

Date: September 12, 2023

Project Name: Lindenhurst NY Forward
Subject: Local Planning Committee Meeting #4

Meeting Location: Rainbow Center (Senior Citizens Center), 293 Buffalo Ave.
Meeting Date: September 12, 2023
Meeting Time: 7:00-9:00 PM

Participants: **Local Planning Committee**

RJ Renna (Co-Chair)
Sammy Chu
Marian Conway
Robert Sweeney
Jason Kontakis
Alice Cromarty
Sara Pesserillo
Joann Boettcher

Not present: Jim Morgo (Co-Chair), Sharon Badri-Persaud, Pat Corcoran, Franklin Cruz, Matt Gaudio, Liz Mirarchi, Lisa Kropp, Anthony Ferlito

New York State

Kevin Garrett, Department of State (DOS)
Rachel Bruce, DOS
Denise Zani, ESD

Consultant Team

Susan Favate, Principal, BFJ Planning
Mark Freker, Associate, BFJ Planning

The purpose of this meeting was to provide the LPC with potential NYF project updates, discuss the Small Project Fund, and establish initial minimum matching requirements for projects. The presentation is posted on the [Lindenhurst NYF Website](#).

Introductions and NYF Code of Conduct

- 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.
- Co-Chair RJ Renna introduced himself and the NY Forward process.
- Susan Favate of BFJ Planning introduced the consultant and New York State team.

- Mr. Renna read aloud the LPC preamble for disclosure and reminded LPC members to recuse themselves from weighing-in on their own projects.
- Ms. Favate presented an overview of the NYF timeline. This is the fourth out of five LPC meetings. The second public workshop on October 10th will include high-level draft project profiles for public weigh-in. The public will have the opportunity to voice input on details of Village-sponsored public projects. LPC Meeting #5 will take place on October 24th.

Community Engagement Update

- Mark Freker (BFJ Planning) gave a recap of the Social Pinpoint Ideas Wall engagement tool which was closed for public comment at the end of August.
 - 443 unique visitors viewed the Ideas Wall.
 - A total of 116 comments were posted.
 - The top themes commented on were “Buildings, Streetscape, & Public Realm” (32%), followed by “Shopping, Dining, & Arts” (25%).
 - A word cloud was generated from all received comments, demonstrating areas of interest for revitalization and investments. Top words represented in the Ideas Wall include: *Parks, Sidewalks, Streets, Playground, Wellwood, Supermarket.*
- Public Workshop #2 (October 10th) will be held at the Middle School Gymnasium. In addition to a short presentation that provides an overview of the NYF process, the workshop will provide an interactive component to solicit community feedback on proposed projects with the opportunity to refine public project details and approaches.
 - A web-based public survey will launch at the same time, allowing community members to review proposed NYF projects and provide input.

Project Evaluation Criteria and Considerations for Project Evaluation

- Ahead of reviewing NYF project updates, Mr. Freker reminded LPC members of key questions that should be considered when evaluating the proposed NYF projects:
 - Does this project meet the State and Local NYF Goals?
 - Does the project have the potential to create a catalytic effect?
 - Is the project ready to be implemented?
 - Is the project cost effective?
 - Does the project have co-benefits?
- The projects should be evaluated on the following five criteria:
 - Alignment with State and Local Goals: NYF State Goals
 - Catalytic Effect
 - Eligible Project Type
 - Cost Effectiveness
 - Co-Benefits
- Mr. Freker explained that the responses from the LPC “homework” handout were received by 7 LPC members. LPC comments were reviewed by the BFJ Planning team.
- The planning team reminded LPC members that NYF funding is limited and that the project selection process is competitive.
 - Projects have continued to be considered for opportunities to be combined – as represented in the project profile updates.

- The project team has followed up with project sponsors and relevant stakeholders to clarify questions of scope, feasibility, and cost estimates.
- Kevin Garrett of DOS provided the guidance that the package of projects recommended for funding by the LPC in the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) should be in the range of \$6M - \$8M. Although \$4.5M is the total amount awarded to Lindenhurst NYF, a higher range represented in the SIP will leave discretion to the State and provide flexibility in the event that a proposed project falls through.
- It was explained that ballpark project costs will be presented at Public Workshop #2 but these will continue to be refined afterwards.
 - Project cost estimations should include contingency.
 - Project sponsor financing will be vetted in order to confirm the applicant's ability to fund a project.

Target for Matching Funds

- Ms. Favate introduced the discussion of establishing a matching funds target for both the Small Project Fund as well as for Private Standalone Projects.
 - For a small project fund, private funding must be no less than 25% of the total cost per project (per State requirements).
 - The LPC agreed to initially set a minimum matching requirement of 50% for the Small Project Fund, citing the desire have the total \$300,000 fund stretch further, across projects.
 - It was agreed that the requirement for non-profits will be revisited, whether this minimum will apply or if it will be adjusted.
 - The LPC agreed to set a minimum matching requirement of 33% for private standalone projects. Whereas the State does not require a matching requirement for private project sponsors, the LPC discussed wanting to establish this requirement in order to keep the process competitive, maximize private equity, and to generally reserve NYF funding for public projects.
 - **The conversation of this matching requirement was revisited and finalized towards the end of the meeting, once projects were reviewed.*

Discussion of Potential NYF Projects

- The BFJ Planning Team explained that based on proposal reviews and project sponsor follow-ups, potential NYF Projects have been consolidated for LPC Consideration. The following portion of the meeting focused on reviewing project proposals. Standalone private projects were first discussed, followed by public projects.
- Ms. Favate and Mr. Freker alternated presenting an updated summary of each Open Call submission, with updates since LPC #3. The notes below reflect the presentation and LPC discussion. More details regarding each project submission are included within the presentation slides.

An overview of potential Standalone Private Projects was presented:

- 197-201 S Wellwood Ave Façade Upgrade
- 175 S Wellwood Ave 2nd Floor Expansion
- 100-102 S Wellwood Ave Façade Rehab
- 101-109 N Wellwood Ave Façade Upgrade
- 101-105 N Wellwood Ave Belfast Gastro Pub Upgrades
- BACCA Renovations
- BACCA Public Art Projects
- 50 E Hoffman Ave- Former Waldbaums Site
- It was highlighted that a NYF Project Form was received for 50 E Hoffman since LPC #3.

- It was clarified that although BACCA is a non-profit, its projects are considered private. Public Projects pertain to projects where the Village is the sponsor.

LPC Discussion of Standalone Private Projects:

- 197-201 Façade Upgrade
 - The project team met with the applicant and is awaiting a rendering and refined cost estimates. The scope of work remains focused on façade enhancements of the 4-unit building, with a desire to restore original brick if possible.
- 175 S Wellwood- 2nd Floor Expansion
 - The project team met with the applicant and discussed the rationale for building expansion to accommodate business growth. A rendering and refined cost estimates were requested and are pending.
- 100-102 S Wellwood Ave
 - The project team reported that the applicant has not provided needed updates pertaining to a precise scope of work and cost estimates. No new information is available at this time. However, this project is still being considered at this stage but will be re-assessed as information is obtained.
- 101-109 N Wellwood Façade Upgrade
 - The project team met with the applicant and explained that the applicant would like to know whether a matching requirement is set. This will help the applicant establish a refined scope of work/cost estimates and a rendering.
- Belfast Gastro Pub Upgrades
 - The project team met with the applicant to get a better understanding of this project. Upgrades would reinforce the vitality of this business and add to activity on this central intersection in Lindenhurst. The applicant already submitted detailed cost estimates and a rendering.
 - A question was raised regarding the duration of Belfast's lease and how long this is for. The project team will follow-up.
- 50 E Hoffman Ave – Former Waldbaums Site
 - The Village explained that a formal application for this site has not yet been received.
 - Project information was presented (refer to meeting slides) – most importantly, this proposed development is for a 172 unit building with a 5,000 sf grocery store on the ground floor. The total project cost is an estimated \$70M with a \$1.25M NYF funding request.
 - LPC members generally expressed enthusiasm about this vacant site being redeveloped.
 - An LPC member questioned whether a 5,000 sf grocery store is the best use for this site and if this is needed in Lindenhurst. Other LPC members referred to public interest/need for a new small grocery store in the Village.
 - There is interest for this site to help activate the Hoffman Ave. streetscape.
 - What are the possibilities for a mix of retail tenants?
 - The LPC discussed that public benefits should be revisited for this site, in order to maximize improvements/investments in the public realm.
 - The LPC expressed some question/concern about the parking arrangements – how will the screened parking look? Is there opportunity for shared parking?
 - There is interest to maximize greenspace and features such as bioswales.

- BACCA Renovations and BACCA Public Arts Project Fund
 - The project team explained that a call with the project sponsor is pending, in order to clarify the scope of work and cost estimates for these two projects.
 - Clarification is needed on BACCA's intention to expand the existing building – the project team will follow-up.
 - Guidance was provided that it would be beneficial for the Public Arts Project Fund to identify several candidate sites (i.e. for murals).

An overview of potential Village-sponsored **Public Projects** was presented

- Irmisch Historical Park Revitalization
- Lindenhurst Greenway
- Pedestrian and Streetscape Improvements
- Village Square Park
- Marketing and Branding Strategy

LPC Discussion of Public Projects:

- Irmisch Historical Park Revitalization
 - The project team met with the Lindenhurst Historical Society and the Village to discuss the scope work. This investment is seen as an enhancement of an underutilized public space. The historical components of the park are timely for the Village's 100th anniversary.
 - The LPC agreed that enhancing pedestrian safety and connectivity, as it relates to the park, is a needed focus.
- Lindenhurst Greenway/Walking Trail
 - BFJ Planning presented the refined scope of this project that combines concepts from three project form submissions. The project would focus on a walking trail from Firemen's Memorial Park to the LIRR station. BFJ is working with a subconsultant to refine design ideas – design scenarios will be shared at Public Workshop #2.
 - LPC members strongly supported this project to link to a "Phase 2" future vision that would span into other areas of the Village.
- Pedestrian and Streetscape Improvements
 - This project combines three separate project forms received by the Village (East Hoffman Improvement, West Hoffman Improvements, and N Wellwood Improvements).
 - The project team is in communication with Suffolk County to strategize how Hoffman Ave. improvements will be approached within the NYF timeframe.
 - This project could pull in the BACCA Seating project proposal as well as wayfinding elements.
- Village Square Improvements & Expansion
 - This project assumes the acquisition and demolition of the County Courthouse building. The Village continues to pursue this.
 - The LPC expressed interest to coordinate Village Sq. improvements with the future redevelopment of the Waldbaum's site.
 - The carousel project could be considered in the design of the park expansion.
 - The project team is working with a subconsultant to develop design scenarios for this project. These scenarios will be shared at Public Workshop #2.

- Marketing and Branding Strategy
 - The project team recapped a stakeholder call with Village staff, Joanne Boettcher (Chamber of Commerce), and Jason Kontakis (Lindenhurst BID) that discussed issues and opportunities for Village marketing and branding. It was decided that for NYF purposes, funding is not needed at this time since existing marketing and branding needs are generally being met. The LPC supported this notion. This project will be cut from the Public Project list.
 - Generally, there is local interest in business assistance programming/funding. The Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) should consider referencing other funding sources for this.
 - The LPC supported the potential to explore downtown wayfinding/signage enhancements that could also play a role in communicating the Village's identity. It was explained that such a NYF funding request would be looped into the Pedestrian and Streetscape Improvement project.

Discussion of Small Project Fund

- The consultant team shared the following list of project forms that were received during the NYF Open Call that could be candidates for the Small Project Fund. The list is meant to demonstrate examples, not to serve as an exhaustive reference.
 - Hunter & Thief façade
 - Knights of Columbus exterior work
 - Sidelines Café façade improvement
 - Island Kava exterior/signage improvements
 - 27A Brewing façade and exterior upgrades
 - Breslau Brewery façade and heating/AC
 - 125A South Wellwood upgrades/renovations
 - 218 North Wellwood elevator
 - Ice cream shop renovations – 168 North Wellwood
 - The Holy Black
- The LPC indicated support to continue pursuing a Small Project Fund.
- The project team explained that the Village would be the main administrator of the fund and the BID would play a supporting role (i.e. application review).
- Eligible activities were reviewed and are listed on the meeting slides.
- In addition to setting an initial 50% matching requirement, the LPC supported establishing the guideline to allow for a minimum match of \$10,000 and a maximum match of \$50,000.
- It was clarified that the Small Project Fund, if approved by the State following the SIP issuance, would entail a separate competitive application process in the first half of 2024. Any applicant recommended to the Small Project Fund from the NYF Open Call would have to re-apply and is not granted any preferential treatment in review.
- The project team explained that establishing local design guidelines will be important to help steer the Small Project Fund – specifically in relation to future façade work projects.
- The Lindenhurst BID currently supports signage improvements with matching funds – this should be considered as another local resource.

Next Steps

- Continue to revise list of preliminary projects, follow up with sponsors.
- Upcoming Public Events
 - Public Workshop #2: October 10th, 7pm-9pm (Location: Middle School Gymnasium)
 - Web-based public Survey will be launched around this time
 - LPC Meeting #5: October 24 (7-9PM, Rainbow Center)

Public Comments

- Q: The Lindenhurst Youth Center project was not represented in the slides – is there an update on this proposed project?
 - A: The proposal received by the Youth Center is seen as a candidate for the Small Project Fund. The project team will follow-up with the applicant with more information.
- Comment: The NYF process and local planning should consider a “welcome center” location where information pertaining to small businesses could be offered.
- Q: If a private property owner is awarded NYF funding, are there any State provisions that prevent the owner from selling their property immediately?
 - A: No, such an action would not be prohibited. This question supports the importance for the LPC to consider the public benefit of each project proposal. In other words, even if a private property owner received funding to support upgrades on their property, are there clear public benefits that would remain, even if an owner were to sell?