

# Village of Williamsville Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Waterfront Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

**Date of Meeting:** November 6, 2019

**Meeting Time:** 6:00 PM

**Meeting Location:** Williamsville Village Hall

**Attendees:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nick Roth	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sheryl Davies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Maggie Winship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Judy Kindron
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ben Vilonen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tim Boyle
<input type="checkbox"/>	Peter Warn	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keaton DePriest	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sergio Fornasiero
<input type="checkbox"/>	Deborah Rogers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jane Vohwinkel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wendy Salvati, WWS Planning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marisa Riggi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Joel Bernosky, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Noel Bartlo	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emma Phillips, C&S

Public Meeting Follow Up

Wendy Salvati handed out a summary of the comments that were gathered at the six breakout table discussions from the Public Information Meeting that was held on October 24<sup>th</sup>. She went through the comment summary with the committee members and the following was noted and discussed:

Question #1 – How do you use the waterfront?

- There were several ways the public indicated that they use the waterfront; nothing new was disclosed. Wendy will make sure the inventory reflects what was noted by the public.

Question #2 – What should the overall goal for the future of the waterfront area be?

- There were a number of requests for using the dam at Island Park for public access. Nick Roth stated that historically, the dam was accessible to the public (maybe 40 years ago), but deterioration has prohibited access for public safety reasons. Noel Bartlo expressed a desire for dam reconstruction to enable future public access. Installing proper railings or similar preventative measures would allow for scenic viewing, as well as access to the Ed Youngs plaza (assuming the property owner is supportive of such access).
- The general consensus is that the dam and weirs must be replaced.

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- The use of the dam for energy generation was discussed. Could this be done without the need to divert too much water away from the falls? Nick Roth also mentioned the Dyson agreement, which guaranteed riparian rights to the creek for property owners west of Island Park. It was felt that a small demonstration project might be appropriate to illustrate the power of the water flow, perhaps this could be done north of Main Street and the energy used to light up the falls.
- Fix the weirs so that people can ice skate on the west branch of the creek at Island Park.

Question #3 – Any additional natural or historic resources that need protection or enhancement?

- The low water flow in the Lehn Springs area was another issue that was raised at most table discussions. We need a better understanding of what is occurring and why. This is an issue that should be discussed at a joint meeting with the Town of Amherst LWRP committee.

Question #4 – What opportunities exist for generating more activity along the creek?

- The desire for increased visitation vs. less visitation to the WRA was discussed, as a few people expressed a desire to reduce the number of visitors to the area. Visitation to the area was considered a plus by the committee. Supporting recreational tourism and public access to the creek can benefit the businesses in the area. The Village should capitalize on its natural assets in a manner that does not adversely impact the waterfront.

Question #5 – Are there any public access concerns? Potential for connections?

- The ability to take dogs into the parks was expressed. This issue was discussed – dogs are allowed in Island Park, but not Glen Park (although this prohibition is ignored/not well enforced). It was noted that the joint ownership of Glen Park may be the reason for the prohibition.
- There was a desire for access/improved access between Glen Park and Amherst State Park. It was noted that access already exists by way of the informal trail along the creek.
- A few people said they would like to see boardwalks or access improvements in the area behind the Village Glen for hiking and fishing. Also, could access be provided from the Town-owned parcel at the end of North Cayuga (another issue to discuss at a joint LWRP meeting with Amherst).
- The desire to “reinvent” Island Park was noted. Noel Bartlo said that the Recreation Committee was working with a landscape architect and a plan for a newly designed Island Park was nearing completion. This could be used in proposed project discussion in Section IV of the LWRP.

Question #6 – Are there any environmental concerns that need to be addressed?

- The ponds in Glen Park were mentioned a few times – they need to be cleaned, they need improved water flow, better maintenance, etc. Wendy mentioned discussion that took place during the site tour of this area. Would improving the pond in the southwest corner of the park (remove the liner and restore the natural conditions in the area) help. This pond currently has an outlet connection to a swale that flows to the ponds, but the connection is broken (not functional) and the swale is overgrown with phragmites/weeds. It was noted that the liner may have been put in place to keep water in the pond

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and its removal could lead to the area drying up. Either way, it was agreed that this area of the park needs to be revitalized (another issue for joint discussion with Amherst).

- A few people noted concerns about water quality impacts from the airport and thruway. It was felt that the airport likely properly manages de-icing wastewater in accordance with DEC regulations. Not sure if this is really a problem.
- Erosion of the creek shoreline was noted; Noel said that the Recreation Committee did not tackle this in their planning for Island Park. This was being deferred to the WAC. Creek shore erosion will be discussed further as we move forward with this project.

Question #7 – Are there other overall quality of life concerns in the waterfront area?

- The issue of the Village having sole responsibility for the dam was noted at the meeting. It was the feeling of committee members present that the State, County or Army Corps. should manage the dam – whoever owns the creek (which has not been determined? It needs to be established that the dam is important for creek management above and below the structure. If the Village chose to abandon the dam, and problems resulted in other areas, what would be the ramifications. This was also considered an issue to be discussed at a joint LWRP meeting with Amherst.

In general, the issues that rose to the top from the public meeting include water quality in the creek, shoreline erosion, dam and weir reconstruction, low water in portions of Ellicott Creek and public access improvements. Wendy said that she will provide the summary to the full committee for their review and further discussion at the next meeting.

### Introductory Policy discussion

Wendy briefly reviewed the 44 policy statements, indicating which ones we should focus on. Under Policy 1, which addresses abandoned, deteriorated and underutilized waterfront areas and uses, caution was noted regarding potential re-watering the mill race. It was felt that placing emphasis on this could be problematic for the Village in the long run. Do we actually know that the mill owner has rights and if we say it is so, without knowing for sure, does that make it so? If the race is re-watered how does that affect water management in the west branch of the creek? This need further discussion. Additionally, while the race could be considered a water-dependent use, what is the likelihood that the mill owner would want to utilize this structure in the future?

Wendy noted that she had previously provided the committee with a copy of the policies to allow the group to become familiar with this section of the LWRP. As there were too few committee members present, it was decided that the discussion of the LWRP policies would be carried to the December WAC meeting. Members were asked to review the policy document that was previously provided to the committee in preparation for that discussion.

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Next Steps/Action Items

Waterfront Advisory Committee members who were in attendance are reminded to record their time for participating in the meeting.

- Prepare and distribute the WAC committee meeting summary.
- Committee members (particularly those who have not read the draft documents) to provide any final comments on the draft Inventory and Analysis to Project Team.
- Follow up on the identification of properties that have formal conservation easements in the vicinity of Island Park and indicate on Existing Land Use Map (Keaton and Maggie).
- Revise the draft Section II Inventory and Analysis to reflect final comments and discussion offered at the Public Information Meeting. Revised Section II and supporting maps will be placed in the project Drop Box for Committee review and access.
- Committee members to review Policy document in preparation for discussion at December WAC meeting.

The date for the next WAC meeting was not scheduled for December. Judy will speak with Keaton and Maggie and an appropriate date will be determined. Whatever date is selected, the meeting will commence at 6:00 at Village Hall. At the next meeting, the committee will revisit the public comments and continue discussion of the policies. If time permits, potential projects will also be discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Wendy Weber Salvati*