

**Ballston Spa  
Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee  
Visions and Reality  
October 18, 2022**

Present in Person: Scott Burlingame, Bob Bush, John Cromie, Mat Ercoline, Jared Iacolucci, Karen Martell, Peter Martin, Ellen Mottola, Jackie Pelliccia, Marilyn Stephenson Steve Springer, John Behan.

Present on Zoom: Carrie Chapman, Monique Cohen, John Hearn, and Amy Fitzgerald.

Excused: Nafeesa Koslik, Peter Martin, Ellen Mottola.

Observers in Person: Liz Kormos, Frank Rossi, Jr.

Observers on Zoom: Gina

Karen Martell called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Minutes of October 6 were reviewed. John noted the heading should have been "Land Use II" rather than "Social Considerations II." Marilyn moved they be approved as corrected; Jackie seconded; passed.

Karen turned the meeting over to John Cromie, who led the committee through various statements incorporating most all the issues discussed during past meetings. The committee discarded concepts deemed not viable and rated others based on their immediacy. The discussion resulted in the following goals:

**SHORT TERM GOALS**

S-1. The zoning law should be written so its enforcement is generally accepted and will not be ignored, by allowing flexibility with uses and area requirements but require the character and charm of existing buildings and uses not be threatened. For instance, any non-conforming use that can prove its existence for 20 years may be allowed to continue by special permit, with the burden of proof on applicant that use does not adversely affect the neighborhood.

S-2. Develop standards to guide the Planning Board and Building Inspector and guidelines to help property owners, that will protect village streetscapes by requiring conformity in height and size to neighboring buildings, ensuring consistent designs for front facades, requiring new construction to conform to certified energy efficiency standards. Publish guidelines to be followed by the Historic District Commission and inform other property owners of the village.

S-3. Require new development to conform in mass, height, and fenestration with downtown buildings recognizes Ballston Spa should be different from other communities.

S-4. Greenery (trees, shrubs, lawns, flower gardens, etc.) should be protected and encouraged as it helps unify the built environment by pulling together varying architecture and uses in village and projects a comfortable image. Include generous green spaces and trees in site plans

S-5. To integrate affordable rental units throughout the village, and provide infrastructure and services to accommodate migrants from climate damaged locations, allow housing variety in some neighborhoods from mixed use to solely single families, to accommodate accessory living units with sensible restrictions in some residential neighborhoods, especially in larger houses, as a percentage of the primary residence (in preparation for state mandates) and permit home/retail businesses on lower Milton Ave, Bath St., and other area streets

S-6. Airbnbs are a positive use to ensure sufficient accommodations for visitors. Embracing Airbnb's means enforcing noise ordinances.

S-7. To promote pride in maintaining property and discourage exploitation, property maintenance should be codified in Village law and enforced to include appearance and upkeep of occupied and vacant properties, make property owners and tenants responsible for conduct and property maintenance, and establish periodic inspections of rental units to ensure safety, maintenance, elimination of over-crowding, and other conditions that will devalue a building beyond its usefulness.

S-8. Open communication among government, businesses and residents is important for a cohesive community. It is imperative that current electronic tools be used by village government to communicate relating to, infrastructure concerns, bill paying, emergencies, accomplishments and needs, soliciting volunteers, and the like.

S-9. Government should partner with village non-profits to engage new residents and youth and to encourage social and cultural institutions and organizations to offer activities for all in the region.

S-10. In addition to regional marketing, the village should work to realize the full potential of thousands of surrounding residences, a school district with almost 5,000 students and staff, and hundreds of Saratoga County employees and visitors. (Moving the County Complex from the village would adversely impact the village.) Traffic flow and parking sites have to be studied so locals do not avoid downtown as Saratogians do in August.

S-11. Add infrastructure to downtown including maps, signage to parking lots, charging stations, extension of the Zim Smith Trail and other attractions throughout the village. Seek State tourism dollars.

## MEDIUM TERM GOALS

M-1. Create a digitized map of the water system from wells to user laterals and digitize its distribution, including meters that don't need to be read. Increase efficiency of wells, pumps and storage systems, and root out leaks.

M-2. Digitally map the sewer system to eliminate crossovers with the stormwater system and provide developers with accurate capacity estimates.

M-3. Support a sense of community by supporting work-at-home with co-working space, high-speed internet, and charging stations; seeking financial incentives to promote owner-residents in two families; establishing a registry of individuals responsible for apartments; involve developers in community affairs and measure the demand for unconventional homes.

M-4 Build Public bathrooms downtown.

## LONG TERM GOALS

L-1. Embrace “Smart Technology” in government buildings and street lighting, assist residents to harness renewable energy and switch from fossil fuels.

L-2 Development of underused parks (Victory Circle, rear of the swimming pool) and expansion of opportunities for residents and visitors to engage in recreation, shopping, eating, and the like will increase the importance of walkable sidewalks between neighborhoods and central core.

L-3. Construct trails along the creeks may include a foot bridge over the Kayaderosseras tying the North End to the Tedesco Trail and downtown.

## ON-GOING GOALS

O-1. Continue the planning process by periodically reviewing and articulating 1) a simple message that encapsulates a desired community image, 2) a strategic plan that covers village operations and assigns responsibility, including DPW priorities and citizen communication

O-2. The building department should have an inspector available to meet the needs of residents, survey conditions of buildings yearly or less, be knowledgeable about historic architecture, and, once a new zoning law is enacted, enforce it proactively so owners and potential investors will know their investments will be protected.

O-3. The Village will better address challenges if dedicated responsibility can be assigned to specially trained employees relating to issues of management, the spectrum of IT issues, communications and repair of equipment and buildings.

O-4. Keep village buildings on a human scale along entrance routes and be wary of apartment complexes in favor of home ownership to maintain the image

of a friendly, approachable community. Promote the village's older architecture and spruce up the traveled gateways.

O-5. Strategic planning is necessary to exploit the village's location in the Capital Region and proximity to Saratoga Springs by emphasizing its unique shops, eateries, built and natural environments, and chance to explore side-street, home businesses, all of which can be best enjoyed over several days

O-6. Policies should support investors who work within the architectural and business framework of the village.

O-7. Separate water and sewer budgeting completely from other village finances to avoid comingling of resources, fund repairs and improvements in both systems, and work with the County to develop a joint sewer permit application.

O-8. Capital funds should be established and generously funded for four separate purposes: water, sewer, stormwater management, and buildings and grounds.

O-9. Develop a plan that will attack delayed maintenance of village buildings with a major emphasis of repairing the Police/Court Building and DPW garage, firehouses, etc., find more room for the Justice Court, provide toilets and heat to the Village Hall's upper floors, and, if necessary, construct new facilities.

O-10. Complete the digital mapping of the stormwater system begun by Blue Neils and begin a process of repairing faulty basins and regular cleaning, identify streets that need drainage, opportunities to divert stormwater away from the system, and educate the public about keeping debris out of collection basins. Ready the village for the impending DEC audit of the system. Map natural springs and how their waters flow to the creeks and modify the confluence of the Gordon and Kayaderosseras to minimize flooding.

O-11. Develop a formal expansion plan for CBD by creating shopping loops for shoppers to roam. Make room for growth of the retail sector by extending the retail district the length of Front and Washington Streets (open up the underpass at Iron Spring Park), down Bath Street and up Malta Ave. to Pine St. Select areas

for longer term parking. Help finance improvements, such as street lighting in an expanded downtown, with a Downtown Business District.

O-12. Without sacrificing aesthetics, ensure local laws will not restrict residents from producing their own electric power.

After the discussion, it was determined Behan Associates would have a draft Comprehensive Master Plan ready for review in a month. The committee determined it would meet to review the plan the week of November 14, preferable Thursday, November 17, depending on room availability. Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted  
John Cromie, Sec.