

**IMAGINE AMHERST  
MEETING NOTES**

JOINT  
TECHNICAL and PROJECT WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING  
January 11, 2017

**Working Committee Attendees:** Ellen Banks, Duncan Black, David Chiazza, Jim Cwierley, Brian Kulpa, Carl Montante, Jr., Gary Palumbo, Ramona Popowich, Daniel Ulatowski and Bob White

**Absent:** Dal Guiliani, Chair, Steven Herberger, Frank Pasztor and Jane Woodward

**Technical Committee Attendees:** Brian Andrzejewski, Kelly Dixon, Rick Gillert and David Mingoia

**Absent:** Gary Black, William (Bill) Pidgeon, Bart Roberts and Mark Rountree

**Staff Present:** Dan Howard, Kim Schueler, Amy Carrato

**Code Studio:** Lee Einsweiler (via telephone)

Rick Gillert welcomed everyone – he ran the meeting in Dal Giuliani’s absence. He apologized for the technical difficulties regarding the TV screen.

Dan Howard asked if there are any comments or concerns on the November 21, 2016 meeting notes. Duncan Black moved to approve the meeting notes, seconded by Gary Palumbo. The notes were approved as presented.

Dan Howard stated that both the Precedent and Charrette Reports have been accepted by NYSERDA, and the next step, to be discussed at this meeting, is for the Committee to begin to develop the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments. The new zoning code language that will be developed will be completed after this Comp Plan step.

Lee Einsweiler explained that his team got some guidance from the Charrette Report in order to move forward with the Comprehensive Plan amendment. He would like the Committee members to look at all the commercial centers identified on the map and consider whether its characterization is correct and whether the groupings of similar centers are also correct.

Lee first walked the Committee through descriptions of two major patterns/forms of development seen in the Town today: Suburban and Traditional. He stated that these two forms can work together on larger sites, with a Suburban exterior and Traditional interior. He explained the characteristics of two forms via descriptors and picture examples. Next Lee explained the three center types based on general location, parcel size, and building height aspects: Center, Corridor, and Node. These characterizations lead to 6 different designation types. He gave some examples: that Traditional Nodes are typically in the older parts

Meeting Notes

January 11, 2017

Page 2

of Town (south west area), that Suburban Nodes are typically spread throughout newer neighborhoods in the center of Town, and that Suburban Centers are typically along highway interchanges and major roads. He also showed the Committee that a few areas on the map that are currently identified as commercial or mixed use centers are proposed to be removed.

Dan Ulatowski asked why some nodes do not include the office or multifamily areas around them in order to show that those may redevelop in the future along with the GB or commercial areas?

Lee replied that they were tasked with only looking at the parcels which are commercially zoned, but said that some of the areas identified could expand if the Committee decided that is the direction they'd like to go. He also explained that the Comprehensive Plan could have some language included in order to provide criteria on how to make decisions about those areas that could be expanded. Applicants may have to amend the Comp Plan first and if approved then come in for the rezoning. This initiates a discussion about which places are appropriate for what at the beginning of the process.

Dan Ulatowski said he did not agree with a process of having to amend the Comprehensive Plan first before a rezoning application is submitted, but that this is something the Committee should discuss.

Lee stated that their intent is for the Committee to discuss these issues and that it is ultimately up to the Town. He also suggested that we do not want to spread the commercial areas all over the Town because it would take away redevelopment opportunities from some of the existing areas.

Rick stated that the Committee should examine these issues in order to include them in the Comprehensive Plan, but right now we need to look at the map and determine whether the designations are correct based on the surrounding land use and the characteristics outlined in the documents.

Lee asked that the designated areas be carefully reviewed, and we can add other areas in the future if needed. The classifications are really the things that need to be nailed down correctly right now.

Ramona Popowich asked what the height is for the node classification because it is not specified.

Lee suggested that during the Charrette they had mentioned up to 5 stories but that realistically the height may be 2-3 stories in those areas.

Ramona then suggested that the maximum height could be lowered to two stories because people living in the surrounding areas are concerned about height.

Lee responded that is possible; it depends on what the Charrette responses were and what the Committee decides. There are currently three story buildings in these areas already.

Rick stated first we need to make the correct designations and then we can discuss the height.

Lee agreed with Rick and stated that some areas may have the same designation but could have different tools for different heights based on the zoning language – more individualized and not a one-size-fits-all.

Gary Palumbo asked for clarification on why some sites near residential areas are labeled as Center not Corridor (#42 & #43).

Lee explained that areas are labeled as Center when they are near an interstate and have deeper parcels. The height of the buildings in these areas can be two-fold: higher near the interstate or within the parcel and lower when they go out and are adjacent to residents. This is why the Committee needs to look at these centers to see if the designations are right.

Dan Howard asked Lee to explain what the Committee should do with the information they received tonight.

Lee explained he would like the Committee to complete two tasks:

1. Determine whether we have the forms and type correct – are the 6 designations enough or have we missed a category?
2. Confirm the colors on the map. Are these centers designated appropriately?
3. The Committee should try to go out and look at places they are not familiar with – some are very obvious, but we need to critically look at all of them, especially less familiar ones.

Rick stated that the documents handed out to the Committee are draft working documents and are not for public distribution.

David Chiazza asked why the Audubon Office Park is not being looked at since based on the economic study these office parks would be places for future mixed use redevelopment, as office is no longer as desirable.

Rick stated that Code Studio was only charged with looking at the existing commercial and mixed use areas in the Town, which does not include office, but that it will likely be examined as a separate process to respond to the economic study that was recently completed.

Dan Howard stated that the staff spent a lot of time critically looking at the existing commercial areas, and asked the Committee to take their time in order to evaluate these sites and the six categories. He also recommended that they look back at the Precedent and Charrette Reports to get ideas and to look at concepts.

Public Comment:

- Tom Frank spoke about collaboration with the Village of Williamsville and the One Region Forward initiative.

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.