

**VILLAGE OF FARMINGDALE
BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA (BOA) GRANT
DGEIS SCOPING MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 13, 2011, 7:00 p.m.
Farmingdale Public Library**

I. Introduction

Mayor George “Butch” Starkie welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced the Board of Trustees and asked everyone to introduce themselves. Mayor Starkie applauded the last administration’s efforts in conducting a visioning process in 2006, which led to an effort to update the Master Plan - in turn leading to the granting of a New York State Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Step 2. Mayor Starkie emphasized his desire to review everything comprehensively, as opposed to doing an overlay district, and expressed how he wants this process to be as transparent as possible. The Mayor also mentioned that he wants the process to be very well studied and “bullet-proof.” The Mayor then began soliciting recommendations from the audience about how to outreach to as many participants as possible, with the audience recommending flyers or mailers regarding meetings.

II. Presentation

Eric Zamft, AICP, Project Manager at VHB, Inc., presented PowerPoint slides 1-20 (attached), including history of the project, overview of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) process, the definition and purpose of scoping, the proposed action, and next steps. Specifically, the presentation included explanation and review of the process to date and all that has happened. Mr. Zamft also explained the SEQRA process, its intent, and how it is decided. Mr. Zamft addressed the scoping process in relation to the GEIS and mentioned that it is the framework and guidelines necessary for preparing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) document. Mayor Starkie made additional comments on this process and provided some background information as well.

Joe Diurno, 128 Fairview Road, asked about the significance of the SEQRA process and why the Village couldn’t focus on a few successful private developments. Mr. Diurno also questioned the benefits of so much time taken to get through the current process. It was explained that the State requires a comprehensive environmental review process, and that it was important to see what the infrastructure could bear. It was also mentioned how important it is to have a municipality’s buy-in, and that the study can leverage other non-private funding.

Others in attendance continued dialogue and discussion on SEQRA and the scoping.

Artineh Havan, Community Planner with Sustainable Long Island, presented slides 21-24 and moderated the public comment period. Ms. Havan introduced the outreach process and explained the steps that remain including the DGEIS and FGEIS meetings.

III. Public Comment period

Chuck Gosline, 33 Waverly Place, asked whether the economic analysis has been enhanced or could be enhanced to provide more information regarding common restaurant attributes on Main Street and to study the entertainment value of downtown redevelopment. Mr. Gosline also asked about the viability of the market analysis as it refers to the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). Mayor Starkie addressed the availability of all previous study documents and for them to be published and available on the website. The Mayor also mentioned that the process has “done a lot of the heavy lifting” that is necessary for private development proposals and their requirements.

Laura Colletti, 310 Staples Street, discussed the issue of density and questioned whether the existing study has analyzed traffic, including the hotel’s development. Ms. Colletti also posed a question about the number of units that previous studies have proposed regarding development in Farmingdale as well as a question about Secatogue and the study of density in the area. Mayor Starkie responded that former traffic studies did include the hotel and mentioned that developments in the Village would be spread out in three main areas according to the study. The Mayor also commented on sites subject to change.

Joe Carosella, 21 Sherman Road, mentioned that the studies that were conducted were costly and time consuming, especially the traffic study.

Erin Reilly, 15 Clinton Street, asked where the scoping document was. It was mentioned that hard copies were available at the meeting, as well as on the Village’s website.

Robert Wisloh, 100 Eastern Parkway, asked about the BOA process and whether it included the proposed hotel.

The Mayor responded that the hotel was as of right, that there was a proposed land swap to create green space and that the new proposal was going to be heard at the Zoning Board’s meeting the following day.

Erin Reilly asked a question regarding studying the connections with Steve Bellone and the Town of Babylon’s growth plans and visions.

Mayor Starkie responded that he has had, and continues to have, discussions with the Town of Babylon’s Supervisor regarding their town’s progress, the jurisdiction of Conklin Street, and all that is related to the Village’s ongoing study. The Mayor also stated that he has had discussions with Jeff Speck to encourage and ensure continuity with developments around Greater Farmingdale.

Eric Zamft added that the GEIS looks at developments in surrounding areas.

Patrick Finn, 42 Hudson Street, had a question regarding EIS and the role and power of the state in its evaluation.

Eric Zamft responded that the state does review the EIS.

Mayor Starkie mentioned that plume studies have been completed and discussed the sites at issue, the plume’s potential effect and impact. The Mayor mentioned the Village’s involvement with South Farmingdale and Bethpage, as well as a discussion regarding consolidation of resources. The Mayor also discussed the existing Village water system and its three wells.

The Mayor also discussed traffic and parking near the railroad and Eastern Parkway. The Plan included a vision of parking structure along Eastern Parkway.

Laura Coletti questioned community land trust property.

In response, the Mayor added dialogue regarding the land swap to increase space.

Terry Robey, 8 Cornelia Street, had a question on the location of discussed land trust properties.

The Mayor clarified the location of the land trust properties.

Ines Alvarado-Wisloh, 100 Eastern Parkway, asked whether Eastern Parkway and Secatogue were part of the study and expressed her concern regarding the proposed hotel and traffic in the area.

Ms. Alvarado-Wisloh also expressed concern over the growth adding to the problem.

There was a question posed regarding the loss of 23 spaces of parking as a result of the land swap for the hotel.

Mayor Starkie responded and explained that there would be no impact on Village residents, and that it was important to increase green space in the Village.

The meeting came to a close and everyone was thanked for their attendance and participation.

Total 26 attendees including presenters (sign-in sheet attached)

The Downtown Revitalization Committee met at the Farmingdale Public Library on April 21 to prepare comments for the Draft Scoping Document.

The following members were present: Debbie Podolski, Ralph Ekstrand, Kevin Bagnasco, Joe Diurno, Jim Orabono, John Capobianco. Joe Carosella arrived as the meeting ended and shared his concerns.

The Committee recalled the goals and priorities of the master plan as indicated on page III-8 of the Drafter Master Plan.

- Coordinate a long-range approach for downtown Farmingdale
- Diversify the economy of Farmingdale to be more competitive;
- Make downtown Farmingdale a more vibrant and unique destination;
- Provide mixed-use;
- Make the downtown more attractive to residents, shoppers and employees;
- Provide increased social amenities such as open space and workforce housing;
- Create a connection between Main Street and the train station;
- Improve the efficiency of the transportation/circulation/parking network.

With those basic tenets in mind, the Committee respectfully submits the following comments.

Traffic, Transportation, and Parking

The Nelson & Pope report is based on a .3% growth rate (Assumption 2 & 3) that disregards the projected rate of the NYSDOT for the Town of Oyster Bay. How was the .3% annual growth rate determined?

The mitigation conclusions are similar to the Saccardi & Schiff (S&S) report except that S&S did not study the Secatogue intersections with Conklin St. and Melville Road. The traffic analysis by Nelson & Pope indicate that under Assumptions 1 & 2, the traffic Level of Service (LOS) will be at D and F and LOS C and E (p. 41), which in one case is average while the rest below average. The Committee believes there should be further study with additional recommendations to mitigate traffic impact at these intersections. The N&P study recommends a signal warrant analysis.

The Committee noted the recommendations to mitigate traffic impact at Main St and Conklin St. There is no data to support the improvement gained from widening the sidewalks on Main Street. This recommendation would seem contrary to the goal of creating more pedestrian-friendly walkways. This intersection is currently at a LOS of F, D E, going NB and SB in the AM and PM making this intersection a priority for improvement before additional development.

The Committee noted that the N&P report did not take into consideration future growth of areas surrounding the Village, i.e. Babylon, South Farmingdale, etc. which the Committee sees as having an impact on Village traffic.

Parking

The S&S Existing Conditions report indicated that the parking lot owned by the Village at the railroad station experiences a 98% occupancy rate (p.28). How will the Village compensate for the loss of parking spaces if the area that includes 23 parking spaces is swapped with Bartone?

The Existing Conditions report also includes the parking available at the Waldbaum's site. What is the impact of the loss of these spaces should the property become private residential or mixed-use?

Land Use & Zoning

The Committee feels that there is inconsistency in referring to building heights in feet, i.e. 40 feet vs. 3 ½ stories. The Committee prefers building heights to be indicated in feet.

The Committee felt strongly that there should be a height limit included in the revised zoning code. In addition, the number of stories should be explicit so that ½ is not subject to interpretation. The Committee would also suggest that no height variances be permitted.

The Committee recommends a minimum front to curb distance to prevent narrow walkways such as those north of Conklin Street.

There is a concern about rental units vs. owned townhouses. The S&S Existing Conditions Report indicated that there are ample rentals units in the Village, so why more? What data was used to determine that rental is a better market than condo/townhouse? The Village currently has a number of empty stores, we don't want empty apartments as well. What is the current demographic of the new Secatogue apartments and vacancy rates?

The Committee has been informed, that rental units are considered commercial property whereas townhouses/condos are considered residential. An influx of rental properties doesn't help lower residential taxes.

How was it determined that a hotel would be beneficial to the community? Where is the market research data? There have been reports that vacancy rates at nearby hotels are at 40%. How was it determined that a hotel in the Village is a viable option?

What data defines transit-oriented retail? Who is marketing the area to attract such retail?

The Nelson & Pope study also included the 85 rooms of the hotel in the number of changed or increased residences. The total changed residences is listed as 389 not

375 which is indicated in the Preferred Scenario.

Downtown Design

The hotel at the train stations seems to be garnering the most attention as it probably has a proposal waiting for approval. The construction of a hotel by the train station would start the development of that area. If higher density, mixed-use with retail, around the railroad is the first priority, what is the plan/timeline for connecting the train station area with Main Street, providing green spaces to provide walkability to Main Street, S. Front Street improvements, and the development at the Main Street/S. Front Street gateway? The Draft Master Plan indicates that mixed-use development at the train station will bring more customers to Main Street. The Committee believes this will be true only if simultaneous actions occur. The concern is that the build up of the train station area, with new retail, iHOP, etc. will detract from Main Street not enhance it.

The Committee would like a study to determine the cost of removing the LIPA poles on Main Street. The Committee understands that the cost is high but we've never received a cost. We want to know the actual cost. In the event that another stimulus- type program or grant becomes available would the Village be ready to pursue this project? The Committee agrees with Saccardi & Schiff that the downtown needs to be rid of this visual clutter.

The ARB was established to develop a "look" for the Village and provide a template for new proprietors to use in building out their stores. It seems that there are several "looks". As the new Cara, Cara restaurant shows, their design choice is different from the new pizza place. The Committee is hoping that the design guidelines recommended by Saccardi & Schiff will be considered.

Infrastructure

The S&S Draft Master Plan indicates that there is "minimal capacity to supply existing domestic water demand at this time" (p. II-9). Water is an immediate issue and of deep concern with impending new development. There needs to be a study to determine shared services with nearby water departments and/or costs in obtaining a new well.

Community Facilities and Resources

A new issue has surfaced since the Draft Master Plan was written and that is the fate of the Waldbaum's property. The Committee suggests that someone or the Village purchase the property and create a cultural arts center. The Committee believes that this will be the draw for Main Street and the downtown. The Committee believes that in addition to adding new residents to the Village, the downtown has to create an atmosphere to attract people from outlying areas.

Construction

What plans are being developed for the construction phase, especially during rush hour?

Response/public comments to FV scoping meeting on 4/13/11. In reviewing the proposed action FV BOA I have the following comments and/or suggested changes for the doc;

1. Planning process; A. the end result must clearly define the implementation scenario planned, based on meetings attended and discussion it appears it will be a 'hybrid' scenario, however that needs to be clear and defined. B. The implementation must suggest funding strategies and opportunities. C. Much talk about TOD needs a clear draft of what could be in words and a rendering. D. Should include in the scope alternative options for dealing with 'difficult' land/bldg owners not participating. E. Include better details/options/opportunities in the market analysis than as presented 2/28/11.
2. Study area; consider the impact of future development in surrounding communities redevelopment possibilities and rumored , like TOD Plan for East Farmingdale plus other locations and some potential in Bethpage.
3. Proposed Action; A. Better define TOD as it may relate to our village. B. Consider stating and including the CLT model as an opportunity to create a greater % of affordability (not just 20%) also the CLT model as creating more affordable commercial business and public spaces. C. consider a Performing Arts Theater as a downtown destination to be created. D. Bldg Height should be limited to 3 stories max and better explain the floor ratio that will determine future density.

Please include my other thoughts that were detailed in the email below as sent to FV Bd recently.

submitted by Chuck Gosline 33 Waverly Pl. F'dale, LI. NY

My thoughts/comments from 2/28 DMP subcommittee meeting;

Lots of number crunching and data was presented Monday night. As I digest what I heard my feeling now is how much is useful that we can take away and implement? Also, could we have simply arrived at a similar conclusion? Overall I was not very impressed, didn't seem like they really walked the streets and talked to store owners? As I walked Main Street last night I counted 20 empty store fronts, included soon to be Waldbaums.

If I heard the experts correctly the results of their data indicated Farmingdale Village had room to grow the following;

1. 15K sq ft of Grocery business
2. 15-40K sq ft of add'l dining restaurant space
3. 4000 sq ft of retail

So this could become part of our revitalization strategy in the future? However do we agree this is the right mix?

After listening and hearing some of the comments I must strongly agree with Pat as far as a starting point strategy we need to see an upgrade on Main Street. Cleaner streets, attractive storefronts, good spaces to shop/dine and back store fronts that are clean and more welcoming. Absentee property owners still seem to continue to be a barrier/challenge. Even with the new CDBG funds. Rents are very high compared to other downtowns and many landlords, I hear, are very difficult to deal with. I for one do not want to reward these types of property owners in the future with height and density bonuses. So we need a strategy to deal with that issue.

I continue to applaud the boards efforts and I welcome more discussion that can lead to a more vibrant sustainable downtown and desirable community overall. All the studies in the world are mute if we do not create a realist strategy that people [can](#) embrace and then develop a strong implementation plan (with funding potential) that you can roll out and make visible progress to.

My thoughts toward drafting a strategic plan as of this point are;

1. To revitalize Main Street with the current CDBG grant and just encourage some owners' to make improvements to their building.
2. Pursue add'l funds that rework our parking lots in need, enhance back store entrances and help maintain a cleaner streetscape ie Lot 1 & 2 south of Conklin are in bad shape and need redesign and much help with the rear entrances. Also there may be room for expanding the lot behind Chase.
3. Develop a market strategy/outreach to niches businesses ie a Bakery, Clothing store for all and others niche retail that could enhance the village shopping experience on Main Street. Are there some stores that may be better relocated? ie Would the Post Office be better in the middle of the village, swap and move CVS? Grey & Grey swap out for a PAC and there may be others ? I think we need a dedicated

person/staff to create and push any marketing plan. A BID may be too costly, a FV staff person could be considered and/or could C of C fill that role?

4. Draft the new code that would allow for new and infill development that includes a max of two and half stories, first floor businesses with a mix of housing options above. (again not sure about rewarding some of those difficult owners but swap for trade-offs may help)
5. Plan for TOD potential with walk-able connection to Main Street and maybe even to F'dle College. Coordinate with other municipalities for TOD potential synergy for more clout with the MTA.
6. Plan a strategy for the CLT model to be employed and help provide 100% housing and some commercial affordability in the downtown area.
7. Plan for an anchor business and/or a Performing Arts Theater to help draw more folks that could contribute to our many restaurants.

I look forward to continuing this dialogue and I welcome a discussion on a CLT strategy in the near future.

Regards,

Chuck Gosline

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