

Village of Hastings on Hudson

Waterfront Rezoning Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: July 12, 2018

Time: 7:30 - 9:30 pm

Location: Hastings Public Library - Orr Room

Members Present:

Richard Bass, Kate Starr, Shannon Rooney, Spencer Orkus, Katey Stechel, Meg Walker, Morgen Fleisig

Minutes Prepared by: Sandra Nam Cioffi

Meeting called to order at 7:45pm

Chair's Welcome & Updates (Kate Starr)

- Coordination with Comprehensive Planning Committee
 - From Pace's perspective, we should be in dialogue with the comprehensive planning committee with the understanding that we would be responsible for the waterfront process and build upon the 2011 comp plan. We need to figure out what is going on with that committee so we can inform each other.
 - Kate/Sandra to follow up: determine who is on the comp planning committee, what the timeline is, and create a shared understanding about scope and how to build a working relationship - discuss the future management of public space/waterfront and public programming and maintenance.
- Riverkeeper (update from Meg) - Peter had a meeting with Paul Gallay
 - There is a fund of money (trust fund) that was set up to be spent (est \$1.1M) on waterfront related projects
 - When the Village wants to spend money on something waterfront-related we have to get approval from Riverkeeper and BP ARCO.
 - Peter proposed we use some of these funds for the capping and completion of quarry landfill (which is to become a park); there is \$1.2M from the consent decree to close the landfill, however, we are still missing \$700K.
 - Riverkeeper is going to agree to use these funds - not sure what this entails; Meg will get more informed details and information regarding the funding sources; the Village Manager is keeping track of all of this; this trust fund has not been tapped very much and has been somewhat for Kinnally Cove - mostly to be spent on waterfront related and what the Village wants to do re: public spaces. Trustees have been discussing this, but we do not have clarity on the details.
 - Paul is also excited about our shoreline plan however he needs a link to the plan, and would like a presentation so he can ultimately defend it. Meg and Shannon will be working on getting this report over to them (as part of the Shoreline Committee)

- Letter from Argent Ventures, Uhlich property
 - Generally positive comments and a positive gesture by Argent to initiate this vision study (Morgen and Kate agree); the fact that someone else created this vision plan for all three sites is a good starting point
 - Spencer: appreciated they indicated they read everything and took decades of work into consideration; interesting proposal and thought-provoking, however it was a plan for all 3 sites and we have 3 different property owners that need to be at the table, especially as it pertains to transportation; this reinforces we need a comprehensive plan they can each build off of.
 - Meg: we think of ourselves as a different community - one that is progressive, and desiring a ground-breaking waterfront plan; they took our shoreline plan and went further with it, did things that we were afraid to do - so all of this was thoughtful and creates a nice community space with active edges; the way Meg approaches waterfronts is starting with public goals and public spaces so she would have started things differently by asking what is the public fabric? What are the public spaces that would bring the community down there - this would be the starting point and not starting at the river's edge
 - Katey: put this on the agenda; it is conceived of as a coastal town, the vision study thinks about sustainability and the future of sea-level rise and storm surges, however, did not seem that there was thought about access to the site. Raising buildings up and putting marshlands underneath are exciting to see
 - Richard: different and not what you see anywhere else along the riverfront, they present 20% lot coverage; we kick around 15%; the density was 600+ units that gives him concern and will come out in an environmental review, but he would want to see that number meets all the goals we and the Village have articulated about tax revenue positive, etc. If it works at 600 or 200 units, it does not matter to him; likes the design; but now this makes him think does this mean we should think of our own thoughts? Dialectical process or other?
 - Spencer: when you see how different this is versus Suncal's developments and the fact that we have three properties, it exemplifies the need for a plan. It is important to see what is feasible. Form-based zoning with some of these guiding principles could be successful in allowing them to propose things such as this and working around broader stroke guidance
 - Shannon: interesting plan that incorporates shoreline plan and waterfront infrastructure plan; northern end density seemed a bit much but the uses were not defined; concerns about the amount of open water area at southern end - though it could be a good asset, is it feasible with environmental cap? And every time we get a storm surge, it will get filled with storm trash; are mosquitos an issue? What type of housing is proposed on stilts? How can they be accessed? It's a great master plan but to what extent is this feasible based on what the DEC is saying can/cannot be done?
 - Spencer: part of their intent is to be inspirational, which has been successful

- Kate: Generally positive thoughts, it is collaborative, providing open communication and gestures, this is the kind of group/attitude to work with
- For follow up - we need to draft a response from our committee; Kate and Sandra will craft a response, send to WRC for review, and we will send to Peter for our reaction back to Argent
- Morgen: if we meet with BP, we should meet with Argent as well to hear them out
 - Kate: we are not ready for this meeting, but if we want to draft a thank you note for Mark Lester for being present at our site meeting and that we do want to be present with them sooner than later
 - second phase with Pace - invite all property owners and developers at a second workshop
 - BP has requested something for July/August, so we should have some response sooner than later, even if there is no meeting til after this timeline
 - Morgen is not convinced we should meet with all of them at once and at the same time
 - Richard mentioned to BP that it is a bit soon and we could meet some time in the fall, but we received pushback from Mark Lester that timeline is too late; Richard suggested meeting for coffee and Mark was amenable; when Richard asked what price/s.f. BP has in mind and that the buyer must also have a general price/s.f. in mind, Mark was quiet in response.
 - Status of cleanup - the rush from a real estate perspective is not as imperative as the cleanup; BP said they have to give Suncal a sense of how serious we are; as a response - WRC is serious and we do not want to waste their time
 - What is the best way to negotiate these three relationships? If we can't figure this out on the 17th, then we will need to understand the best strategy

Planning for Land Use Workshop on 7/17

- Report on meeting with Pace Land Use Law Center 6/27 (Morgen)
 - Most of the discussion was around preparation for the meeting on the 17th; agenda has been edited and streamlined
 - There will be a welcome by Peter (remote) and Dan as to why this committee was created; we should coordinate whether or not Peter or Dan will speak - there is no need to have them both speak
- Review agenda & Materials (Shannon & Committee)
 - Identified who will be introducing which parts of the agenda
 - Meg and Richard to spend about a minute on the past plans, so that we can get right to why we want to have this meeting and make sure the attendees have time to interact and ask questions/interact

- John Nolon will talk about zoning authority the Village has to overzoning its powers, obligations, or lack of obligations and how to treat zoning principles and how it must be consistent with the comprehensive plan; zoning may not deprive of the property owner
 - John will discuss planning and zoning tools - go into detail about various use plans, land use plans, target area plans, land use regulations
 - Discussion about how the outcome is separate from the process
 - Jessica will discuss the overall plan for the next 3 months and what the outcome is for the next two years
- Materials we will provide: matrix of plans, GANTT chart
 - If anyone has time by tomorrow/end of weekend, please add key activities and milestones to the GANTT chart, so the audience can see how this will unfold
- We are fully on board with this Pace process and we are excited about it, but this still means we are going to continue to do other things. We are still working on the communications piece through the unConference. We are not trying to substitute any process, but run things in parallel to see where the committee is. As a group this gives us the opportunity to work on a few things; Kate wants to keep an eye on how things intersect and find a balance on where/how to strike knowing that whatever we come up with has to go along with the Pace process. John is used to running the process, but we are also wanting to make sure we run things properly and together. He raised a few interesting points and we need to determine what the right balance is so that we are not just waiting.
- Review of RSVP List (Shannon)
 - RSVP from WRC
 - (2) NO - Katey, Meg
 - (5) YES - Kate, Danielle, Richard, Spencer, Morgen, Sandra
 - (1) REMOTE - Shannon
 - (1) TBC - Tom
 - Katey will reach out to Fire Chief
 - Shannon will reach out to Anne Russak and others as a follow up
 - It would be helpful to have Village Staff present; Meg will give Peter a call to make that suggestion
 - Barb Prisament - as Village staff, not necessarily rep for the businesses (as we are not yet talking to the businesses at this point), Shannon will add her to the list
 - Will talk to businesses at future Pace meetings

Report from RFP Subcommittee Coordination Meetings 6/25 and 7/10

- Subcommittee discussed RFQ vs RFP
 - Shannon - we wait until what happens at this meeting, then prod it again;
 - Richard - Mayor said there was a pool of money for consultants and then it was pulled back, does not want to fundraise money for consultants, we should know what we have and it's in the developer's best interest to have the tools; this is a strong message we need to send to the Mayor or this will be dragged out for

many years - and no one wants to do this. We need to know what the set pool of money is

- Follow-up item: make sure we bring this up at the 17th - what is the funding and where is it coming from? What is the dollar amount, is it committed, and is it in a bank account? Let's know what this is and let's see it.
- At the first meeting it was said there was a pool of money, but it isn't enough to cover the EIS. If the developers want to play, they need to put out a check to the Village so the work can be done
- Email Response from John Nolon re: 2-step process RFQ+RFP:
 - To the subcommittee - make sure to bring the whole committee back before going out to Pace or others so that this process is in sync.
 - All of the concerns John expressed are valid to submitting an RFP; Spencer explains what the difference is: RFQ to see resumes and some initial thoughts and maybe consultants might want to show up to meetings and understand the process so that we could then get it to a shortlist of people to hit the ground running; if we can't do this until the end of September we wouldn't be starting anything until very late.
 - The subcommittee outlined a group of consultants who are highly qualified, but this is just a start and to grow/change later
 - Should we bring this up specifically on the 17th? Or a follow up call after the workshop?
 - Meg agrees this can be good to know who the players are and what some thoughts are, but perhaps this creates more work for us and would this backtrack us? We should continue this conversation with John, think about constructive things that can prepare us to move quickly
 - The subcommittee put together this list/starting point which is great because it is everything that has been discussed so far
 - Meg: regarding the example from Spencer about the delay of an RFP deadline - we have to be very clear what it is that we want and be professional about it
 - RFP list - might have been confusing to John Nolon, since we were talking about an RFQ
 - Regarding an RFQ - we could also state that there are areas where we are unclear (i.e. RFP)

unConference Planning and Discussion (Katey Stechel)

- Timing - was this discussed with Pace? Response is No. Just the fact that we as a group are starting to form this idea and want to pursue it and this was the goal of bringing this up with Nolon. From the 17th, we can determine the format for the unConference - is it separate from, similar to? Decentralized public seminar and different aspects of village life and the impacts of? What does it mean to meet the goals of the Pace process - we don't want this to be confusing or redundant
- Katey thinks this is more of an educational event

- Design aspects and discussion about form-based or things that people want to see
- Economic: maybe we invite John Fullerton; Spencer is thinking about things that generate cost/revenue, operational maintenance costs and tax revenue; mix of affordability and how does this translate into revenue impacts
- Management and Programming of waterfront parks and public spaces is very different to how we manage our parks in Hastings. We need to be clear on Village's responsibilities vs. Developer's responsibilities; do we want to bring outside non-profits to help educate the public about this?
- Once we get clarity on the Pace process, then we can narrow down the unConference process
- The subcommittee will meet July 30th
- Let's not leap into what people want to see on the waterfront; everyone will want to have a say; we need to craft the community engagement ahead of time and not leap into this prematurely
- Center for Economic Democracy in Boston - participatory economy - running into similar issues, Kate will ping this contact

Slideshow - Precedents from Around the World (Meg Walker)

- Many great waterfronts from around the world are not really relevant to Hastings; we could marvel about them, but that is not what we have here. There is a report in our shared precedents folder with images of great urban waterfronts if the group wishes to see them
- We have a different site therefore Meg is brief and hits a few important highlights - most of this work comes from her work at PPS and what makes waterfronts work well for community and for people, particularly for those living in this community
- Cleveland Lake Erie waterfront
- Working with municipality or local government - always start with public space and where you want your key public spaces and destinations; whether its a promenade, beach or lawn or civic destination, start with the things that the community needs/wants and constantly come back to these goals; this is the key to principle making; work with the community to shape it and build to make a stronger community, then everything falls in place after that, start with what the public goals are
- Isar River, in Munich, Germany - channelized river that was made into a natural river and beaches from scratch; community loves the natural areas
- Battery Park NYC
- Create multiple use destinations and multiple destinations; power of 10 - helpful to layer activities and destinations with a lot of things to do; PPS talks about place - create 10 great destinations on our waterfront and each of those places could have 10 different things to do; things could layer and triangulate whether its a cafe next to a playground - how does this synergy work and the activity of the whole rather than parts?
- Granville Island, Vancouver BC

- Laguna Beach, California - string of simple destinations; we don't have to have a complicated set of destinations (such as big hotels); create things that help keep people moving along
- Multi-modal access, not just about cars or trains, but also about pedestrians, bicycles, boats - people will likely want to connect by boat or by kayak, so we will have to think about the river trail
- Balance environmental benefits with human needs - will need to think about how to provide the best access to the waterfront, not just about gigantic wetlands with a bit of boardwalk; how can we interact with this whole edge?
- Get people on the water and to the water and interacting with the water when they can't get into or in the water (ex: Burlington VM, community owned boathouse has public uses upstairs and public uses downstairs); floating restaurant in Oslo - simple yet wonderful things to have; if we can't have things in the water's edge, then can we have things actually in the water?
- If you cannot get people to the river, then can you bring water to them (kids?) such as interactive water play? Doesn't have to be expensive, can be simple
- Design and program buildings to engage the public spaces
- Good management sustains community vision - managing programming and water related uses, and how to maintain it all may be more than the village can handle; we need to think about how to incorporate this into the planning and in conversations with the developer; we need to think about the park space that the Village will be given (per the consent decree), so that we don't go broke and that it goes well with the developer
- Brooklyn Bridge Park - in terms of management, there is a non-profit conservancy that does all the programming (it is a city park); built condos within the park for funding; beach-like edge conditions similar to the cove in the shoreline plan; ferry terminal - the infrastructural requirements; areas for different age groups on Pier 6 at end of Atlantic Avenue
- How do we relate to buildings? How do we relate to uses?
- San Antonio Pearl Brewery complex - series of public spaces in and around brewery buildings and new buildings, there is a nice integration of the two; some buildings left skeletal; nicely scaled urban buildings and well-preserved feel of industry and urban streetscape without resorting to standard commercial; buildings reach out to public spaces
- Brisbane, Australia - concrete instead of stone; more formal; flexible space backed up with restaurants
- Meg will send the presentation to Sandra to put up on the drive and Sandra will send to Village/Joe to put up on the website

Public Comment (Kate Starr)

- Eric Anderson with Argent Ventures
 - a. Works with Clay McPhale and leading the effort with the designers
 - b. They want to listen and get familiar with what HOH is looking for
 - c. MVVA was the designer for Brooklyn Bridge Park and another big project in Jersey City with Argent

- d. Eric asks if the meeting on the 17th is open to the public?
 - i. Kate responds it is not and it is focused on key stakeholders.
Transparency is one of our (WRC's) core values - we want a better outcome with the owners and developers of the sites, so we will invite you and others in the future; we have Pace involved so we can make sure we give ourselves the best chance so that what gets developed is relevant for the future 100 years from now.
- e. Eric responds to a question by WRC member that he is not sure why Clay was focused on this site; Argent likes waterfronts, sites that are within commuting distance and on transit so people can commute; they have a waterfront site in Jersey City (site on Millcreek/knuckle where no bridge is going across, west past the Marina where Liberty State Park meets the hospital area)
- f. WRC is grateful for Eric's attendance
- g. Eric is glad to hear the committee's comments around the vision study - as it does give people something to react to
- h. WRC questions for Eric:
 - i. Morgen asks, "Knowing that Argent has some development rights along the railroad rights of way up the Hudson Valley, we are interested in the connection of the waterfront property back to the Village and we noticed that while the vision study was bold for the whole 42 acres, Zinser parking lot was left empty - what are your thoughts on connecting back to the neighborhood?"
 - Eric's response: Argent looked at it early on but didn't want to distract from the waterfront focus; they put in 5 pedestrian crossings - end of Washington street was a logical place to put in a road connection; seems like the earlier planning efforts there needs to be a better traffic plan for getting over the main bridge which is tight and blind; they talked to Sam Schwartz about this and wanting to get involved, but they didn't want to over-project what the Village wants and instead wanted to wait and listen. Sam is a consultant to the Village, so there was a concern about conflict of interest - Argent called Sam but did not retain him as a consultant.
 - ii. Are you talking to Suncal?
 - Eric's response: It would be VP of acquisitions, Clay talking to them
 - iii. Are you in dialogue with Exxon?
 - Eric's response: Yes, in some discussions; Argent is interested in talking to all parties
 - iv. Remediation - the groundwater is currently being remediated for contaminants, so do you and the DEC anticipate closing the site to remediate? And would it be 5-10 years?

- Eric does not want to respond without engineer's expertise; he has looked at some technical reports, but he wouldn't want to characterize it;

i. Lee Canali present (former Mayor) - no comment

Meeting adjourns at 9:33pm