

NY Forward – Capital Region – Hoosick Falls

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| Subject | MINUTES LPC Meeting #5 | Date | Monday, Oct 28, 2024 |
| Place | Hoosick Armory, 80 Church St, Hoosick Falls | Time | 3:00-5:00pm |
| Distribution | <u>Local Planning Committee</u> Robert Allen, (Mayor and Co-chair) Brian Williams (Co-chair) Doug Sauer Trish Bloomer James Monahan Ric DiDonato Paula Kamperman Gayle Donohue Craig Kennedy Mike Danforth Mike Willemsen (<i>remote</i>) Marianne Zwicklbauer Aaron Buzzinski | <u>State Team</u> Matthew Smith, DOS <u>Consultant Team</u> Ian Nicholson, Buro Happold Daniel D'Oca, Interboro Laura Lourenco, EDR <u>Public</u> ~12 individuals | |

Meeting Summary:

Please see 'HF_LPC Meeting 5_Slides_record' for the presentation shared during the meeting, which parallels the discussion summarized below.

*Action items are called out in **bold-italic highlight***

Welcome and Agenda

Ian (BH) welcomes the group to the 5th NY Forward LPC meeting. He briefly overviews the meeting agenda and reminds the room that these meetings are open to the public, but not intended to be public interactive workshops.

Opening Remarks

Mayor Allen (LPC Co-Chair) welcomes the LPC and public, and thanks everyone for their support and involvement throughout the process.

Code of Conduct

Ian (BH) reads the Code of Conduct preamble, and reviews key points from the Code of Conduct that LPC members are expected to abide by. The list of LPC members recused for each project is presented.

Aaron adds the Town Playground project to his recusal list.

Updates: Planning Process & Engagement

Ian (BH) review of what's been done so far and what is on the horizon (see slides).

Community Engagement

Dan (Interboro) reviews the engagement results throughout the process, including the Engagement Table, website traffic, Instagram highlights, online project review survey, and a summary of overall public interest for each project.

Submitted Projects

Ian (BH) presents updates and changes provided for each of the submitted projects in turn, with discussion among the LPC for each. Note that in the "challenges" section of each project, budget and timeline is not generally noted, unless there is a particularly unusual amount of risk – some level of budget and timeline risk is an unavoidable characteristic of all capital projects.

A. Monument Park

- Observed correction that per the conversation at the previous meeting, the total budget was reduced to \$352k with a NYF ask of \$282k.
- Mayor reports that the parallel design project that has been commissioned by the Village has kicked off – there was an onsite meeting, very few questions, very well-received.
- Question about status of cooperation with US Army Corp of Engineers – answer that outreach has not been started, want to have the procured design firms assist in these efforts related to making the connection to the Greenway.
- Question about what happens to funds of NYF project if US Army Corp of Engineers does not allow the connection to the berm? As with any project, if it falls through for whatever reason, the funds would be re-allocated to another project in the approved slate.

B. Hoosick Falls Branding & Marketing

- No specific comments noted.

C. Hoosic River Greenway Unification

- No specific comments noted.

D. [previously removed]

E. Murphy Building Renovation

- Mayor reports that multiple attempts to contact the County regarding the purchase of this property have been unsuccessful, proposes that the project will have to be withdrawn from consideration for NYF funding.
- Discussion around including the project as a “pipeline” project in the SIP.
- Question about whether the State could convert a “pipeline” project into a funded project. Answer is that this would not be an option during the initial round of grant awards. It may be an option in the future, but would require a series of major problems funding the other approved projects in the slate – i.e., a “last resort” option.
- Confirmation that information in the pipeline project profiles will be as accurate as possible.
- **Committee confirms that this project should be withdrawn from funding consideration but included in the SIP as a pipeline project.**

F. Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements

- Mayor clarifies that the curb bumpout at Church St between John and Classic is not currently reflected in the proposal budget – suggests that \$50k be added to accommodate this. Committee generally agrees.
- Discussion about expanding the scope of this project more generally – especially as regards the potential pedestrianization of Railroad/Lyman from John to Elm. Desire to see this project be truly transformative and make the most of this opportunity.
- **Committee agrees to increase the budget and NYF ask of this project by \$100k in order to allow more room for transformative impacts.**

G. Skating Rink Upgrade

- Confirmation shared that the nearly \$1m SAM grant will not reasonably be accessible. This is reflected in the Sponsor’s updated budget.
- Discussion around the revised scope and budget – clarification that the new budget is based on a professional estimate; is more accurate than the original high-level estimate; came in a bit lower overall than the original estimate; and also backs out some sitework scope.
- Observing that the Hoosac School increased their proposed match slightly to bring the NYF ask down to an even \$1m.

H. [previously removed]

I. Historical Society Carriage Barn Renovation

- No specific comments noted.

J. Hoosick Armory Modernization

- Reminder that the Sponsor had confirmed that the Committee may consider the accessibility scope items separately from the energy efficiency items.
- Clarification of what was changed to bring the budget down from the original estimate – the basement bathroom scope was pared down dramatically (use existing plumbing roughs, no re-tiling, etc).

K. *[previously removed]*

L. Total Playground Improvements

- Sponsor is in the audience and offers that there's a real possibility for the Town to provide matching funds for this project, since they intend to spend money on these facilities anyway. Ian (BH) confirms that as long as the NYF ask doesn't increase, we can make these changes as we finalize the project profiles.

M. *[previously removed]*

N. Firehouse Restaurant Renovation

- Question about the flag showing that proof of matching funds has not been submitted – answer that all sponsors are strongly encouraged to provide this by the time of SIP submittal, and would not be able to execute a contract with the State without it.

O. Game Store Renovation

- Clarification that this proposal will not require a change of use per existing zoning.

P. Historic Sweet Shop Restoration

- Confirmed that 1 of the 2 commercial spaces are currently vacant.
- Sponsor offers additional explanation of how prospective commercial tenants have declined to take on the space because it's too big. Another audience member with commercial space in Bennington corroborates that this has happened with him as well.

Q. Lower Classic St Mixed-Use Revitalization

- No specific comments noted.

R. *[previously removed]*

S. The Sand Bar Expansion

- Observation strongly in support of the project – it's a key location adjacent to the greenway unification, the pedestrian infrastructure improvements, and directly in between the proposed park and the business district.

T. STAY apARTments Redevelopment

- Question about the cost estimate – seems low for that amount of space and level of fit out. Answer that the sponsor provided a detailed cost estimate from their architect – not from a contractor or vendor. Also observed that the scope is primarily a fit-out of interior loft space, so the cost/sf would be expected to be lower than usual.
- Clarified that for all projects, any budget over-runs would be borne by the Sponsor – an increase in their NYF award would be very unlikely.

U. Wood Block HoosArt Center Restoration

- Clarified that the scope that they've pulled out of the NYF ask is still in the project, still in the budget, and still intended to be done at the same time as everything else. The Sponsor has simply committed to finding other money for it.

- Committee member asks what uses on the 3rd floor this project will unlock – Sponsors (in the audience) provide long and detailed explanation of the events they've been holding, how those have been limited by the lack of egress, and how the building had been used historically as the opera house and host to a variety of different musical and cultural events. They note that a lot of the programming they are anticipating would be free for the organizations to use the space – and they would also hold events like weddings that would pay a reasonable rate.

V. 1 Center St Warehouse Mixed-use Rehabilitation

- Mayor updates that the Village did put in a letter of intent for the Restore NY program on behalf of this property. The focus of that scope would be to build out the remaining 10 residential units that are not included in the NYF project.
- Discussed whether Mayor's recusal is necessary – not sure, but advised to just recuse to be safe.
- Sponsor clarifies that the NYF project is primarily getting the roof and shell stabilized so the interior can be inhabited – a gym, brewery, and workshop do not require much else.

W. 1 Mechanic St Warehouse Commercial Rehabilitation

- No specific comments noted.

X. 15 Church St Residential Rehabilitation

- No specific comments noted.

Y. *[previously removed]*

Z. *[previously removed]*

AA. 114 Church St

- Mayor confirms that the Village is now officially looking at developing the parcel next door as a parking lot, which would be usable by the tenants of this project.

LPC Q&A

Confirmed that it is standard practice for the SIP to be submitted to the State without detailed review and comment by the LPC. Consultant team can re-share the downtown profile summary feedback form if helpful.

Observed that there are up to 20 new units of housing proposed in the final slate of projects.

Discussion around the Small Project Fund.

- Discussion about the logistics and timing of the Small Project Fund process.
- Discussion about the proposed per-project award maximum – agreement to propose \$75,000.
- Discussion about required match – confirmation that 25% is the minimum, but LPC can set a higher match requirement for all sponsors, or a class of sponsors (for instance, 50% match for private sponsors).
- Village would contract with HCR, and project sponsors would contract with Village. Fund would be administered by a 3rd party to be solicited by the Village via RFP. Some State requirements would flow through to Sponsors – but not, for instance, prevailing wage.
- There would be a small committee setup by the Village to oversee the Fund and make award decisions.

- Clarification that the SIP will include as much interest demonstrated in a Fund as possible – including standalone projects that would be viable contenders – this would not affect those projects’ competitiveness for the standalone awards.
- **LPC confirmed that the Small Project Fund should be included in the recommended slate of projects, at \$450k.**

Discussion around the slate of projects.

- Question around if Sponsors are required to maintain ownership of their projects. Answer is that yes, it is a reimbursement program so Sponsors are required to finish work before receiving reimbursement, and additionally there is a clawback provision, typically 5 years.
- Confirmed that sponsors that require additional information, such as demonstration of matching funds, will provide the necessary info, ideally prior to submission of the SIP, but certainly prior to signing a contract with a State agency.
- Timing of awards is likely to be sometime during Q2 of 2025. These vary widely depending on the communities in a region, the complexity of their proposed projects, and the logistics of scheduling the announcement event. Consultants submit the final SIP by end of year 2024, which begins the State review.
- The SIP will focus on the local goals set by the LPC when presenting all of the project profiles – the State will nonetheless consider the full range of goals, including State program goals and effectiveness criteria.
- Discussion around whether the Committee ought to remove any projects – there are no nominations for projects to be removed, and multiple members observe that all remaining project align with the program’s goals. There is some concern that simply presenting the full slate with no cuts leaves all the decisions with the State, but also an observation that there were significant cuts made at the last meeting and further reductions since then.
- Discussion around diligence items, e.g. Sponsors must be up to date on property taxes, informed of the 5-year clawback provision etc. Confirmed that all of these issues will be covered as part of the State’s review and diligence efforts as they decide which projects to award, and work to contract with the awarded Sponsors. It is not in the scope of the current process to resolve these items at this time, which would only serve to limit the potential slate preemptively.
- Discussion about going back to Sponsors to reduce all the NYF request amounts so that more projects could be funded. Advised against this, as it would actually make a lot of projects less transformative and therefore less likely to get funded. Also observed that these discussions have already been had at least once with all the Sponsors.
- **LPC takes final vote on slate of projects, which includes all as presented and amended over the course of the discussion, with only the Murphy Building removed.** Consultant team will distribute formal ballots for record.

Public Comment

Comment encouraging the committee to prioritize projects that are catalytic and bring people into the Village.

Question about some information in the brochures on the website – clarification that those reflect information as of the 2nd Public Workshop and are not being constantly updated.

Next steps

Consultant team will follow up with project sponsors for needed information and work to finalize the project profiles that will go into the Strategic Investment Plan to be submitted to the State by end of the year. **There will not be a sixth LPC meeting.**

Closing Remarks (LPC Co-Chairs)

No specific comments noted.

END OF SUMMARY