u>Local Planning Committee</u> Robert Allen (Mayor and Co-Chair) Brian Williams (Co-Chair) <i>Doug Sauer (absent)</i> Trish Bloomer James Monahan Ric DiDonato Paula Kamperman Gayle Donohue Craig Kennedy Mike Danforth Mike Willemsen Marianne Zwicklbauer Aaron Buzzinski	<u>State Team</u> Matthew Smith, DOS	<u>Consultant Team</u> Ian Nicholson, Buro Happold Isabel Mulay, Buro Happold Daniel D'Oca, Interboro
		<u>Public</u> <i>1 individual</i>	

Meeting Summary:

Please see 'HF_LPC Meeting 2_Slides_record' for the presentation shared during the meeting which parallels the discussion summarized below.

Action items are called out in ***bold-italic highlight***

Welcome and Agenda

Ian (BH) welcomes the group to the second New York Forward LPC meeting. He reminds the room that these meetings are open to the public, but not intended to be public interactive workshops.

He then briefly overviews the meeting agenda.

Opening Remarks

Mayor Allen (LPC Co-Chair) recognizes the role of the LPC as the voice of the community. He highlights the significance of the NYF grant, viewing it as a pivotal moment in the history of Hoosick

Falls. This grant symbolizes the transition from a period of community and environmental challenges to a time of prosperity, a transformation that the community has achieved collectively.

Code of Conduct

Ian (BH) reads the Code of Conduct preamble, and reviews key points from the Code of Conduct that LPC members are expected to abide by.

Guidance is delivered regarding conflicts of interest and recusal, although emphasis is placed on the importance of recusal during the third LPC meeting when potential projects are discussed.

Planning Process Updates

Ian (BH) reviews the NYF timeline of actions since June 3rd, including the website going live, the first LPC meeting, and the first public workshop. He also informs the LPC that 8 sponsors have attended technical sessions with him and Matt Smith (DOS) to discuss potential projects. He then outlines the upcoming steps in the planning process, the next of which is the deadline for projects to be submitted on Aug 7th.

Ian also shares a calendar illustrating the vision of how the NYF program will proceed, placing today's meeting in context of the overall process.

Hoosick Falls' NYF Boundaries / Map

Ian (BH) presents a map of Hoosick Falls' current NYF boundaries for LPC members to comment on. He informs members that they can extend boundaries during the next LPC meeting as well, while reviewing project submissions. The LPC agrees that the boundary should be moved from Lyman Street to First Street, to encompass the Rescue Squad, more residences, and the parking lot at the corner of First and First.

Consultant team to adjust NYF boundary and maps

Public Workshop #1 Overview

Dan (Interboro) provides a brief overview of the first workshop for the LPC members who were not in attendance. He explains the breakout activity, where participants wrote observations and thoughts on comment and dream bubbles and placed them spatially on a map. He also shares the number of participants (22 signed in, but there was closer to 30 in attendance) and the consultant team that attended the workshop. Photos from the workshop are shared.

The team received 80 comments from the workshop participants, with the top three focused on pedestrian experience, waterfront access, and redevelopment projects. The accompanying map

showing where the comments were concentrated is shared, zooming in on the locations with the top three categories of comments.

Consultant team to provide LPC with raw data from workshop

Dan presents the key themes synthesized from the activity: improve pedestrian infrastructure, increase river access & prominence, reconfigure parking options, housing development, support cultural events and activity, and preserve historic urban fabric.

Feedback on the preliminary goals is also presented. Community members agreed that fostering local economic growth is the most important goal. However, Dan points out to LPC members that very few comments were related to economic growth. One LPC member suggests this goal was selected because it is a generic statement that the other goals inherently play into.

Visions and Goals

Ian (BH) presents the preliminary downtown vision from the NYF application. He presents three alternative vision statements for the LPC to discuss and workshop. LPC members want to avoid mentioning the water crisis in the vision statement, instead opting to use the word “resilient”. Members agree that the second alternative is the most viable, but the phrases “entrepreneurial spirit” and “investors” from the first option should be utilized in the second. A finalized downtown vision is drafted collectively from this input:

“The Village of Hoosick Falls is a vibrant, forward-thinking community built on its rich entrepreneurial heritage, resiliency, and scenic waterway. By transforming our historic assets and embracing sustainability, the Village will be a thriving hub for local food, arts, and outdoor recreation. With a walkable, lively downtown and access to the Hoosic River, the Village will provide longtime residents, new investors, and visitors of all ages with accessible and affordable opportunities to experience Hoosick Falls.”

Ian (BH) presents the preliminary downtown goals adapted from the NYF application. He highlights the top three selected by the community at the workshop. The goals are compared to key themes identified at the workshop, illustrating clear connections between the two. Using this information, LPC members discuss alterations to the existing goals. Finalized goals are drafted from this discussion:

- Foster local economic growth while embracing our rural charm
- Improve walkability, pedestrian infrastructure, and accessibility
- Redevelop vacant assets & restore historic urban fabric
- Broaden the activation of the Hoosic River waterfront
- Improve and expand housing options
- Expand cultural activity, outdoor recreation, and the arts

Topics discussed include:

- Housing
 - Young people and seniors have difficulty finding options
 - Affordability an issue
 - Rental units needed
 - Improvements must be made to existing housing
 - Ultimately decide to include specifics on types and affordability in the strategies
- Short-term lodging
 - Currently no Airbnbs, hotels, etc
 - Include within strategies for economic growth goal
- Riverfront
 - “Reactivate” as a verb does not recognize existing efforts and success developing along the river

Downtown Profile and Assessment

Isabel (BH) presents research done for the downtown profile. She explains the purpose of the downtown profile section.

Review of history & trajectory, recent plans and investments, alignment with REDC, geography & ecology, architecture & urban form, streets, circulation & parking, parks & open spaces, land use & zoning, socio-economic conditions, employment & commuting, and real estate market.

Isabel (BH) discusses key observations drawn from the downtown assessment, emphasizing opportunities and challenges.

LPC Q&A / Discussion

- Question about multifamily vacancy rates: are they typically this low across the county? Ian explains that when supply is low the vacancy rate is usually also low.
- Question about projects: can the village put out an RFP for the public to propose projects for the village to sponsor? Likely not, as it is too late to begin a formal RFP process.
- Discussion about what potential sponsors need to present to the LPC. Consultant team confirms that sponsors just need to complete the application and perhaps include some photos or drawings. The consultants will then transfer this information into standardized templates to share with the LPC. Ian mentions the possibility of doing sponsor presentations.
- Question about large projects: would it make sense for sponsors to submit multiple applications? Consultant team suggests that if the project is on one property or serving one purpose to submit a single application. However, the sponsor should make clear if there are different phases or sections of the project.

- Discussion on how to respond to public questions regarding NYF funding. The grant is to improve the future of Hoosick Falls. It's not coming from local taxes, so if Hoosick Falls didn't get it a different village would have. It is a testament to the community and how much progress they have made.
- Question about grant recipients: can they receive NYF funding if they haven't paid their property taxes? Consultant team suggests that the LPC can write private memos to the state informing them of offenders.
 - **Matt (DOS) will follow up with the state regarding this question**
- Discussion of other villages' success fostering economic growth. Matt mentions Schenectady increased commercial space and housing units which made a change. The small project fund was explained and discussed.
- Question about alignment between potential projects and goals: is it the LPC's job to make sure folks are submitting applications that address each goal? Consultant team says that the LPC should be encouraging everyone to submit projects.

Public Comment

N/A

Closing Remarks

Mayor and consultant team thanks everyone for their time and input.

END OF SUMMARY