

A Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Oxford was held at 7:00 pm on November 18, 2015 at the Oxford Memorial Library - Fort Hill Park, Oxford, NY 13830.

Call to order at 7:03 p.m.

Present were: Mayor Terry Stark, Trustee Dale Leach, Trustee John Todaro, Anna Stark, Ann Scorza, Holly Finch, Nathaniel Emerson, Carl Koenig, Gene Rood, Town Supervisor Lawrence Wilcox, David Emerson, Jeannie Petersen, Brit Basinger and John Guariglia from Saratoga Associates, Clerk/Treasurer Shelly Marks

The Village of Oxford wanted to come up with a vision for the future. We tried to get a consultant to help in a number of areas. We reviewed several consultants and Supervisor Wilcox and Mayor Stark decided to pick Saratoga Associates (Brit Basinger and John Guariglia). They are a 50 year old firm and they deal with New York State as far as waterfront, green and blue ways and street scapes. They can contact the state for a grant application for the NYS Main Street Grant (we were denied in the past; however, we did finally get a grant a couple years ago.)

A Gap Analysis was done that would/could be done in the Village. We, as a community, will "pick" the project/spot we are interested in pursuing. A few options are the Dollar General area, the blank space between the "Bank Building" and the Laundromat and how to take advantage of the Chenango River (greenery, parks, etc). A couple of options to take into consideration are:

Median household income and population

Median income survey

Retail gap analysis

Identify underutilized parcels or buildings

Concentrate

Focusing on the Village Center

The Village has three (3) green areas and most villages/towns have only one

Building and maintaining character on and along Route 12

Opportunities to move forward along the WWTP

LaFayette Park has a strong opportunity for improvement. The Village has a lot of history and we have to preserve the building and protect and build upon them. We want to create a welcoming invitation to our community on both ends (north & south).

SOUTH-Street Scapes, utilities, school properties and the river-connect in a safe and inviting way for the public and safe access to open space with a pedestrian bridge across South Canal Street. A waterfront park along the river would add to the community.

EAST-historic greens, street scapes, school and Village green and fire department. Old rail buildings, Navy Island Block, feed store. Support, preserve and promote the buildings to strengthen our community, Economic Development. There is a pretty large piece of land at the feed store.

Phase I-LaFayette Park, improve sidewalks, add streetlights, bike lanes. There is a lot of pavement out there-maybe lengthen the park. Great structure in all the buildings, they are historic and we have a lot working in our favor.

Recommend-sidewalk improvements, lights, benches, splash strips. Crosswalk improvements (color print to add vitality), street trees along south side, expand the park. Creating safe zones (bump outs) by changing the material for the cross walks. This creates a zone where pedestrians are safer. Trustee Leach inquired about the loss of parking spaces around the park and if anyone has complained. Mayor Stark said we will have to find alternate parking.

FORT HILL PARK-MERCHANT STREET area has a lot of asphalt, should feel like pedestrian space due to the school being right there.

Catalytic projects-(Fourth idea)-Navy Island Block, LaFayette Park, Washington & State Street, Bank Building space. 1) Make the space look better 2) Expand in a better way-improve downtown setting 3) New building-how would that be placed

Continue streetscape improvements, additional street trees and landscape feature at the corners, keep existing building, improve parking and circulation. Spend money on property that the village already owns and not "deal" with other owners (would need easement, etc). Perennial garden (paid for by donations) at the corner of Dollar General and Taylor Street. Add on to the parking at Dollar General and put the parking in the rear rather than on the side.

NAVY ISLAND BLOCK BUILDING-Offices and/or residential on second floor, store fronts on the ground level.

CANAL STREET CONCEPT-continue water front/public space concept. Pedestrian connection. Connection from school area to South Canal Street.

VILLAGE OFFICES & PARKING-angled parking would give us approx 40 spaces, create a one-way system for short-term use or a through lot.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME SURVEY-NYS Main Street Program. This program is meant to update private property owners. RCAP is a 3rd party survey-expand to wider survey for the income survey. The Village could be eligible for a million dollar grant and a no-interest loan if we can do a better job with the survey.

Change is always hard for those that have been in The Village forever. Losing parking spaces will be tough-people always want to park right up front. People should see what they want and go with it.

Bring entertainment back (stop focusing on buying and selling), have concerts on the park and bring people back downtown. Have fun things for the family to do. If we build it, we will have to have a programmer that brings programs to the area. We can't just build it, we have to have plans for the area. We need something to entice people to come in and set up shop if we develop new areas (Navy Island Block). We need a building owner that is willing to create the area for beautification.

It's nice to have someone come to Oxford with a "fresh" eye and new ideas. It's tough for residents to come up with ideas as they see the same thing daily and it's hard to think of new ideas and improvements. We have a nice river and bringing a river walk with play area near the river would be nice. Adding benches along the sidewalk and/or river bank are inviting also. If there is a sidewalk, we can add some benches and lighting and people are instantly attracted.

Biggest concern seems to be the loss of parking around the Village. Some people just need a quick spot to park to run in and fill a prescription, etc.

Connecting Canal Street to the school properties-extend the street on South Washington Ave all the way down to the connecting pedestrian bridge and add street lights and benches.

LaFayette Park is the Focal point of the Village-concern is still the loss of parking spaces around the park and where to make up those spaces. People seem to have “issues” with having to walk too far from where they park to do their business.

We need to emphasize to the business owners the importance of keeping their buildings looking nice. Some of the buildings aren't looking that great and they are in need of maintenance. Saratoga Associates mentioned that there was a Village that started investing money in their area and then the store owners started working on their buildings.

An expanded park seems to be a big "like" by everyone in attendance.

We need to figure out how to bring more people (180-190 Dairy farmers were in Oxford and now it is down to only 24) to the Village/Town of Oxford as there was in the past.

Supervisor Wilcox says it appears to be a matter of making priorities. He likes LaFayette Park the way it is and doesn't agree with making the park wider but he hears that from his milk truck friends that complain. There are a lot of large trucks that drive around LaFayette Park and you can see what a tight fit it is when you're sitting in the Town and Village Offices. Eliminating the parking around LaFayette Park may make for an even tighter fit around the park and in those areas. Maybe if we came up with a place for the trucks to turn off before they have to go through the park that would help.

Most features of the walk-ability of the Village are good. We want to keep the Village quaint. Navy Island Block now has five (5) empty store lots out of 6 (six). We should focus on the quality of the school and have people want to come and live in Oxford and support the Village.

Work on the things that people want and will support. The Mayor encourages everyone to think about these things over the winter, talk to your neighbors and get ideas out there.

Reconstruction of the railroad has gone out to bid per Supervisor Wilcox. This will bring something back to the Village and Town of Oxford.

Saratoga Associates will summarize these issues and they will come up with a plan for us.

Meeting adjourned the meeting at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shelly W. Marks
Clerk/Treasurer