

Date: May 30, 2023

Project Name: Lindenhurst NY Forward  
Subject: Local Planning Committee Meeting #1

Meeting Location: Rainbow Center (Senior Citizens Center), 293 Buffalo Ave.  
Meeting Date: May 30, 2023  
Meeting Time: 7:00-9:00 PM

Participants: **Local Planning Committee**

RJ Renna (Co-Chair)  
Jim Morgo (Co-Chair)  
Joann Boettcher  
Lisa Kropp  
Liz Mirarchi  
Jason Kontakis  
Pat Corcoran  
Marian Conway  
Robert Sweeney  
Sara Pesserillo  
Franklin Cruz  
Sammy Chu

*Not present: Sharon Badri-Persaud, Matt Gaudio, Alice Cromarty, Anthony Ferlito*

**New York State**

Kevin Garrett, Department of State (DOS)  
Denise Zani, Empire State Development (ESD)  
Jenna DiMarco, ESD

**Consultant Team**

Susan Favate, Principal, BFJ Planning  
Mark Freker, Senior Planner, BFJ Planning  
Suzanne Goldberg, Planner, BFJ Planning

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The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the Local Planning Committee (LPC) and members of the project team, the NYF process and timeline, introduce strategies for public outreach, and discuss goals and priorities for the Lindenhurst NYF. Approximately 10 members of the public joined the meeting as attendees. The presentation is posted on the [Lindenhurst NYF Website](#).

### Welcome and Introductions

- Members of the public were reminded that LPC meetings are working sessions, and there is an opportunity for the public to share comments at the end of the meeting or submit comments online at [www.LindenhurstNYF.com](http://www.LindenhurstNYF.com).
- RJ Renna, Co-Chair and Deputy Mayor of the Village of Lindenhurst, led the introduction of LPC members.
- Kevin Garrett (DOS), Denise Zani (ESD), and Jenna DiMarco (ESD) introduced themselves as State representatives involved in the Lindenhurst NYF process.
- Susan Favate of BFJ Planning provided an overview of the consultant team. BFJ Planning will lead the NYF effort, while economic development, sustainability, engineering experts and other subconsultant specialists will cover the various topic areas for the Strategic Investment Plan.

### NYF Code of Conduct

- Ms. Favate gave an overview of the NYF Code of Conduct, which all LPC members must sign, and explained that any potential conflict of interest must be disclosed at the earliest possible time. LPC members must complete and submit a formal Recusal form when a potential conflict is identified.
- RJ Renna read the LPC preamble for disclosure and recusal.
- Ms. Favate concluded the NYF Code of Conduct discussion with an overview of how LPC members will vote on a slate of projects to be recommended to the state for NYF funding.

### What is NY Forward?

- Ms. Favate outlined the program objectives, with the state's goals encompassing:
  - Enhancing downtown living and quality of life, encouraging the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, growing the local property tax base, and providing diverse employment opportunities for a variety of skill sets and salary levels.
- An overview of the roles and responsibilities of participants in the NYF process was given, including members of the public, New York State representatives, consultants, Village Staff, and the Local Planning Committee.
- Ms. Favate summarized the NYF Timeline and deliverables, which will conclude with the compilation of the Strategic Investment Plan in December 2023.
  - Public events will be held throughout the process. The first deliverable, the Public Engagement Plan, will identify specific outreach strategies to ensure the full Lindenhurst community has the opportunity to weigh in on the NYF projects.
  - There will be five LPC meetings.
- The proposed NYF boundary was displayed, and Ms. Favate explained that every project proposed must be located within the NYF boundary. Other adjustments are possible (within the Village boundary) and should be identified as early in the process as possible.
- Ms. Favate discussed the plan outline, as well as project criteria, and identified the types of projects that will and will not be eligible for NYF funding.

### Downtown Vision, Goals, and Strategies

- Mark Freker of BFJ Planning led an icebreaker exercise for the LPC members aimed at understanding goals and priorities for NYF. LPC members were asked to answer the following questions:
  1. What do you love the most about Downtown Lindenhurst?
  2. What do you see as the biggest opportunity in Downtown Lindenhurst?
- LPC Answers to the question, "What do you love the most about Downtown Lindenhurst?" include:
  - Walkability
  - Increased activity in recent years, including more places to eat and drink
  - Open space, i.e. the Village Square

- Active and exciting community filled with people of all ages
- New, youthful energy from the Wel
- Community anchors in the downtown area, i.e. the library
- Several destinations to eat and drink
- Multiple arts and entertainment venues
- LPC responses to “Opportunities for Downtown Lindenhurst” include:
  - Walkability and pedestrian safety
    - Elements of walkability can be introduced from nearby towns like West Hempstead, i.e. traffic calming, public seating, walkways
    - Need better crosswalks, specifically on Belfast and Wellwood and Hoffman intersections
    - North side of Hoffman is dangerous since it is significantly narrower than the south side
    - Need to increase pedestrian safety
  - The building next to the Village Square could be removed
  - Creating a thriving downtown while maintaining a suburban feel
  - Building on the momentum of revitalization in the recent past
  - Downtown Lindenhurst can be a regional destination
  - Solar charging stations in public spaces to charge devices, Wi-Fi mesh network, and seating
  - Wayfinding signage to remind people of nearby parking, especially off Wellwood Ave
  - Holiday decorations and spirit could last all year long and be updated seasonally
  - More branding and advertising for businesses across all different industries
  - More activities for families
  - Unified effort to increase social media presence for Lindenhurst and invite people from other towns to visit local businesses
  - Village Square is a great success that the Village can build upon
- Mr. Freker shared a preliminary downtown vision based on the NYF application. The vision will be refined during the NYF process to reflect input from the LPC and public.
  - An LPC member requested that the word “community” is added to the downtown vision.

### Public Engagement Strategy

- Mr. Freker shared an outline of potential public outreach tools that could be used in the NYF process. These will be tailored to Lindenhurst to ensure this process reaches as many people as possible.
- The first public workshop is scheduled for July 18<sup>th</sup>, 7-9 PM, at the firehouse on Wellwood Avenue.
- All information about public events and tools will be available on the Lindenhurst NYF website. LPC members are strongly encouraged to spread the word through their social networks.
- The consultant team will also coordinate pop-up opportunities with Village events to share information on the NYF process with the public.
  - The LPC proposed the following events as potential pop-up opportunities:
    - June 16<sup>th</sup>- Library summer reading kick-off
    - June 24<sup>th</sup> and June 25<sup>th</sup>- Our Lady of Perpetual Help’s festival in Village Sq. Park.
    - July 19<sup>th</sup> and August 16<sup>th</sup>- Wednesdays on Wellwood
- Mr. Freker also introduced an online visioning exercise through Social Pinpoint, which will include an Ideas Wall. This web-based engagement tool will launch in late June or early July 2023.

### Open Call for Projects

- The Open Call will be launched on June 12<sup>th</sup> and will stay open for a 6.5 week period until July 26<sup>th</sup>.
- The Project Team will host technical assistance office hours end of June or early July for members of the public that would like to submit a project.

### Next Steps

- Finalize Public Engagement Strategy
- Send out Open Call for Projects
  - LPC members should send questions or comments as soon as possible.
- Refine Vision and Goals
- Develop Downtown Profile & Assessment
- Upcoming Public Outreach
  - Next LPC Meeting: Tuesday, June 27<sup>th</sup>
  - First Public Workshop: Thursday, July 18<sup>th</sup>
  - Pop-up Event: TBD (late June)
  - Office Hours (technical assistance of Open Call for Projects): TBD (late June or early July)

### LPC Comments & Questions

- Q: Can sidewalk improvements be included as eligible projects?
  - A: Yes, they can be one-time investments. Future maintenance or ongoing improvements, however, are not eligible.
- Q: Is there a minimum threshold for investment in projects?
  - A: The LPC will decide the minimum thresholds for investment, as well as matching requirements.
- Q: Private investments are reimbursable, correct?
  - A: Yes, project sponsors will be reimbursed.
- Q: Can applicants use bank loans for private investments?
  - A: Yes, they will need to present a bank letter or some kind of evidence. Since sponsors are reimbursed through State funding, banks are typically aware and willing to participate.
- Q: Are there deeper criteria metrics used to evaluate a project's ability to meet the State's goals?
  - A: There are many qualitative elements used to evaluate the criteria, but there are also more specific thresholds in the Guidebook for certain goals, such as achieving decarbonization.
- Q: What are examples of significant infrastructure projects?
  - A: Past DRI projects have included bulb-outs, street trees, street furniture, crosswalks, targeted pedestrian safety improvements, new gazebos, and more.
- Q: Can LPC members assist members of the public with project proposals?
  - A: DOS will follow up with an answer to this question.
- Q: Can we target public members who are engaged with a specific interest, such as arts and entertainment?
  - A: Yes, it is appropriate to engage people with specific interests and invite them to public meetings.

### Public Comments & Questions

- Priorities identified by the public included:
  - Introducing a Shop Local program in New Jersey that gives property tax rebates to people who shop locally. This program requires about \$40,000 to start up and print cards.
  - Increasing the Village's attractiveness for visitors once they exit the LIRR. Westbury, for instance, just beautified the area surrounding the train station.
  - Finding ways to attract diversity through events and projects.
  - Promoting recycling education and messaging in the Village.
  - Increasing crosswalk safety with electronic signage.
  - Introducing traffic cameras at dangerous intersections.