



CITY OF DUNKIRK

BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA

STEP 2 NOMINATION STUDY

Steering Committee Meeting Notes

October 19, 2016

3:00 – 5:00 PM

The first Steering Committee meeting for the City of Dunkirk Brownfield Opportunity Area Step 2 Nomination Study was held on October 19, 2016 from 3:00 – 5:00 PM at the Fredonia Technology Incubator in Dunkirk, NY.

Attendees:

Willie Rosas	City of Dunkirk, Mayor
Rebecca Yanus	City of Dunkirk, Director of Planning & Development
Nicole Waite	City of Dunkirk, Deputy Director of Planning & Development
Christina Lincoln	City of Dunkirk, Community Development Planner
Chris Bauer	NYS Department of State (NYSDOS)
Maurice Moore	NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)
John Ames	Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation
Allan Steinberg	Developer
Gina Paradis	Chautauqua County Land Bank
Paul Neureuter	The KROG Group, President
Pat Gooch	Chautauqua County Department of Planning & Economic Dev.
Michael Taylor	Vita Nuova
Neil Pariser	Vita Nuova
James Manzella	Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.
Anton Balanevskiy	Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.
Mary Rowlands	Highland Planning, LLC
Allison Harrington	Sustainable Planning Design, LLC

Introductions:

Mayor Rosas (City of Dunkirk) welcomed participants to the meeting and thanked them for participating. He is excited about the project and the opportunities it can provide the City of Dunkirk. He also is proud of the City of Dunkirk development team and consultants and the work that has been accomplished thus far.

Michael Taylor (Vita Nuova) introduced himself, and stressed the importance of having a collaborative Steering Committee to guide and assist the project team throughout the process.

The attendees introduced themselves and expressed what they like most about Dunkirk.

Vision & Goals:

Rebecca Yanus (City of Dunkirk) gave a brief history and overview of the project. She summarized the agenda for the meeting, and reviewed the vision and goals for the project.

Project Scope and Schedule:

Michael Taylor reviewed the BOA project scope and nine-month project schedule. He reviewed the regional context map and noted that Dunkirk sits in a unique position given its lake shore frontage and highway proximity.

Market Study:

Neil Pariser (Vita Nuova) provided an update on the market study, and reviewed demographic and economic information collected to date stressing the economic and social connections between Fredonia and Dunkirk.

Allan Steinberg asked about the connection between Dunkirk and the university. Michael Taylor indicated that the consultant team will be interviewing SUNY Fredonia. John Ames mentioned that many students don't have a car and therefore cannot get to Dunkirk easily. Allan recommended that the consultant team investigate the University program called "Student Connection."

BOA Area, Target Sites and Prioritization Methods:

James Manzella (Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.) explained how the consultant team developed the list of 15 preliminary target sites for further study. The consultant team started with 40 sites, and removed many of them due to their having been developed, having poor transportation connections, small size, or being limited by environmental constraints such as wetlands, etc.

The preliminary target sites fall into five categories:

- Waterfront
- Central Business District
- Former Industrial Sites
- Large Undeveloped/Underutilized Sites
- Combining Smaller Parcels

Michael Taylor solicited input on the preliminary sites and shared that the team is in the process of trying to contact the owners of these properties. He asked the steering committee to let the consultant team know if they are aware of issues that might impede development of the selected sites. For example, are there any known environmental issues? Is the owner tax delinquent? Is the land in a trust?

John Ames asked if the hospital site should be added to the list. Michael Taylor referred to Rebecca Yanus, who agreed the current hospital site should be added. The steering committee also recommended that the Adams Art Gallery be added.

Michael Taylor asked Gina Paradis (Chautauqua County Land Bank) to explain what the land bank does. Gina shared that they purchase and manage abandoned properties through tax foreclosures. None of the Land Bank properties are on the selected sites. Ms. Paradis was asked if she could provide a list of properties in Dunkirk owned by the Land Bank, to which she indicated yes.

Anton Balanevskiy explained that there are many small city lots, and it is hard to produce dynamic developments on small sites. The team therefore looked at grouping multiple parcels, be they City or privately owned into larger development sites. If a major redevelopment can be attracted to one of the larger sites, smaller development on the nearby lots will follow. Michael will talk further with Gina to discuss properties going to tax foreclosure. Gina mentioned that they do have the power to bond and take title.

Allan Steinberg has inquired about buying Site #1 (the Waterfront Block), but the City is not ready to sell it. They prefer to lease it. Allan indicated that no one wants to spend that much money on a development and not own the property. The mayor said there have been a lot of inquiries about that site and he can speak with Allan about it further off-line.

Michael Taylor asked Chris Bauer (NYSDOS) to comment on the importance of the sites selected to date. Chris stated there is never a shortage of sites, but always a shortage of money. Once completed, the market study will help the council understand what can be done and help direct the City's financial investment.

Lakeshore is residential, and perhaps the zoning should be changed before any development is advanced. Chris Bauer indicated a follow-up study to revise the zoning code may be appropriate.

Gina Paradis inquired if sites that are not included are at a disadvantage. Chris Bauer indicated, yes however, we may still tweak the boundaries to include other sites. Michael mentioned that the team is okay to include adjacent sites, however, they may not be a priority site for this study.

KROG is one of the largest brownfield developers in the area and has done the most redevelopment within the NYSDEC's Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP). Paul Neureuter (KROG) shared a story about an 8-acre site in Clayton, NY that was a perfect BCP site for tax credit, but the City decided to clean it up first. KROG built a hotel there. The story exemplifies the importance of not advancing the clean up by the municipality before identifying a developer who can take advantage of the tax credits. It is hard to justify the cost of a cleanup for a small site, and they are not economically feasible with the BCP.

Anton Balanevskiy reviewed the attributes of each of the 15 sites. Comments are summarized below:

- #1 Large, vacant city property
- #2 No comments.
- #3 The Mayor noted that this is a site the city wants to market.
- #4 Paul Neureuter noted that parking is essential to development. The parking lot is full everyday; it is a parking lot used by the County. Anton stated that if the best use for this site is a parking lot, it should be removed from the list.
- #5 Allan Steinberg owns several of the lots. He has plans to expand Rookies. Crosby's may also expand. He hopes to start this addition in the next few weeks after he combines some tax parcels. He bought the Yellow Goose, and has already started remodeling for a clothing sports store.
- #6 This site has environmental concerns. The City's Code Department might have some information on the owner of the church. Rebecca Yanus will speak with him. The Land Bank owns a small parcel on the corner but its isolated.
- #7 The former Mulholland Spring & Gear Co. has architecturally interesting buildings. The team hasn't spoken with the housing authority yet.
- #8 No comments.
- #9 Three sites on three corners in a residential area. This is a major intersection Main St. & Lakeshore. The site not utilized well, and the entire block is unused.
- #10 The area is residential. Gina stated the land bank has a property nearby. Michael asked Anton to map all of the land bank properties. Gina will provide a current list. Gina wants to know if any of her sites are within the boundary.
- #11 Four vacant lots.
- #12 This group includes city/private/some vacant. Wetlands separates the site. The site is limited due to access. It is unusual for a city to have this amount of vacant land.
- #13 County-owned land. There is a NYSDEC Record of Decision (ROD) on it for the former Edgewood Warehouse Parcel. It is a former industrial site. James explained a ROD summarizes the NYSDEC required remedial measures that must be implemented prior to future use of the site; however, prior to cleanup this site would be prime candidates for the Brownfield Cleanup Program. Previously the site was covered with concrete slabs; however, much of the concrete slabs were broken crushed and returned to the surface of the former Roblin Steel site. Maurice Moore (NYSDEC) asked about Cliff Star properties, which was bought by Cott Industries. He suggested the hospital may be interested in it for ancillary uses. Michael Taylor

noted that if brownfields are adjacent to the sites, we have already identified and should include them in the boundary.

- #14 Maurice Moore noted that the long red portion to the north of this site is the Lucas Avenue plant. It is an unusual property that abuts a high-speed rail line. They are in the process of demolishing the building, and it should be ready for redevelopment in 2017. This site may be worth looking at it. He asked for advice about what would be suitable on this site. It will be zoned as commercial.
- #15 NRG - large power plant. The consultant team added the site, in case that would help the City. The owner of the site is Dunkirk Power LLC. It's possible that this property would qualify for the NYSDEC Brownfield Cleanup Program. By any current standards the site will not be one the consultant team can address for redevelopment given political, remedial and related issues.

Michael Taylor concluded the meeting by summarizing the next phase of the project, which should be available in early December. The next Steering Committee meeting will take place in early 2017. The goal is to hold an economic development workshop with key federal partners, developers, stakeholders all together in February 2017.

Rebecca Yanus thanked everyone for coming. The meeting adjourned.