

**IMAGINE AMHERST
MEETING NOTES**

PROJECT WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING
September 27, 2016

Working Committee Attendees: Dal Guiliani, Chair; Duncan Black, Gary Palumbo, Frank Pasztor, Ramona Popowich, David Chiazza, Brian Kulpa, and Daniel Ulatowski

Absent: Steven Herberger, Carl Montante, Jr., Bob White, Jane Woodward, Ellen Banks, and Jim Cwierley

Technical Committee Attendees: Rick Gillert, Gary Black, Brian Andrzejewski, Bart Roberts, David Mingoia, Mark Rountree, and Kelly Dixon

Absent: William (Bill) Pidgeon,

Staff Present: Dan Howard, Jean Brzezinski

Dal thanked everyone for coming and turned the meeting over to Annette Hermann, Home Run Creative. She stated that the website had been visited 417 times since last month. Video from telecasts of “AM Buffalo” were the most popular with 7,188 views; “WNY Living” had 5,900 views and approximately 17,000 people were reached in September.

Dal noted that over 40 participants attended the Hands-on-Workshop session on Saturday, September 24, 2016 at the Hyatt Hotel.

1. David Versel, Senior Consultant, Delta Associates gave a summary of the market analysis he is preparing for the Town. The following are points he presented:

- the economy has been strong over the past few years (since 2010)
- net increase of 23,000 jobs led by “Eds and Meds”, professional services and retail/hospitality
- significant loss of 29,000 jobs in manufacturing and still recovering, but recent growth is good (+2,400)
- over the past 15 years, Amherst was a choice location where companies wanted to be
- after 2010, as we came out of the recession, the preference for corporate office parks shifted from suburban office campuses to newer or historic office buildings in more urban areas because companies are looking for
 - excitement
 - mixed use
 - walkable environment

- New corporate offices and start-up office demand is shifting to Buffalo and refurbished old buildings
- UB remains the major driver of Amherst's economy

Amherst's Strengths

- still strong medical/professional office and retail location
- still in demand for housing
- quality area
- many amenities along Main St.
- UB campuses

Weaknesses

- lack of large vacant sites for development
- large number of underutilized existing sites
- suburban business parks are struggling in the region and all over the country
- need for additional transportation

David noted that the introduction of transit can help encourage development and redevelopment, but is not typically the sole driver of such activity.

Kelly Dixon spoke about the value of transit in promoting redevelopment efforts. She cited the example of Reston, VA where a new Town Center was developed in the 1970's and is now under redevelopment. David referred to the recent development of the Silver Station in Reston which was developed specifically in the new center, but it is convenient because millennials are not interested in driving as much.

While job growth is slow, it is likely to continue to take place in the southern part of Town and along the I-290/Main Street corridor over the next 25 years. The GEICO area will also grow as well as the area around UB.

2. Lee reviewed the preliminary concepts for each pilot center developed to date. Following are comments by the Committee:

West of Village

- issue here is how to transition from Village form of development to the intersection of I-290 and Main St.

G. Palumbo – asked what the maximum sizes for buildings along Union and No. Forest would be (the finger). Lee, said 3 stories.

Northtown

D. Ulatowski – envision a ratio of building mass to parking. Parking structure would be \$12,000 - \$15,000 per parking space.

Brian Kulpa said it would be more like \$22,000 and up per parking space.

D. Versel – dollar figures for a parking structure don't add up without public/private ownership.

Snyder/Eggertsville

D. Chiazza – noted that Daemen College may be an important factor to redevelopment at Key Bank parcel

G. Palumbo – 3 stories in Snyder would invite variances. Parking ratios must be looked at as well as mixed use and shared parking, parking on street and valet parking. Parking standards could be lowered. Might exempt additional parking for existing building.

D. Ulatowski – Would it be best to guarantee putting buildings to front of parcel? Lee said not necessarily, needs to be worked out for the area.

B. Kulpa – Snyder on Main – does it have a height minimum. Lee, no. Brian, thinks it should.

B. Kulpa – what about minimum parking requirements?

Lee – there will be some; new buildings will be the only ones to park themselves.

3. General Discussion

D. Black – 20-30 year olds have a much different view than older people. Three story buildings may not appeal to older people, but would be desirable to younger people. This was his observation from the Saturday morning Charrette workshop.

D. Versel – Larkinville is a good example of mixed use, with retail, restaurants and residential.

Adjourned 9:00