

March 9, 2005

Strategic Planning & Partnerships Commission ----

Proceedings by Authority

State of New York,
City of Jamestown ss.:
Mayor's Conference Room

The regular meeting of the Strategic Planning & Partnerships Commission of the City of Jamestown, New York was held on Wednesday, March 9, 2005 at 8:00 a.m.

Members Present: Co-Chair Jennifer Harkness, Co-Chair Anthony Dolce, Raymond Fashano, Larry Senn, Miles Lasser, Gregory Rabb, Brent Sheldon arrived at 8:25 a.m.

Members Absent: Beulah Cammarata, Mayor Teresi, Gregory DeCinque, George Spitale, Todd Trantum, Walter Haase, Michael Sullivan and James Ventura

Others Present: Acting City Clerk Debbie Patti, Council President Dr. Lillian Ney, Councilwoman Carolyn Bloomquist, Principal Planner William Rice, Michael Lyons, Maclain Nichols, Amanda Bleck and Anne Fafinski-Mason

Co-Chair Harkness called the meeting to order.

Dr. Ney announced that Ms. Nichols has been named the new Director of Development in Dunkirk. She expressed her appreciation to Ms. Nichols for all her hard work and stated that she will be missed.

UPDATE ON COMMUNITY FORUM

Ms. Nichols stated that she discussed with Wally Haase, Lillian Ney and Russ Diethrick the Community Forum. With Susan Stohr's help, they put together a plan for the panel. They spoke with Allan Richardson, CEO of Public Power Association ("PPA") and he has agreed to be a part of the panel. Ms. Nichols also spoke with Bob Shipler of the University of Buffalo about being on the panel and stated that he was very honored to have been asked. He would like very much to do it, but may have a conflict and will try and work it out. She stated that they are very excited to have him if it all works out. She also said that Mike Lyons has agreed to be on the panel as well as Rich Alexander from the Chautauqua County Industrial Development Agency has agreed to put on a panel to bring a more county-wide perspective for economic development. She went on to say that Ms. Stohr is trying to find someone from the EPA and/or the Department of Energy and at this point, it doesn't look like it is going to happen. She is still looking into other possibilities. Ms. Nichols stated that this all needs to be finalized by the end of the week so they can start communicating as a group. She will eventually send out an email invitation to everyone so they can pass it along to friends, family and co-workers as a way to start getting information out to the community. Ms. Nichols further explained how the panel is going to work.

Dr. Ney commented that originally when the sub-committee met, they wanted to get new and outside people and commented on Allan Richardson being able to give a national view to the panel on what communities are going through all over the country in regards to their power needs and how does it tie in with the economic and development needs of the community. Also, she stated that he will discuss how important it is to keep our own power plant in the City. Dr. Ney also stated that having Rich Alexander, Mike Lyons and Mr. Haase, who are local and respected in the Community, on the panel is a very important balance for people attending the forum.

Mr. Rice asked if it was going to be put in the newspaper also.

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Dr. Ney stated, yes. She further stated that after the invitation is done, perhaps it could be stated that if they could not attend the forum and would like to make suggestions, either go to the website or do it in writing. Dr. Ney mentioned that on the Board of Public Utilities website there will be the Op-ed articles that the Commission had asked people to provide. She stated that she will be meeting with Walter Simpson from the University of Buffalo, Energy Department, along with a couple of other people, as he is very interested in the project and wants to help.

(Co-Chair Dolce arrived at 8:15.)

Mr. Rice asked if Mr. Simpson might be appropriate for the panel.

Dr. Ney stated that others have talked about it but she has not spoken to Mr. Simpson about that, but will do so. She stated that she is an environmentalist at heart, but, doesn't feel it is real practical right now for Jamestown, and stated that the real issue is coal. Jamestown is and has been a depressed area but is showing progress for a small city. She feels that this is a reasonable and practical approach to the problem.

Ms. Nichols stated that Todd Trantum is working on trying to get someone from Burns & McDonald to sit on the panel.

Co-Chair Harkness asked if everyone was comfortable with the format after the last meeting when they tried to change the focus in regard to a broader prospective.

Everyone said they were fine with that.

Dr. Ney stated they were not going to be having a long presentation of the project itself.

Mr. Senn asked what it is being called.

Co-Chair Harkness stated they really have not talked about it yet.

Ms. Nichols stated that it was going to be at the Reg Lenna.

Dr. Ney stated that there have been some handicapped accessibility issues at the Jackson Center and they have done a good job trying to get funds and the City has been very supportive of trying to fix the problem. There was some discussion about the last group meeting there not being able to have full access to the building. Some had brought cameras and were very upset that they couldn't take pictures. Dr. Ney stated that she spoke to some of the people who called and she had promised that they would do everything they could to rectify the situation. She stated that the elevator is due there this week. They have an emergency door that they have made on the side of the auditorium, but the ramp isn't completed.

Co-Chair Dolce said it also was a comfort issue. He stated that there have been many remarks made about the seating.

Ms. Fafinski-Mason stated that the Civic Center does have the marquis that can be good for advertising.

Dr. Ney stated that was a great idea, but another thing she didn't like about the building is that there was a stage and the panel would be looking down on the people and she also didn't care for the Council sitting on the stage for the same reason. It is better to be on the same level as the people so that they can see.

Co-Chair Harkness asked Ms. Nichols about any outstanding op-eds.

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Ms. Nichols responded with the ones still outstanding.

Dr. Ney stated that they should be included on the website.

Co-Chair Harkness asked if there were any other questions and if she needed any other help from any of them.

Ms. Nichols stated not at the present, she would probably be calling all of them with lists and things to do.

Dr. Ney stated that the Council is co-sponsoring this and she stated that Ms. Nichols could call all of them as well as the Commission people.

Co-Chair Harkness stated that Ms. Nichols took all of their long-term goals and objectives for each of the Action Teams and is still trying to input them into performance statements to help get this report out. It will also help them when they get ready to produce the report cards. It will have to be updated to Amanda and then we will be able to report and it will be so much easier. She added the co-chairs. She stated that some of the goals and tasks of the Action Teams may need to be changed. Those will be emailed out to everyone and every month prior to the meeting we will email to the Committee Chairs.

Mr. Senn asked if the Council Retreat picked a goal for each of these topics.

Dr. Ney answered that what the Council Retreat is going to be this year is to get the goals of what the Council did last year with the Department Heads and the Mayor and they will get the next piece of paper (which Co-Chair Harkness has not discussed yet) which is a compilation of all the work of the Community Revitalization Plan, what this Commission is doing. Dr. Linden had suggested that they review all that and then to make three goals that they want to do for this upcoming year. She stated that they have Greg Lindquist now who is Co-Chair of the Coordination and Effective Government. He is an employee here and very interested in this kind of thing. She stated that he will be pivotal in trying to get all these things together so that it all ties in the way it should.

Mr. Senn stated he should be a great help.

Ms. Nichols stated that she agreed with Mr. Senn in that this is what he has envisioned from the beginning – doing this type of POS Form to show accountability and this form is very effective to keep things on target.

Dr. Ney stated that it would be nice to have the departments use this form as well.

Co-Chair Harkness stated that since Ms. Nichols is leaving, they need to find a new co-chair for the Neighborhood Revitalization.

Action Team Updates

Mr. Lyons spoke on the Capital Improvement Plan Action Team and thinks that they have made good progress. They now have on the team, Mike Metzger and Joe Johnson who used to be involved many years ago with the City. They have also brought on John Scalise, Craig Colburn and a couple of other people who have financial experience – Joe Bellitto and Jim Olson, Jim McElrath from the Council, and they got right into addressing where the money will come from. The City is working on several things for them. They are looking into how they can put some real money into the capital improvements plan in order to maintain the asset base, dig out of the hole we are in right now, and then maintain the asset base of the City. He commented that he thought the couple of meetings they have had went very well and feeling that it could be done. He wondered if the political will to get it done is there or not. Obviously, the money has got

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to come from somewhere. They will present a realistic proposal and see what the Administration and City Council will do with it.

Dr. Ney stated that it would be wonderful if he could come with a final report to the Finance Committee and then to City Council for a presentation.

Mr. Senn asked if they were actually doing a capital financing plan involving levels of financing.

Mr. Lyons stated yes, that they actually based the plan on private industry ways that they are doing it within the companies themselves. Joe Johnson had some great comments on when he first went to Chautauqua and faced the same challenge. They had no coordinated plan and no way to allocate the monies needed. They have some really good people working on it and the City people that were there were very enthused.

Mr. Rabb asked Mr. Lyons if he had received the materials he sent him from the County.

Mr. Lyons stated that he did receive them.

Mr. Rabb stated that they were involved in completely redesigning the planning process, financial management plan that came out of the legislature and redesigning the whole county planning process – the forms, etc. The process is going to be changed this year, but he thought it was applicable because it is a public sector process.

Dr. Ney stated that the next meeting was March 17th at 8:00.

Mr. Lyons stated when the recommendation is made how to develop the “pot” of money, the challenge then is discipline by the City Council and Administration, not to raise the pot. Once it is set up and funded, you have to keep the money there.

Dr. Ney agreed that it was the discipline of the process that makes it happen – the discipline on the Council's part.

Mr. Rabb said pressures from the outside are sometimes very difficult. He gave as an example in the County, the new courthouse that they are discussing and also improvements to the County Jail.

There was discussion initiated by Mr. Rabb about the difference between city and county funding and what some of the differences are on that subject. He stated that it is scary when you know there are things that need to be done and the money just isn't there.

Co-Chair Harkness said the Commission has some exciting news.

Mr. Rice gave an update on the Urban Design Plan. They have a short list of four firms and hopefully by next week, they will have a decision on which of the firms they are going to work with, then we will sit down and talk with them about the scope of the work and the total cost. He stated that some of the information that the firm/firms need they may already have in-house so that will save some money there. They are also looking for another grant, around \$60,000-\$70,000, to obtain a traffic analysis. He thinks there is a good chance for them to get it because it is another quality community grant and they seem to be favoring Jamestown.

Ms. Bloomquist asked what the boundaries would be for Jamestown around the traffic study if the grant is obtained.

Mr. Rice stated it would still maintain the boundaries and scope of the Urban Design Plan.

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Ms. Bloomquist remarked that she thought all the one-way streets are very inconvenient, inefficient and should be seriously looked at in the study.

Mr. Rice agreed with her and stated that it is a detriment to development taking place along the one-way streets.

Co-Chair Dolce commented that last year they realized that the one-way streets were a bigger problem than they thought; but, when you start opening up the box, you find there are more problems. He stated that he feels this study will really help out because they can look at all the streets in the entire area. There are problems in getting to and from the Ice Arena and around that whole area.

Mr. Rice stated that you have exterior changes also with I-86 being a major thru-way system.

Co-Chair Harkness asked Mr. Rice if they could get a copy of the grant for Susan Stohr.

Mr. Rice said he didn't know if she had a copy of it yet either.

Ms. Bloomquist stated that she had read an article about how slow traffic should be traveling when going through a business district and the ideal is 22 m.p.h. It is good for pedestrian traffic as well as vehicle traffic and also gives people a chance to look in the windows of shops without running into each other. All the traffic is going too quickly and all the streets lead out of town. She hopes that this traffic study comes quickly and something is done about it.

Co-Chair Dolce stated that it was safer.

Mr. Rice stated that he thinks the Urban Design people will agree to that. One of the key issues is balancing pedestrian movement with on the field traffic. He stated that many of the people he has spoken with are not happy with one way streets. He noted that the City of Buffalo is changing a lot of their streets because it is detrimental to downtown business.

Co-Chair Dolce asked if there will be grant monies left to make changes.

Mr. Rice stated that will be the next level they will have to start looking for.

Co-Chair Dolce commented that even minor changes are a lot more expensive than people think. It is not just a matter of flipping signs around.

Dr. Ney stated that the beauty of it is that the Commission has a plan that makes sense. Different entities have been working on the very problem for years. It will be an ongoing community process and will cost a lot of money.

Mr. Rice stated that at least we have a direction set and it will take time from short-term to long term. The Commission perhaps needs to raise the bar a little as far as taking discussions through the process of how the City can get out of the survivalist mode into the growth mode and ways and means to do that. But, he stated, the direction will start to be set. He also commented that you will notice that the State Department of Transportation is also on board with these changes and that it has taken them 30 years to reverse 180 degrees in how to approach them.

Co-Chair Harkness asked Mr. Rice about the target completion date.

Mr. Rice answered the middle of September.

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Dr. Ney asked Mr. Rice if the decision will be made as to who will be awarded the job by April 5th at 5:30 P.M. for the Council, Mayor, Department Heads' retreat at the Roger Tory Peterson complex.

Mr. Rice stated that he hoped by the end of next week a decision will be made.

Dr. Ney then stated that this "goal" will have been met and they can all count on that.

Mr. Rice stated that the reason it is taking so long is that he selected six firms that he thought were going to be appropriate to the needs of the Commission. He was told that he needed to put it in the New York State Reporter and solicit for proposals. He stated that when they did that, they got another six or seven firms that were interested.

Ms. Fafinsky-Mason stated that they have made quite a bit of progress on Community Attitude and the Appearance of the City. It was suggested by the Chamber board for them to combine groups. There is a new group in town that only has four people on the group – Jennifer Harkness, Lee Harkness from DJDC, someone from the Chamber, and MAJA. The purpose of the committee is to combine like services and not duplicate. She stated that very good things are coming out of this Committee – one being the appearance of the City and the Beautification Committee and the DJDC are all getting together for "Hands-on Jamestown." She further stated that the event is being sponsored by the Chamber which will be mid-May. She stated that they have money in a fund and Brigiotta's is offering their plants wholesale to create more permanent plants. They are also working with the City on more permanent flower arrangements, sculptured trees or the large potted plants so that each year they don't have to put money into the annuals that need to be maintained constantly. She also stated that it is allowing them to cross-market and be able to get to more people by just one email.

Dr. Ney asked if this was a collaborative effort of those four.

Ms. Fafinsky-Mason said yes it was.

Dr. Ney stated that was outstanding.

Ms. Fafinsky-Mason stated that Downtown Jamestown Development Corporation ("DJDC") has done a great job on the events and this allows us to support them on their events. She stated that this is the first time she has seen some of these goals, but they all fall right into line, and she also stated that they will be meeting and by April 1st they should have some decisions and by next month's meeting, they may be able to present some plans. She is sure that it fits somehow into an urban design plan and they want to know more about it.

Mr. Rice stated that it definitely does. Landscaping is a good way to draw people's attention to the business district and it sparks their interest.

Ms. Fafinsky-Mason stated that Brigiotta's dream was to make people's dreams come true and that he wants to do the hanging baskets and the sculptured tree idea is also great as it starts small and gets big.

Dr. Ney said that was a great idea to create a beautiful downtown area so that people stay and they have an environment that they are comfortable in.

Ms. Fafinsky-Mason said she would somehow like to get the youth involved – more hands on.

Ms. Bloomquist stated that she thought Buffalo did something like this – more permanent type things – such as daffodil bulbs.

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Dr. Ney stated that it would be wonderful to have so many groups of people working together.

Co-Chair Harkness stated that they have a number of things going on. The first weekend in May they will have a Kentucky Derby Party at the Holiday Inn to raise money for the banners and to start filling up that fund. Also, they are going to want to hang baskets on the new light poles on North Main Street. Tony Purpura is working on that.

The Commission discussed the repairs that may need to be made by the Board of Public Utilities when the new street lights are installed on North Main Street. Concerns were expressed over the need to change the repair later to be consistent with the Design Plan.

Mr. Rice stated that it should be consistent with all of the downtown. They could patch until later on when they get a final design for the entire downtown. Then it would all be consistent. He stated that he thinks it is a waste of time to in doing one thing and either living with that. It defeats the purpose.

Dr. Ney stated that once the Urban Design Plan is done, they are not going back and replace all the sidewalks and all the streets, etc.. We simply don't even have the money to buy a truck that we desperately need for DPW. But, she stated, when sidewalks crumble or something else crumbles, and then we replace them, then we would put them in accordance with what the Urban Design Plan indicates such as stained concrete or brick. She stated she would be in favor now of doing what is aesthetically pleasing, as we have a lot of tourist groups coming through.

Co-Chair Harkness stated that they were going to host the New York State Main Street Alliance Conference on April 27th – April 29th here in Jamestown for the Main Street Program.

Ms. Nichols stated that they may want to include this group and talk about what the concept of the group is about.

Co-Chair Harkness reviewed an update that she received from Susan Stohr.

Ms. Fafinsky-Mason stated that the 2005 Small Business Day in Albany is coming up shortly and the Chamber is taking a bus. The dates are March 21-22nd. The State Legislative Breakfast being sponsored by the Chamber is Friday, April 1st at the Rod & Gun Club in Lakewood and the Jamestown Chamber and the Chautauqua Chamber have a web site.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Debbie C. Patti
Acting City Clerk