

Meeting Notes

Clinton Square DRI Local Planning Committee Meeting #1

Albany Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Date/Time: October 30, 2018 / 6:30pm
Place: Palace Theatre, 19 Clinton Avenue
Attendees: Mayor Kathy Sheehan, Co-Chair
Linda MacFarlane, Co-Chair
Mark Aronowitz
John Curtin
Jill Delaney
Al Desalvo
Steve Longo
Kelly Kimbrough
Mohamed Hemmid
Tracy Metzger
Sonya del Peral
Dominick Pernomo
Sarah Reginelli
Brenda Robinson
Joseph Scott
Georgette Steffens

Sarah Crowell, New York State (NYS) Department of State (DOS)
Darren Scott, NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR)
Michael Yevoli, NYS Empire State Development (ESD)
Steve Kearney, Stantec
Phil Schaeffing, Stantec

The first Clinton Square Local Planning Committee meeting took place from 6:30-8:30pm on October 30, 2018 at the Palace Theatre in Albany. The meeting's primary purpose was to introduce the DRI process and LPC responsibilities to the new committee members, review the successful Clinton Square application, and discuss the public engagement plan with the committee. Steve Kearney (SK) from Stantec presented the attached slideshow.

Welcome 6:30

- Linda MacFarlane, LPC co-chair, provided a welcome to committee members

Introductions 6:35

- LPC committee members introduced themselves, followed by New York State agency team members

DRI Overview 6:40

- Sarah Crowell (SC) explained LPC Code of Conduct
 - LPC is expected to act in the public interest through a transparent process

- It is important for LPC members to disclose any conflicts of interest when discussing projects. Conflicts are expected, however, since LPC members were chosen based on their involvement in the district
- SK introduced consultant team and roles
- SK explained DRI program, planning process, report structure, and timeline

Clinton Square Overview and Background 7:05

- Mayor Sheehan, LPC co-chair, reviewed key features of Albany's successful DRI application
 - New ideas are important but DRI is focused on implementable projects. Ideas now can become projects in the future.
- Phil Schaeffing (Stantec) reviewed potential projects identified in DRI application
- SK introduced public engagement strategy
 - Strategy will build on previous outreach and engagement that developed application
 - **ACTION:** SK polled LPC about changing future meeting times. Majority agreed by show of hands for LPC to meet at 5:30pm going forward.

LPC Discussion 7:30

1. Review and discuss Vision and Goals
 - Tracy M.: 'gateway' implies you arrive here then go somewhere else. What about 'destination'?
 - Brenda R.: add 'inclusion' to vision
 - Jobs not mentioned.
 - Al D: don't want to get too detailed in vision
 - Sarah R: application includes priorities that mention inclusivity and workforce development
 - Mayor: based on previous DRI experience, do goals/priorities become lens through which projects are evaluated?
 - SK: Yes, they become one way projects are measured. We'll create matrix with projects and goals to identify which goals are met by each project.
 - Al D: Clinton Square is both a destination and a gateway.
 - SK: will ask community for their ideas next week to tweak vision statement, then LPC will confirm at next meeting.
2. Open call for proposals / Project Profile Form
 - Open call for projects (SK): Stantec will email open call request to LPC members in next few days; it's a detailed form for public to propose additional projects. We need to identify the due date and we're suggesting December 7 (week before preliminary project list due).
 - Sarah R: we had 28 potential projects in application, we're aware of at least 5 more that have come up since then. While \$9.7M is a wonderful sum of money, it's not enough to do everything. 28 projects in application already more than \$9.7M DRI funds available. Projects will get prioritized that are most shovel-ready and ready to start now. Need to be clear that projects in the DRI plan we're creating are not guaranteed funding either, State makes final funding decisions mid-2019.
 - Dominick P: once a project is funded, when are checks cut?
 - SC: once awards are announced, projects are assigned to a state agency to work with project sponsor and develop contract. Private sector projects typically get reimbursed at end of project consistent with ESD policy. All DRI funding is reimbursement.
 - JC: are there any disqualifying items (e.g. having received State funding before, etc)

- SC: DRI funding is flexible, but there are project costs that are not eligible (see 'Project Types' slide). Projects requesting all state funding not looked at favorably. Demonstrated need is important - DRI funding is meant to be "but for" dollars.
 - JC: CFA application requires 80% match, does DRI count for match?
 - Mike Y (ESD): no hard line, look at each project individually
 - Darren S (HCR): DRI counts as leverage
 - SR: there are also other state agency funding sources available, so DRI projects may be channeled toward those
3. Identification of opportunities and issues
- Mayor: need to make sure we have roving mic's for public meeting so that everyone can be heard. Also need to be careful using acronyms that can make process seem complicated.
 - Tracy M: should make sure we engage with local colleges like UA, Russell Sage, etc.
 - Kelly K: should reach out to all businesses in the study area
 - Georgette S: how will project form be publicized?
 - SK: will finalize due date and have printed copies at public meeting next week and available on website that will be up soon.
 - Matt A: will project form go out to the 28 projects in the application and the 5 new projects SR mentioned?
 - Ashley M: Capitalize Albany has 1000+ email list and form will be emailed to that, as well as posted on project website and Capitalize Albany website.
 - Jill D: ok for LPC to spread to our networks?
 - SK: yes, via email is good to spread the word
 - John C. Regarding the 'key dates' slide, what do dates in gray box mean?
 - SK: those are milestones set by NYS. The preliminary project list can still change. Will ask subset of LPC to review downtown profile (existing conditions). Goals refined into set of strategies by LPC or working groups. Project profiles are critical piece of DRI.
 - JC: what is difference between preliminary project list and project profiles? SK: Preliminary list generated from application and open call for projects; more detailed information required for project profiles. SC: it's a process of first expanding to identify new projects, then contracting back down to focus on projects with real potential.
 - John C: there are several high-profile projects in application. Has there been any outreach to engage corporate entities to co-sponsor projects? Like bike share here.
 - SK: we haven't seen that in previous DRI but it's an interesting idea. Would be a leveraged funding source.
 - Mayor: we expect that the project form would identify any partners; LPC role isn't to find partners for projects.
 - SK: consultant team will try to make project profiles as strong as possible, but we can only do so much. Projects need to be shovel-ready with data required for project profile. Good ideas can still be recorded in plan but wouldn't be eligible for DRI funding.

Public Comment Period 8:10

- Regarding housing and affordable housing, do you have a plan for what you will do for the existing residents in the neighborhoods?
 - Mayor: Clinton Ave project is using low income housing tax credits (LIHTC) to rehab housing for affordable rents. Other projects have converted office space for housing so we don't displace residents. That will be a lens to evaluate projects.

- SK: team member Marc Norman will help project evaluation, looking at providing a ladder of affordability
- It's difficult to find a grocery store on N. Pearl, has there been any discussion of this in DRI process?
 - SK: food access is a core component of DRI but groceries are difficult from market perspective. Team member Barretto Bay Strategies will help look at food access, team member Larisa Ortiz will consider from retail perspective.
 - AI D: maybe not so "pie in the sky" anymore. More apartments have been built downtown and nearby (including Habitat for Humanity). A small-format store could be possible.
- My college planning class will be doing a needs survey in Sheridan Hollow and Arbor Hill, how can our work be part of DRI?
 - SK: take my business card and talk to Ashley at Capitalize Albany. The more ways we can hear from the community the better.

Next steps

- Set committee meeting/public engagement dates
- Confirm vision, goals and strategies
 - SK: through public meeting next week
- Community engagement strategy
 - SK: will confirm with community so it works for them

Next meeting dates

- The first public meeting will take place on November 7, 2018 at the Palace Theatre.
- The second LPC meeting is scheduled for November 29, 2018. The meeting location may change due to a scheduling conflict at the Palace Theatre.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

Please send questions, comments or corrections regarding the meeting notes to Phil Schaeffing (philip.schaeffing@stantec.com).

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