

Lancaster, New York

MEETING REPORT

Joint Planning Board and Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Re: Preliminary West Main Street Restoration Plans

February 18, 2010

I. Attendance / Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 by Planning Board Chairman Allein.

Historic Preservation Board:

Brunea, J.	<u>exc.</u>
Harnack, W., V. Chair	<u>x</u>
Meyer, M., Chair	<u>x</u>
Pecqueur, J.,	<u>exc.</u>
Preston, T.	<u>exc.</u>
Miller, G., Secretary	<u>x</u>

Planning Board:

Allein, J., Chair	<u>x</u>
Parzynski, L., V. Chair	<u>x</u>
Bulman, R.	<u>exc.</u>
Refermat, M.	<u>x</u>
Deutschlander, R.	<u>x</u>
Connelly, N.	<u>x</u>
Grucella, M.	<u>x</u>

Alternates:

1. Kwiatek, R.	<u>exc.</u>
2. Hassett, J.	<u>x</u>

Alternates:

1. Kless, M.	<u>exc.</u>
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Secretary: Maciejewski, C. x

Also in attendance:

Simme, J.	<u>x</u>	(Bldg. Dept.)
Stribing, J.	<u>x</u>	(Village Bd. Liaison)

Guest:

Robert Harris, Wm. Schutt Associates x

Roll call indicated that four (4) Historic Preservation Commission members were present and a quorum of four (4) existed.

Roll call indicated that six (6) Planning Board members were present and a quorum of six (6) existed.

II. New Business: Preliminary West Main Street Plans:

Mr. Robert Harris of Wm. Schutt Associates presented preliminary cost-estimate plans for the restoration of West Main Street through to Aurora Street, expected to total \$850,000, on behalf of the Village of Lancaster Community Development Corporation. The purpose of the preliminary plans is to enable the suggestions of the Planning Board and Historic Preservation Commission to be incorporated. The plans and costs estimates are created as if the existing Boces building in the path of the planned roadway is out of the way, and include no estimates or options for its demolition. The plans incorporate information from a new topographical survey, and show the existing grade and the proposed new roadway. Harris noted that the plans also account for the relocation/installation of utilities, water/sanitary sewer, etc. as needed.

The Aurora end of West Main Street has been angled at about 300 ft from the bridge to discourage wrong way right turns from Aurora, and to accommodate a possible roundabout intersection at Aurora, Pleasant and St. Mary's. There has been indication from regional agencies such as the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council that a round-

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a-bout funded with federal transportation money could be very possible. Round-a-bouts are safer for vehicular and pedestrian traffic and Harris noted that they have been beneficial in Hamburg. He also stressed that the roundabout itself is an independent project not included in the cost estimate plans under consideration.

The new roadway will continue to be a one-way street and the width of the new roadway is proposed to be the same as the existing portion of W. Main. This is in keeping with the façade setbacks of existing buildings, and prevents the difficulty of eastbound inflow traffic so close to the Broadway and Central Ave intersection. Also, angled parking can be retained.

Retaining walls are incorporated due to the grade, built strong enough to serve as the front foundation walls of future buildings up to 3 stories. Setbacks between the roadway and the retaining walls are 9 ft. The height of the retaining walls above the roadway is approximately 1 ft. Stribing noted that the structurally appropriate retaining walls helps future developers come right in.

Harnack inquired about the quality of the existing fill. Harris noted that 3 borings had been tested and that the quality was found to be good, with little concern about water, etc. Excavation is expected to be required only for the footings. Additional structural fill ranging in depth from 2-9ft will need to be laid under roadway and costs for this are included in the estimates. Allein asked if the grade for the new roadway is expected to be the same as it was for the original roadway 50 years ago. Harris noted that precise information is not available, but it will be similar.

Various options for sidewalk material have been discussed, and are currently planned as stamped concrete. Stribing has noted that stamped concrete is attractive but slippery underfoot when wet. Mark Gee of the Dept. of Public works is not in favor of actual bricks due to upkeep/maintenance concerns. Stribing noted that hardscaping on the south side of Town Hall is open aggregate (safe, durable, attractive) with decorative stamped concrete brick trim surrounding, and recommends that this be carried through to the new roadway plans.

Allein asked for clarification on the project cost estimate. Harris explained that the \$850,000 includes total construction design, soft costs, a reasonable contingency, but nothing for the demo or demo plans for the Boces building. Stribing noted that guestimates on the demo costs place a partial demo at \$1 million and a full demo at about ½ that. The reason a partial is more expensive is because care must be taken with the structural needs of the remaining portion and a new wall must be constructed to finish it off.

Harnack asked about the timeline for the project. Stribing noted that the current plans are preliminary and intended to gather thoughts and comments from the Preservation Commission, Planning Board, and Village Board before proceeding to the next step of planning. Depending on how the books look and how the planning and funding for the demo progress, the earliest the project could be bonded would be 2011.

Stribing addressed a few other concerns with the demo project. The CDC has long-term obligations Save-a-lot (ten year lease). The building could be partially demolished to retain their portion (the only good portion of the building), or fully demolished and a new building constructed in partnership with another entity (The CDC cannot build a building). There is still a mortgage obligation on the building as well. Deutschlander noted that Save-a-lot does

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draw people and that is something we want to keep, since the village is unlikely to attract something similar. Stribing agreed and noted that Family Dollar is interested in locating in the Village due to strong demographics, and could possibly partner with Save-a-lot. Harnack stated that it might be best to keep the Save-a-Lot portion of the building rather than risk losing them for a cheaper demo, which would ultimately cost more money.

Harnack noted the importance of greenspace and walkability. Stribing described greenspace on the S side on and down by Cayuga Vreek which could be utilized. He also noted that one conceptual plan to re-open Plumb Bottom Creek included a lot of greenspace but left too little room for actual development, since the area is not so large as it might seem. On a side note, Stribing mentioned that plans for the water tower are also under consideration. Since the tower functions as a cell phone tower, the options are to prep it and paint a mural on it and continuing to maintain it, vs. demolishing it and creating an appropriate cell tower structure. Some discussion followed, generally in favor of removing the tower.

Harnack asked about the overall purpose of the street extension project, and questioned whether it was part of a targeted economic development approach, including bringing in mom and pop stores. Stribing explained that the goal is to have small businesses on bottom, and commercial and residential on upper floors. The industrial Development Agency has the ability to promote smaller businesses on the bottom floors that could not make it at market rates that building owners need to get. The Community Development Corporation can keep the lower floors and rent out at retail incubation rates while the building owners investment is in the upper commercial/residential floors.

Deutschlander questioned whether the Village itself would be involved in development of the area following the street project, and Mr. Stribing explained that the Village is only making appropriate infrastructure so that other developers can come in. Dick Young will be in charge of development marketing. The developers would own the building itself but the CDC will continue to own the property. Deutschlander asked if we must have the actual street or if just the commitment is enough, so that development and the street happen at once. Stribing noted that the entire redevelopment of the area cannot be done at once, so the point is to take constructive steps that do not end up putting obstacles in the way of future progress. At least a large portion of the Boces building must eventually come down no matter what. And opportunities such as Restore NY have passed by because the village did not have the planning and infrastructure in place to create partnerships. Allein asked what will happen if the Village is dissolved ½ way through. Stribing noted that the CDC exists independently.

Grucella and Refermat expressed that the plans are a good start of a bigger plan, with the possible roundabout and development, but questioned whether it is wise to approve a plan for a street when the issue of the demo or partial demo of the existing building is unresolved, and there are as yet no concrete development plans for the street once it is built. Stribing explained that the project will motivate the necessary demolition of the building, noting that \$300,000 have been received for the required studies and the design of the demolition (about 1/3 the total cost of a partial demo or ¾ of the total cost of a complete demo. Once the project plans are in place, it will be possible to attract more funding for the street and demo, etc. But sitting with no movement will not yield any results. Also important, the project will enable the area to attract developers because once the street is there it will define what and how much space is actually available for development. Deutschlander agreed that this would give

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the developers the information needed to create their own cost estimate numbers.

Grucella expressed his desire to know that the backers for the development are already there before moving forward with actually building a street, but the plans could be considered as conceptual. Stribing explained that at this point the project is in the preliminary/conceptual cost-estimate stage, and the boards need to decide if they approve of the preliminary plans so that the next level of planning can occur. Hassett noted that the approved plans, even if preliminary, are a tool that could be taken to developers to generate excitement. Harnack noted that we don't want to invite the wrong kind of development, that would conflict with master plan, and don't want to repeat the mistakes of urban renewal. Stribing noted that that urban renewal was poorly thought out idea coming from the outside, but that this project has involved dozens of people working in the right direction over the years. It is a restoration of what worked before mistakes were made. Harnack agreed that the full restoration of West Main Street must be the impetus, and something must be done about the Boces building.

Connelly expressed some discomfort with the cost vs. benefit of putting in the street before the ultimate development is clear, but recognized the need for the area to be the hub. Refermat also reiterated discomfort with making a vote for the project before the building is actually gone. Stribing and Harris explained that this is not a vote to build the street as presented, but that these preliminary plans must be amended and approved in order to move on to the step of creating the detailed bid drawings and an actual budget for the project. Harris noted that the timespan for which the cost estimates will be valid a couple of years. He also noted that Mr. Gee of the Dept. of Public Works will be reviewing and commenting on the plans. Simme noted that the plans were within code and that were the project to move forward, the plans would come before the boards again at future planning stages in any case.

Discussion ended and the boards created the wording of a motion together, but each board moved and voted separately.

MOTION: Hassett: To recommend that the preliminary plan be approved by the Village Board with the following contingencies:

1. In line with the original look, feel and function of West Main Street
2. Direct traffic to the north toward possible round about
3. All designs to be within code or variances sought
4. Sidewalks will be open aggregate
5. Street lighting to be approved
6. Future plans of project will be approved by a joint commission, naming both commissions, Historic Preservation Commission and Planning Commission.

Seconded by Harnack.

MOTION APPROVED: In a vote of four (4) to zero (0). Carried.

III. Next Meetings: TBA

IV. Adjourn: The Historic Preservation Commission members left the meeting at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Grace M. Miller, Secretary and Board Member