

Village of Hastings on Hudson

Waterfront Rezoning Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: September 13, 2018

Time: 7:30 - 9:30 pm

Location: Hastings Public Library - Orr Room

Members Present: Kate Starr, Katey Stechel, Morgen Fleisig, Spencer Orkus

Pace Land Use Law Center: Jessica Bacher, Tiffany Zezula

Minutes Prepared by: Sandra Nam Cioffi

Meeting called to order at 7:33pm

- Public present: Eric Anderson (Argent), roughly 4 more individuals arrived soon after the meeting began
- Small group tonight due to voting, back to school night, and members on vacation
- Re-ordering the agenda around for Morgen who has to depart at 8:40pm and Jessica and Tiffany (Pace) who will be headed to Long Island after the meeting.

Pace Land Use Workshop 2 - September 5th (Jessica)

- Recap of workshop - Pace documented many specific steps to be put into the strategic planning document, which will be used by the planning firm when the consultant is hired
 - The strategic plan should be used to design the RFP so that no one has to go back and collect more or redundant information
 - New reports and studies were identified during this workshop, including additional and helpful information that will be of use for the planners
 - Next Steps: capture to date what we have into the strategic plan and lay out the areas that need to get more in-depth - specifically, protocol for working with land owners and developers and how to manage this process for transparency
 - Pace is also documenting the legal processes and working with the legal committee
 - Morgen: the workshop showed us that we are only scratching the surface; it is difficult to capture everything into 2 meetings
 - Spencer: stayed for the economic session and had to leave early, but coming out of this along with the various emails received and comments raised, we knew that the financial analysis will be very important and challenging
 - Not many people do them well
 - Kate asked if this is done by a specialized firm; Spencer replied he has only worked with a few of them, but the ones he has worked with have had glaring holes in their work
 - Spencer has been thinking about what we can do (in the Spring) to understand what and how interactive elements relate (parks, retails, schools, etc); all has to get rooted in the market

- Katey: it might make sense to pick up and take off where a previous consultant has dropped off; Katey sat in the infrastructure workshop - it was good to hear how the fire department has their concerns; we need more 1v1 meetings so that we can focus on some of the major issues such as egress and emergency response, but overall the meeting was great and nice to hear everyone's opinions
- Spencer: we're not suggesting 'what' should go in the waterfront, we can't dictate a use, but we can zone permitted uses (which needs to be explained more, probably during community engagement)
- Jessica: agrees it is important to have cost benefit analysis
- Kate: let's be clear once the RFP is drafted, that we'll have a meeting for people to come and understand it; wondering how we do further community engagement related to this.
- Jessica: on the stakeholder spreadsheet, the tasks will be added to the top and she will fill in stakeholders that need to be included and suggest different levels of engagement ideal for each (interviews vs larger level of engagement); for example, fire department would be infrastructure engagement, so everything will sum up and be a guide to the process
- Kate: crossed paths with Hastings Historical Society (Natalie Barry) and she felt like it was just a start, and she will write up a 1 page summary for the WRC
- Question arises, how much do we want the planner to do vs the Committee?
 - Jessica: we don't want to do duplicate interviews, so Pace will put in the plan the different stages that these interviews should take place; however, Jessica suggests we use this initial phase as identifying the tasks and that can then be turned into scope for the RFP
 - Kate: wants to include the in-depth interviews and tasks or 1v1 meetings with stakeholders; Jessica agrees and will do so
- Kate: other thing she heard was a lot of scope creep and a lot is getting piled onto the waterfront project, which does/can naturally happen, however, the discussion did start to feel like it was getting outside our scope. Perhaps the WRC begins to draft a letter to the Trustees so these other issues beyond our scope do not get lost, and that it is clear what we take on versus what is outside our work
 - Jessica: is putting together what a planner needs to know and will take out extraneous information - differentiate between planning zoning vs impact
- Kate: there is an unresolved issue as to what is happening with the shoreline plan - perhaps this goes into an "issues to be addressed" section
 - Jessica: yes, this should be put into other issues that need to be tracked; she will connect with Meg and Shannon to spell out what needs to be in the strategic plan and what gets tracked otherwise
- Jessica: will take our GANTT chart and add under the RFP section the actual tasks to be undertaken; Sandra will send Jessica a workable document (Excel)
- Kate made a comment during the land use group about landlords - it was meant to be more about the role of commercial landlords and she believes it may have

been extrapolated as all landlords, but it is not; Kate simply wants to make sure we have enough diversity and voices in this process

- Jessica will move into the appendix some guidance for the planners to include some type of diversity and that it is part of their scope, not just traditional stakeholders to be reached
- Next steps and strategies
 - We are dedicated to a collaborative process, and we are on board with the notion that the zoning process be in dialogue with owners and developers
 - Pace is working on this and will have something for the WRC to look at including various roles, general outreach and education, and individual conversations, and have the legal component addressed
 - **Final Plan and Presentation to the Public - October 11th**
 - Objective of this meeting is to let the community know that the WRC is ready to engage consultants and the strategic plan will outline the process the selected consultants will undertake in order to make zoning recommendations to the village.
 - WRC can share the strategic plan for comments - this will be of benefit for the RFP
 - This is a broader public moment for the community to know what we will do with the strategic planning document
 - Morgen: Zoning is a set of rules designed to control the built environment, including massing, view corridors and use. We are trying to be careful as a group to avoid talking about use when we discuss zoning. That being said, we will prescribe some uses; Morgen feels that the educational component needs to dig in further - describe more clearly the zoning tools and distinctions between form vs. use, because they are intertwined. He would like it to be framed in such a way that we can have an unheated conversation; there are for example people passionate about minimizing residential use and maximizing manufacturing use - there are historic reasons these uses are separated; there has to be a way to frame it so that we can maintain a reasonable conversation and move it forward in a productive way.
 - Jessica: there should be further education on authority and zoning
 - Kate: even if there is a small amount of information to start with, we should have a common understanding of what light manufacturing means (whether it be stone work, or film, etc.) and whether or not there is a scale for how it contributes to the overall tax base.
 - Morgen: this is in the current zoning language, but no one really reads this
 - The question of why this site cannot remain industrial and keep the status quo must be answered as it continues to come up; we must also inform the community that keeping it the way it is may also open the opportunity for things the community may not really want or can foresee
 - Having a public presentation on one evening in October might be too narrow of an opportunity; how can we have another version of this public presentation at

the high school or somewhere else and do it at a morning or on a weekend? We should provide more opportunity to make this information available at large, so that we are not precluding participation due to format

- Jessica: if we are good to go, then we need to get a location for October 11th (after this meeting it is confirmed to take place at the James Harmon Community Center)
- Jessica does not have concerns about producing the strategic plan by the deadline of October 11th; this is a big issue, and we have already had great turnout to our session, therefore she does not feel there will be issues getting folks to the presentation on the 11th.
- Sandra will reach out to the village to tap into its communication plan, perhaps Mayor Swiderski can send a special email and communication around this event.
- **Saturday October 13th - informal method of communicating the strategic plan after the presentation on the 11th;** Sandra will reach out to Pascal at Farmer's market to set up a booth for the WRC
- Reach out to Senior Citizen and Disability groups to determine what the best way is to reach out to these communities or if there needs to be special accommodation for the 11th
- Katey: in terms of spreading the word about the presentation, perhaps we place a big banner on Main Street at the five corners/Foodtown - she notices these banners every time, and Spencer added it is a very long wait at the light - therefore people will notice while driving past.
- Jessica suggests we have the public presentation on the 11th, have it filmed/recorded and then continue to think of non-traditional ways of informing people during the RFP stage and afterwards; we should go to where people are and stay flexible and modular; divide up the tasks and responsibilities; at this later time, we will have something more tangible to work with, thus making the discussion more fluid
- Jessica also suggests having a card to put email addresses down and when we blast out notices, these individuals who want to can stay involved; this definitely needs to happen on the 11th - create one summary card of some kind and another card for individuals to give back to us with email contact
- Jessica will send a draft to the WRC quickly with a timeline for the WRC to provide any comments and guidelines about what this document is and what it is not. This strategic planning document should be more in line (scale-wise) to an RFP scope and not a 50 page document; we will just want to know the high points and Jessica will provide us with some timeline for feedback.
- Budget - planning phases vs. EIS funds
 - We do not want to break it down too much in the scope, however, we do want a range to understand what the resources are otherwise the scope will expand

- We need to have a real sense of our priorities and what we really need answered, which areas need to remain tight and areas that can be looser
- What does a planner **have** to do to give us zoning recommendations? We need to make sure to have a budget for this specifically
- Kate wants to highlight the question - what is the area in addition to the 42 acres to be considered for rezoning, as this would increase budget and would expand the target area
- Katey asks, "How is this different from the comp plan?" If we ask the consultant to rezone any of these areas, then they will have to study and analyze to a certain extent; comp committee is not active
- We are discussing the parking lot and area down to DPW - the planners and EIS consultant will have to take it into consideration, so we just need to be upfront and discuss this with the Trustees that these areas are of concern but do we just leave this to the comp plan?
- Jessica: the zoning charge is still to look at 42 acres, but the planner will have to look further afar - this is how it is currently stated in the strategic plan, but we do need to know at what point do we have enough information about those adjacent properties to learn enough about zoning
- Katey: if not in our scope, how does it get rezoned? Is it obvious what should be done? If not in the scope, then it becomes a bottleneck to a great destination; Jessica explains this is why we will need need strong qualifications (from the consultants) around these issues and vetting these issues. This will come around during the RFP process; if we already have people working on zoning, then it will become a capital improvements planning issue, not a zoning issue.

Jessica and Tiffany leave 8:29pm

- Concluding thoughts on strategic planning document/process by the remaining Committee members:
 - There is nothing to do on the RFP, until we see what Pace has on the strategic plan
 - Should we revisit with Jessica and John about the role of the RFQ and RFP and timeline? Committee concludes to take out the RFQ step - as earlier on this was about trying to run the RFQ process while the Pace work was being done
 - Funding - this falls to the Trustees; if we get a sense for what we need then we need to have a dialogue with the Trustees; let's come back to this when we have the plan more fleshed out
 - Have the RFP spell out the cost and deliverables: hourly with caps? Or lump sum NTE? What is preferred?
 - Spencer expresses his preference for lump sum as the consultants will be paid for a product; it leaves it up to the consultant to manage their time.

- There will be a lot of leveling to do, and contingencies; we will have to push hard to make this a single lump sum (with articulated phases) with any additional services for a few things that have a chance for happening.

Committee Updates (Kate Starr)

- Proposed Hudson River Storm Barriers Hot Topics Breakfast (Katey)
 - Hot topics breakfast sponsored by the League of Women Voters who invited Riverkeeper to present on the Army Corp storm surge barriers proposal
 - At the presentation, Jen Benson gave an overview of her thoughts:
 - Lack of information (by the Army Corp)
 - There were no details provided as to what environmental analysis was done or what detrimental effects could be had on the river
 - Army corp is providing public comment online and this period ends Sept 20th
 - The plan was rushed and the Army Corp did not inform the public that there is a public commenting period
 - Jen will email Katey what their main issues are, however, we should go to their website on Riverkeeper to make comment.
 - When Jen provides us with this information, we can put it on the Village website
 - Essentially what Riverkeeper is asking for is longer commenting period and more information
 - Riverkeeper has their preference for 1 out of the 6 alternatives presented by the Army Corp, but they really want the communities to demand more information before a decision is made
 - Army Corp only focused on the Bronx and South, however, this is really going to affect the entire Hudson River up to Troy; none of these northern areas were addressed on the maps by Army Corp
 - It is tax-payer funded - Army Corp is federal
 - Estimated construction costs of \$60 billion, with annual maintenance of \$1 billion
 - Roles of DEC and the State were not discussed, but all their logos were on the presentation material; it was not clear what analysis has been done by each or what their roles are
 - Katey will email the WRC (including the Trustees) with a recap and a personal note including link to the site

Morgen departs 8:45pm

- Fall monthly meeting in October will remain on 11th - this will be the public presentation by Pace
- November and December meetings - Sandra will send out a doodle poll to set up these dates; we just have to find a date where the most people can come
- Hunter College Studio Site Visit

- Sandra spoke to Melissa Shandroff (high school teacher) and believes there are two young females on our signup sheet who might be best to lead the club
- A club fair will take place at the high school next week - if the students are interested in leading this club, they can take on its direction and lead their peers based on their interests and understanding what the WRC is doing and what the Hunter College studio is doing this fall
- This club can run into the following academic year

Public Comment (Kate Starr)

- Female from the public asks, "Who were the other members present this evening and what is the agenda?"
 - Kate responds that Jessica and Tiffany are from Pace University and they are helping the Village by guiding the WRC in the planning process; the agenda was posted online - is usually posted a week in advance, and the agenda is sent via email if you are signed up to receive alerts

Meeting adjourns at 8:50pm