

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

Date of Meeting: August 22, 2019

Meeting Time: 6:00 PM

Meeting Location: Williamsville Village Hall

Attendees:

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

Welcome, Introductions and Role of the Waterfront Advisory Committee

Wendy discussed the progress that has been made on the LWRP since the Committee met in April. Site tours of the Ellicott Creek corridor and Dream Island were conducted in early May. The LWRP was promoted at the Homecoming on Main event on June 1st. The project team prepared drafts of Section I – Waterfront Revitalization Area (WRA) boundary and Section II – Inventory and Analysis, with supporting maps, which were distributed to the Committee for their review. The purpose of this meeting is to gather comments on those draft documents and to discuss preparations for public outreach.

LWRP Boundary

Wendy displayed a map of the proposed WRA boundary and described the sub-areas and land included within them. The following comments were offered:

- Include Williamsville Village Hall property in Sub-Area 1, along with the other municipal buildings that were incorporated into the boundary.
- Include an additional 3.3-acre parcel that is west of Ellicott Creek in Sub-Area 1, which is part of Amherst State Park and located within the Village’s municipal boundary (tax parcel 68.20-3-1.12).
- Remove the “waterbodies” layer from the boundary map, as well as all the other maps, as it confuses the interpretation of the maps. Emma Phillips will take care of this.

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Review of Draft Section II – Inventory and Analysis

Wendy Salvati went through the draft Inventory and Analysis section; aside from minor typographical errors, the following was noted and discussed:

- Page II-6 – revise the narrative at the top of the page that describes policy planning for the Village as outlined in the Framework for Regional Growth for Erie and Niagara Counties.
- Page II-15 – double check the statistics for housing growth (should be increase not decrease?).
- There was discussion about the lands around Island Park that have formal conservation easements. These lands should be identified and illustrated on the Existing Land Use Map and noted in the report. Maggie Winship will investigate this and get the information to Emma Phillips.
- Change the label on the Existing Land Use Map to read “Vacant/Open Space”.
- Page II-18 –Surface Water Uses: it was noted that Ellicott Creek is a popular location for “recreational” shoreline fishing. In general, Ellicott Creek is primarily a recreational resource in the Village.
- Page II-18 – Water Dependent and Water Enhanced Uses: it was noted that swimming and kayaking occur on Ellicott Creek most times of the year. The Village does not restrict swimming in the creek, outside of the ponds in Glen Park, and it is not uncommon to see people in the creek below the falls (where the water is less murky). Water flow in the creek is also sufficient to support kayaking below the falls. Kayaking also occurs above the falls, from Island Park to the Cadman Drive area.
- Fish stocking is conducted by the Jolly Boys (a local benevolent organization) in the vicinity of Island Park, above the dam for summer events. The NYSDEC also stocks trout in Ellicott Creek at Glen Park. Keaton DePriest has photographs of this that he will pass along to Wendy Salvati.
- Page II-19 – Abandoned, Underutilized and Deteriorated Sites and Structures: The Island Park dam, the sluiceway and the Williamsville Mill should be included in this paragraph. The Island Park dam is deteriorated; the concrete piers are falling apart, and the gates need rehabilitation. Ben Viglonden said that the flood gates have always been used as a means of upholding the historic riparian rights of shoreline landowners along the west side of Island Park (ensure that they have water flow during most parts of the year). He said that it is difficult to manipulate the gates in winter, when they freeze). Additionally, the weirs located at the top of the island and behind the Irishman Restaurant need rehabilitation in conjunction with the dam and sluiceway. This is a proposed project. The sluiceway that extends from the Ellicott Creek channel at the north end of Island Park to the Williamsville Mill is abandoned. The owner of the Mill property, Howard Cadmus, has water rights to the sluiceway. This feature runs underground, below Main Street and the existing businesses on each side of the street to the mill. The sluiceway gate can be seen on the creek embankment behind Britesmith Brewery. The sluiceway must be considered as part of future dam and creek work. Additional information on the sluiceway can be found in the historic preservation nomination documentation for the Williamsville Mill.
- Page II-22 – revise the narrative for Amherst State Park to include the parcel that was added to the WRA boundary; note that Glen Park is owned by the Village and the Town of Amherst.
- Page II-23 – revise the narrative for Island Park to note that the wading pool was removed, and the Village wants to provide a new water feature of some sort to replace it.
- Page II-25 – The Noll Nature Center, identified at the bottom of the page, is going to be demolished by the Town as part of the revitalization of this area of Glen Park.

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- Page II-26 – change Hutchinson Hose Company to Williamsville Fire Company (bottom of the page).
- Page II-27 – Underwater Land Ownership: Wendy Salvati said that she cannot determine who owns the underwater lands in Ellicott Creek. It was noted that some residential property surveys show land ownership to the middle of the creek. The Erie County tax maps, however, only show the properties illustrated in Figure 1 as having underway land ownership. The narrative will be revised to make note of this. As there are no docking structures that extend into Ellicott Creek, and no navigational issues/motorized vessel usage, underwater land ownership is not a significant issue.
- Page II-30 – Water Quality: the statement that indicates that many of the natural tributaries to Ellicott Creek have been channelized into stormwater conveyance systems in the urban and suburban areas of the creek sub-watershed was questioned. Is this true for all areas in the Village? Joel Bernosky will look into this.
- Page II-35 – Flooding and Erosion: It is noted in the narrative that a study is being commenced to evaluate flood resiliency in the Ellicott Creek watershed area of the Village; it was asked if this was true and if so, who was undertaking the study. The WAC members were unaware of it. Joel Bernosky will investigate and correct the text, as required. Ben Vilonen, however, indicated that the Village is doing a survey of all of Island park to determine the actual boundaries and elevations to help with water management.
- II-51 – Wastewater Management: Ben Vilonen said that the Creek Road, Danbern Lane and Creek Heights area of the Village (in Sub-Area 2) is still serviced by on-site septic systems.
- Page II-53 – Energy Generation: It was noted that the final use of the Williamsville Mill was for energy generation and the potential exists to restore this use. It may also be feasible to generate power at the Island Park dam, but the restriction of flow over Glen Falls that would likely occur may not be an acceptable impact.
- Pages II-57 and 58 – The list of findings, opportunities and issues was discussed and revised. The following was noted:
 - Findings - Ellicott Creek functions as a recreational resource for the Village.
 - Issue - Caution was offered for potential plans to improve public access to Ellicott Creek from the Village-owned right-of-way along Oakgrove Drive. It was noted that presently people walk across the creek from the south end of Island Park and enter onto private property. There has been vandalism in that area. We do not want to do something that further invites this activity. Furthermore, parking is a problem along Oakgrove Drive.
 - Opportunity – there is potential to establish a pollinator corridor along Ellicott Creek and encourage residents to be a part of this. Ben Vilonen said this would be a good use for the area of shoreline that the Village owns along the eastern shoreline of the creek, across from Island Park.
 - It was noted that the four themes listed under Issues and Concerns - - shoreline erosion, trail connections, inflow and infiltration and water quality - - were right on the mark. These are all key points that need attention.
 - Additional concerns include the lack of direct access between Island Park and Glen Park, the lack of direct access from Spring Street plaza and Glen Park, no means for pedestrian and bicyclists to safely cross the creek to avoid Main Street (and riding on sidewalks where pedestrian belong), water quality issues associated with point sources, and potential upstream flooding of residential properties.

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- Sheryl Davies expanded on the need for a trail/improved circulation system. It is difficult to ride bicycles along Main Street. The traffic calming improvements did not provide accommodations for bike lanes and the bulb-outs create problems. A way to ride between the parks is needed that can take you away from having to try and ride on Main Street and, instead, through the surrounding neighborhoods to reach park destinations.

Wendy said that she will use the information offered by the Committee to update and expand the listing of findings, opportunities and Issues and provide it to the group along with a copy of the NYS Coastal Management Program Policies for their review. She explained that she would like to utilize this information and work with the Committee to start shaping out the LWRP policies at the next Committee meeting.

Public Outreach

Wendy said that as we are finalizing our summary of findings, issue and opportunities, and have the inventory and mapping fairly well complete, we need to hold a Public Information Meeting to identify any additional opportunities or concerns and start to shape out a vision for the waterfront. It was decided that this meeting would be scheduled for Thursday, October 24th at 6:30 PM at Village Hall. Wendy will work with Keaton DePriest and Maggie Winship to promote the meeting; she will provide a flier and press release. Additional discussion on this will be held at the next WAC meeting.

Next Steps/Action Items

Waterfront Advisory Committee members who were in attendance were reminded to record their time for participating in the meeting (2.25 hours).

- Prepare and distribute the WAC committee meeting summary.
- Committee members (particularly those who have not read the draft documents) to provide final comments on the draft Inventory and Analysis to Project Team.
- Revise the draft WRA boundary map and the Section 1 boundary narrative to reflect changes to the boundary as discussed with the Committee. Revised map and narrative to be placed in the project Drop Box for Committee review and access.
- Revise the other LWRP maps to reflect the boundary changes as well as the removal of the “waterbodies” layer from all the maps.
- Identify properties that have formal conservation easements in the vicinity of Island Park and indicate on Existing Land Use Map (Maggie Winship to provide this information to Emma Phillips).
- Revise the draft Section II Inventory and Analysis to reflect comments and discussion offered by the Committee. Revised Section II and supporting maps will be placed in the project Drop Box for Committee review and access.
- Refine the list of findings, opportunities and issues and distribute to the Waterfront Committee.
- Provide the Waterfront Committee with a copy of the NYS Coastal Management Policies.
- Commence preparations for the proposed Public Information meeting.

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The next WAC meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, October 2nd at 6:00 at Village Hall. At that meeting the committee will discuss the refined list of findings, opportunities and issues and begin working on the LWRP policies. Additional planning for the proposed Public Information Meeting will also be discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Wendy Weber Salvati