

**Ballston Spa
Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee
December 16, 2021**

Present in Person: Scott Burlingame, Carrie Chapman, Monique Cohen, John Cromie, Mathew Ercoline, Buddy Glastetter, Karen Martell, Ellen Mottola, Jacqueline Pelliccia, and Marilyn Stephenson

By Zoom: Josh Frederick

Excused: John Hearn, Jared Iacolucci, Naffeesa Koslik, and Jon Tacy.

Chair Karen Martell called the meeting to order to order at 7:02 PM.

Minutes of the December 2 meeting were reviewed. Motion made by Buddy Glastetter to approve; seconded by Carrie Chapman; passed.

Karen welcomed new members of the committee, Carrie Chapman, Monique Cohen, Mathew Ercoline, Jackie Pellicca and Marilyn Stephenson. She noted the purpose of the meeting is to determine the reasons the condition of governmental buildings are as they are and come up with possible solutions and guidelines for the future. Members took turns to express their views:

1. It is basically a budget issue. If maintenance had been done it wouldn't have taken much money at one time. Now the village has to spend a lot of money.

2. have to first know where we are, what is needed. There should be strategic plan that is carried out over a 5, 10, to 15 year period.

3, There doesn't seem there ever was a plan or the village knew where it was.

4, How can the village ask for money if it doesn't what is to be done? How realistic is it to be proactive if there are no resources? A fund should be created in the budget to be carried over from year to year. For instance, if acquiring land to build a new DPW, how do we get from here to there without having the money?

5. When working on buildings, it may be more cost effective to have DPW do the work they are primarily responsible for and hire contractors do work they are trained in.

6. The problem may have begun with the village acquiring buildings as they became available without assessing costs of maintenance, unique repairs (old fabric not compatible with modern methods) and fitting village functions in spaces not designed for them. It may be better to bond construction of appropriate easily maintained space and sell existing structures to help pay for it. Is the cost of delayed maintenance about the same as the cost of bonding interest?

7. The deterioration of water system structures should be handled by water charge and those moneys and sewer fees should be segregated from other village finances. Recreate a separate water/sewer department from DPW would help in that.

8. Cannot make suggestions on incomplete information, and the committee does not have sufficient information. An assessment is necessary.

9. Retrofit existing buildings to meet village needs based on architectural studies and designs. Keep the historic buildings.

10. Responsibility for caring for the built assets should be assigned to specific person(s), who can develop a planned approach to maintenance and renovation. Hire the right people to do a correct job.

11. When department heads present their proposed budgets to the board is when the funding for maintenance and improvements would naturally come before the board. Without operational plans in place, maintenance items are passed over until they become crisis issues.

12. To move to proactive planning for maintenance requires is a major shift in the culture of the village. Departments have been operating as they are for a long time. It will require a sustained effort, not unlike turning a ship.

13. The option of using other facilities, such as the former Pressroom Building for Village Offices or Emergency Corp for the police station, should be looked at.

14. A yearly review of buildings should be done as a matter of course.

15. A person can be designated- perhaps building inspector- to be a go-to person on maintenance issues and to initiate action. Add to building inspector's job description and hours.

16. Being reactive rather than proactive and depending on DPW may have been the cause for leaves being picked up on December 15, which is unacceptable and places added strain on the storm water system.

17. A search of other NYS villages can be done to find villages that don't have the problem of delayed maintenance and deterioration and find out how they have managed their operations. It will save us from reinventing the wheel. Goshen is a possibility. The factor of relative wealth will have to be considered.

18. A position of village administrator would ensure someone is in charge to make sure the village is running, everyone is moving in the same direction, and operations are being carried out according to plans. At present the Mayor is the only person in a position to do this. Given the Mayor's salary, it is not fair to expect that to be part of the elected official's job.

19. Because it has a separate revenue stream, there should be a separate water and sewer department to be responsible for the maintenance of those properties.

It was noted the suggestions made tonight are very difficult to bring together for the committee to decide what to do. Flip charts would have helped. It was suggested to use Google Share.

The next two meetings will be devoted to how changes in climate and information technology will inform future decision making relating to topics to be discussed in succeeding meetings. A discussion ensued about whether or not IT and climate change will affect the 10-to-15-year period which is the committee's focus. The general feeling that it they are already affecting us. It was noted, if past performance means anything, this Master Plan may not be revised for 30 years. A study was noted that suggests electrical power will be very expensive in another ten years, which will affect how people live.

The Comprehensive Master Plan should work on two levels. One is to provide relatively short-term suggestions, but also to act a guide for planning boards and other decision makers well into the future.

Karen mentioned that three more people have expressed an interest in being on the committee. They live in the east-side neighborhood. She felt neighborhood representation is important. Several areas of the village are home to one member. The fairground area has no one. The east side would have 9 residents if the three came on board. The decision was to wait and see if any of the committee or others can find members from underrepresented areas.

Meeting adjourned, 8:09. Next meeting Thursday, January 6, 2022 at 7 PM: "Uncontrolled Forces" presenter, Bruce Piasecki.

John Cromie, Secretary