

Town of Schodack/Village of Castleton-on-Hudson
Local Waterfront Revitalization Program
Committee Kickoff Meeting Notes

January 8, 2025

7:00 – 9:00 pm

Castleton-on-Hudson Village Hall

Attendees:

LWRPC: Bob Mello (Chair), Suzanne Cecala, Thomas Phillips, Ken Malloy, Glen Camingo, Tom Philips, Michael Wiley, Lissa D'Aquanni

Consultants: Adriana Beltrani, AICP (NPV), Kathy Ember, AICP (P4P), Jim Levy, AICP (P4P)

NYS DOS: Dale Robinson (via Zoom), Lisa Vasilakos (via Zoom)

Members of the Public: Two attendees

1) Introductions and Project Overview

- Planning team introductions, roles, and responsibilities- The PowerPoint presentation is attached.
- Committee Introductions:
 - Suzanne Cecala - President of Castleton -on-Hudson Main Street Association (COHMSA) a 501c3 dedicated to improving downtown economic environment; River access advocate; retired from NYS Office for the Prevention for Domestic Violence in communications division.
 - Thomas Phillips- Retired veterinarian, current botany enthusiast and member of Hudson Taconic Lands (land trust).
 - Ken Maloney- Retired educator, worked with students on engineering and urban design, river access advocate.
 - Glen Camingo- Retired pollution manager at nearby paper plant (Ft Orange), dealt a lot with water quality issues in that role.
 - Michael Wiley- On COHMSA board, structural engineer, Memorial Day parade committee.
 - Bob Mello- LWRP Chair, Construction management and civil engineer for firm in NYC.
 - Lissa D'Aquani- Comp Plan Committee (Village), former Village Board, Just Transition committee, which is extending into brownfield planning, River access advocate, NYS DOS employee on DRI projects.
- LWRP purpose and contents were reviewed.
- Project Schedule/ Task Overview
 - LWRPC generally agreed that the proposed schedule is too aggressive- the group would like to take more time but also keep the momentum going.

- Ms. Beltrani – Agrees that appropriate breaks are important. The schedule is an outline or “to-do” list that can happen on the LWRPC timeline. It is important to set the expectations and timeline for the public outreach process and confirm the WRA boundary early on in the process (the WRA boundary will affect any analysis that is done in the plan). The other plan sections could be worked on a little more slowly to allow time for review.
- Discussion of the role of the WAC within the planning process. The Consultant Team asked for clarification on the role of the WAC versus the LWRP Committee. Ms. D’Aquanni understands the concern that all stakeholders should feel heard and feel involved in the process, but they should not be expected to read all documents or attend every meeting.
 - The LWRPC feels there are 3 tiers of involvement: the Working Group (LWRP Committee), a stakeholder group (referenced as the Waterfront Advisory Committee (WAC)), and the general public. This prompted discussion of the Community Participation Plan elements, and methods of outreach that may be appropriate for this community (see below item 3). *NOTE: The group referenced as the WAC in the meeting is really more of a stakeholder group, as a WAC is a group officially appointed by elected officials to implement an LWRP.*
- The stakeholder group could operate like a focus group, with contacts to a wider audience of stakeholders. As the planning process progresses, specific questions could be asked of the stakeholders creating a direct line of communication to major players.
 - Stakeholder List: Town, County, Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians (Papscahee Island Nature Preserve), Planning Board, Library Director, School District, Main Street business owners, Just Transition project, Complete Streets project, etc.
 - Mr. Mello – It is important to identify people with political backing, entities to grab broader interest, technical support/technical positions, different constituencies (environmental, economic, social, etc.).
 - Mr. Robinson- Would consider the current group to be close to a typical WAC in terms of representation.
 - Following discussion, the group decided that the WAC does not need to be a formal group, but they can be used as a stakeholder focus group.

2) Committee Organization

- 1st Wednesday was confirmed the best date for the LWRPC, the meeting schedule will be determined based on topics and turnaround time. The LWRPC decided to meet next month and may meet every other month at times.
- The use of Microsoft One Drive was discussed, and the One Drive folder was reviewed on the projector screen.

3) Public Outreach

- The purpose of a Community Participation Plan was outlined on a PowerPoint slide and the various methods of outreach were discussed. Flyers or postcards with QR codes can be placed around the Town and Village to link to a survey or an LWRP website. The preference is for the Consultant Team to create/host a website with a link provided from the Town/Village pages.
- For survey/project outreach- The group discussed asking for opinions to fine tune projects already selected as opposed to soliciting more information/new projects. For example, the list of projects will be presented with an opportunity for comment on the projects and a question like “what are we missing?” in case there is another project that hasn’t already been considered.
- Major events: Riverkeeper Sweep (May 3rd), Music in the Park (summer), Memorial Day Parade, Library events, two farmers markets in Town (dates/times to be verified)
- Focus groups - Don’t need to be formal, we can reach out to stakeholders early and invite them into the process, reach out with specific questions as they come up, make phone calls etc.
- Ms. D’Aquanni to provide the Consultant Team access to the LWRP Google Drive.
- Castleton Complete Streets project - Ms. Beltrani to reach out to Verity Engineering for a discussion about the status of the project.
- Just Transitions project - The Consultant Team is scheduled to meet on Tuesday, 1/14.
- LWRPC to add to the stakeholder list.

4) WRA Boundary review

- DOS guidance on WRA Boundary was reviewed.
- DOS noted that the original boundary followed SR 9J and that later a buffer of 2000 feet was added from the road.
- LWRPC does want to take a hard look at the boundary, certain vacant parcels surrounding parklands and Brownfield lands should be incorporated.

- Creeks and tributaries and waterfall areas were discussed. The LWRPC noted that the communities are seeing flooding from sea level rise/tidal action exacerbate erosion further upstream, especially at the Brownfield site.
- There was discussion of Buttermilk Falls far to the east of the WRA - DOS cautioned about needing inland waterway designation if altering WRA too far inland.
- NPV will provide maps that will help to inform LWRPC “homework, ” such as topography, land use, proposed projects, and aerials and the LWRPC will look at the WRA boundary in advance. The discussion will continue next month.

5) Meeting Wrap Up/Next Steps:

- Next meeting confirmed February 5th to maintain momentum:
 - Stakeholder spreadsheet to be filled out by the LWRPC.
 - Draft Community Participation Plan to be provided/discussed.
 - The WRA boundary will be confirmed at the February meeting. DOS will provide guidance regarding the buffer area from the 1995 boundary (and GIS line discrepancies from the municipal boundaries) and regarding the inland waterways.
 - The Consultant Team will coordinate with the other Consultant Teams about projects underway (Just Transition and the Castleton Complete Streets project).