

Village Board Meeting
Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing

October 24, 2022

Board Present:

Mayor Chris Ivers
Deputy Mayor Katarina Woods
Trustee Marlene Hamann-Whitmore
Trustee Eddie Lee
Trustee Keith Walters

Other Village Representatives Present:

Aprile S. Mack, Clerk/Treasurer
Matt Horn, MRB Consultant

Steering Committee Members:

Leah Fletcher
David Woods
Gary Mix
Gretchen Crane

Public Present:

Larry & Karen Kelley
Russ & Liz Morreale
Anne Hasler
Kitty Hayes
Laura Neus
Steve & Susan Specher
Donald (Gene) & Marilyn Curley
Tim Rainis
Cesar Aguilar
Margaret Lee, Livingston County News

Holly Hall
Amy Braun
Cynthia Sattora
Dan Hayes
Carol Robinson
Kurt Christiansen
Kurt Fletcher
Molly O'Mara Smith
Anna Kowalchuk

Ashley Ames
Kathy Deffenbaugh
Judy Davis
Angelle Farabell
Rudi Muller
Elizabeth Conrad
Bettina DeBell
Max Yarowsky
Nicole Sylvester

Mayor Ivers opened the meeting at 6pm. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Deputy Mayor Woods moved to open the Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing at 6:02pm. Trustee Walters seconded the motion and the motion passed with ayes from all.

Mayor Ivers thanked all for coming and turned the hearing over to Matt Horn, Consultant with MRB Group. Matt explained that a Comprehensive Plan is a fifteen-to-twenty-year document that serves as a guide to the Village in decision-making and resource allocation. It is not intended to be a list of projects but a tool to support local leaders in moving the community forward. Its foundation is a mission, vision, and guiding commitments that provide community stakeholders with a clear picture of the Village's intended path. The Board has also decided that the Geneseo Active Transportation plan as prepared for Livingston County and the Genesee Transportation Council and published in February 2020 will be added to the Plan as an appendix.

In the late summer of 2021, the Village Board seated a steering committee of residents and stakeholders to guide the development of an updated comprehensive plan. The steering committee met approximately once a month to discuss the planning framework, evaluate data and public feedback to formulate recommendations for the plan. The current draft Plan reflects several hours of research, conversation, debate, and analysis by steering committee members.

The draft document is grounded in data. In order to forecast where Geneseo should head, the steering committee first needed to understand where the Village is currently. The steering committee and consultant team reviewed and analyzed data related to demographics, market conditions, and other factors related to Geneseo's current conditions. This data was used to identify the gaps between where we are today and where we want to be as a community fifteen years into the future.

The steering committee also used public engagement to shape the draft plan which included a community survey which yielded over 350 responses and two public forums. The steering committee and consultants realized that there were over sampling in some areas of the survey and under

sampling in other areas, therefore they hand delivered surveys to areas of the Village where they knew residents with limited economic means lived.

The public forums were extremely useful. Items discussed during those forums included traffic flow on Route 20A, what Main Street was at one time, and the impact COVID has had on Main Street businesses. Walkability and the active transportation plan were discussed. Student and Community relationships were discussed. Existing housing conditions and the need for affordable housing were brought up.

Socioeconomic and Demographic Conditions are as follows:

1. Since 2010, the Village has seen an approximately 6% decrease in population.
2. Households by 1% and families have decreased by 5% over the last 12 years.
3. Average household size declined by 4% from 2010 to 2022 but is projected to increase to 2.75 in 2027.
4. Over the last ten years, there has been a 6% increase in housing units, with little change in owner occupied units or rental units, and a sharp increase in vacancy.
5. Government employment (including SUNY Geneseo and Livingston County) is the number one employer in Geneseo. (For data purposes this number is determined by the number of paychecks cut.) Retail is the second and food service/accommodation being the third.
6. The US Census defines families as a group of two or more people (one of whom is the householder) who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together. More than 1 in 3 families in Geneseo earn below \$35,000 per year.
7. Single mothers in Geneseo struggle more compared to Livingston County and the United States.
8. Housing in the Village is generally affordable as the median household income exceeds the calculated threshold and 47.8% of Village residents can afford a median-priced home without high-burden costs.

However, the Village has limited land availability, but sparse housing is creating affordability challenges particularly for rentals. The Village's most economically challenged residents need safe, accessible pedestrian and other non-vehicular transportation connections to employment and shopping. To attract and retain healthy households, Village amenities like parks and public spaces must be maintained and expanded.

Consultant Horn explained that the mission of the plan is to "protect what we have, while being purposeful in what we change and how we grow." The Key Initiatives of the plan are to:

#1 – Implement the Recommendations of the Active Transportation Plan.

As stated earlier, the Village Board is adding the Active Transportation Plan to the Comprehensive Plan document as an appendix.

#2 – Improve Communications between the Village and its Residents & Stakeholders.

This initiative includes updating the Village's website (already in process), forming a Communications Subcommittee to identify what types of communication would be best for Village residents and form resident academies to expose residents to aspects of Village operations, including planning, budget, and public works.

#3 – Enhance Parks and Public Spaces (mental health would fall under this initiative but it was noted that the Village Board cannot do much when it comes to mental health.)

This initiative is already in the works as a committee has been formed to discuss and implement upgrades at Highland Park. One-way mental health fits into this initiative is by giving people a place to go to walk. This initiative also includes facilitating enhancements at Kelsey Field and making improvements to the Farmers Market.

#4 – Improve Housing and Enhance Livability.

This initiative states that the Village should form a Housing Subcommittee to facilitate plan implementation along with identifying and inventorying existing

programs that can facilitate ownership by first time homebuyers. The Village should also identify ways to connect first time homebuyers with existing and future resources.

The plan also discusses a Future Land Use Plan. The Future Land Use Plan is a tool for use in creating zoning and development regulations, and for guiding future growth. The plan contemplates five-character areas:

1. Village Center/Urban
2. Corridor/Suburban
3. Traditional Neighborhood Residential
4. Open Space/Conservation
5. Institutional

Matt asked if there were any questions or comments.

Kurt Fletcher stated that the plan mentions creating “A vibrant cultural hub, featuring performing and visual arts, tourism, locally-driven events, and other economically productive activity.” However, that is not reflected in the plan. Matt stated that the Village is this already and it should be preserved, but the plan does not speak to adding any new or additional initiatives to make this possible.

Max Yarowsky asked to what extent does this plan fit into the plans of the Town of Geneseo and Livingston County. Matt explained that this plan is independent of those two entities. However, Matt explained that per requirements, the Plan will be sent to the County Planning Department for County Planning Board review. Matt anticipates that the County Planning Board will say that the Plan aligns with that of the County, but Initiatives #1 and #4 as outlined in the Plan are initiatives that the County helped with.

Larry Kelley stated that he was able to review the draft plan and the transportation plan but wonders about the status of a roundabout at the Crossett Road/Groveland Road/Temple Hill Street/Route 20A intersection. Matt stated that the Village Board or David Woods (as Village Planning Board Chair) may have more information about that. The Active Transportation has been added to the Comprehensive Plan as an appendix, but the Plan itself only addresses the need for the Village to work with the Genesee Transportation Council and the NYS Department of Transportation to improve that intersection with two alternatives shown or some other alternative.

Mr. Kelley also stated that with the development that occurred on the west side of Crossett Road, many homes on the street have substandard water pressure and have had to spend money to add pressure enhancing systems in their homes. Some are not able to shower upstairs if water is being run downstairs. Matt stated that he will make a note of this and has also added drainage concerns in Indian Meadows, Oak Street and Second Street to his notes.

Kathy Deffenbaugh stated that she lives in Indian Meadows. On the east side of Haley Avenue, the farmer has cleared all the farmland. She realizes that this is in the Town but wonders what effect that will have on Indian Meadows and if this plan has addressed it. She also wondered if the Village ever thought about annexing any of those outlining properties for tax purposes. Matt stated that the plan does not specifically address development outside of the Village, but that she is correct that any development that happens outside of the Village in the Town does affect the Village. He stated that this will be noted especially for the Livingston County Planning Board’s review.

He continued by stating that bringing up annexation is an interesting observation. However, annexation is something that is really challenging for cities and villages but does make sense particularly with respect to what I call the “free rider problem” where the village makes all the investments in infrastructure and parks, but everyone gets to use them, but only people inside the Village pay.

Donald Curley stated that he resides on Groveland Road and had to install a water pressure enhancing system that was pricey. He also asked if any consideration has been taken into account on

how to get pedestrians across the crosswalks that have been provided in the area of Crossett Road/Groveland Road/Temple Hill Street/Route 20A. He is aware that on Mary Jemison Drive that runs through SUNY Geneseo they have flashing signals at the crosswalk that assist on getting pedestrians across the street safely. Matt stated that the plan does not specifically address it, but he believes that the Active Transportation plan does. He also noted that as a Key Initiative to the Plan, the Village should form an Active Transportation Plan sub-committee that will be charged with overseeing implementation of the plan.

Holly Hall stated that she is one of those pedestrians that try to cross Route 20A, but traffic just flies by paying no attention to the pedestrians in the crosswalk.

Carol Robinson asked if the sub-committee has been formed yet for “Key Initiative #1: Implement the recommendations of the Active Transportation Plan” and how soon can the residents expect action or is funding for those improvements going to be a hurdle. She is very concerned about pedestrian and vehicle safety. Matt explained that the Village Board will first need to adopt the Comprehensive Plan and then appoint the sub-committee. Matt continued by explaining that he has spoken with Mayor Ivers about available grants and how the Village is now in such a better position to receive grant funding because of an updated Comprehensive Plan and other initiatives the Village is working on. Ms. Robinson commented that then funding is the biggest hurdle. Matt stated that he would say that funding and getting to the best solution are the biggest hurdles. The Steering Committee chose not to pick a specific alternative or solution because they believe that much further discussion needs to take place.

Marilyn Curley stated that she often uses the crosswalks on Route 20A, but yesterday and today she was almost hit. Matt stated that a distinction of this road is that it is a regional road used by many (some not even from here) and some people just do not understand the rules of a crosswalk. Matt believes that it is critical that some type of signalization/visibility be put in place to slow people down.

Molly O’Mara Smith stated that she did not understand the photographic recommendation as presented in the PowerPoint for the Route 20A, Crossett Road, Groveland Road, Temple Hill Street intersection. Matt explained that Alternative #1 (top of page in PowerPoint) gets rid of the feeder road (triangle piece) on Groveland Road which would add additional greenspace between Groveland Road and Crossett Road along with additional crosswalks and bike lanes. Alternative #2 is the construction of a roundabout.

Cesar Aguilar stated that by adding the existing crosswalk at Crossett Road, he believes it made the intersection more dangerous than it already was and he tells his family to cross near Lattimore Physically Therapy further east down from Groveland Road as that seems to be safer. He asked if something could be done immediately to alleviate this danger. Matt thanked Mr. Aguilar for the suggestion.

Nicole Sylvester stated that she walks and crosses on the crosswalks all the time, however, she has seen multiple people including the police not stop for people crossing. She asked how anyone is expected to stop if the police do not even stop. She also stated that if you do stop you are going to get hit from behind. She continued by stating that this subject has been discussed for years and believes that it is just a matter of time before there is a serious pedestrian accident in this area. She understands that the Village is trying to fix the problem, but she believes action must be taken.

Molly O’Mara Smith asked how many accidents happened at this intersection. Matt stated that that number may be in the Active Transportation plan but was not sure.

Kurt Christiansen commented that with utility prices going up and other communities getting electric for their communities in different ways, was this in the plan especially since it is difficult for Senior Citizens to pay those higher prices and the plan mentioned the number of mothers with children and no spouse this community has. Kurt also stated that he would like to see the availability of other providers in Geneseo. Matt stated that this specifically is not in the plan but that he would note it.

Kurt continued by stating that the flooding on Oak Street/Second Street is a big concern and one of the reasons why he moved from Oak Street. He hopes that real efforts are being made to resolve the flooding issues. He also realizes that water runoff is a big issue throughout the entire community and asked where this fit into the Comprehensive Plan. Matt stated that the Steering Committee did discuss this, and he will make another note of it.

Karen Kelley stated that this Plan as she understands it is a “Vision” and not cast in concrete. But wanted to confirm that each item (initiative) would be planned, revisited and further opportunity given for public input. Matt thanked Ms. Kelley for stating that. He continued by stating that the Comprehensive Plan is built as a decision-making guide. Public input/feedback was given throughout the development of the plan and the feedback given tonight will assist the Board in moving forward. Future public engagement will be offered once solutions have been agreed upon by the Board. Ms. Kelley stated that she appreciates all the efforts that have gone into this plan and loves that some items in the Plan have already been put into motion.

Hearing no further questions or comments, Matt thanked all for attending and encouraged everyone to keep an eye out for future meetings.

Mayor Ivers also thanked everyone for attending and wanted everyone to know that of the four key initiatives the Board is already meeting to enhance Highland Park (part of Key Initiative #3), improving the website (part of Key Initiative # 2), and decided to append the Active Transportation Plan to the Comprehensive Plan (part of Key Initiative #1).

Mayor Ivers continued by thanking the Steering Committee for their work on the Plan and the insane amount of volunteer hours they put into developing the Plan as it has been presented. As a new Board/Team, Mayor Ivers stated that he hopes that projects discussed previously and currently can be accomplished.

Hearing no further questions or comments, Deputy Mayor Woods moved to close the meeting and public hearing at 7:09pm. Trustee Walters seconded the motion and the motion passed with ayes from all.

Aprile S. Mack, Clerk/Treasurer