

TOWN OF OVID COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Steering Committee MEETING #3
Notes- July 27, 2016

Committee Members Present (7): Rod Winkleback, William Dalrymple, Pam Armitage, Tobias Hertzler, Joe Borst, John Hubbard, Paul Engineri; MRB Group/EDR Team: Connie Sowards, Diana Smith, Emily Palumbos

Notes from May meeting were reviewed and accepted unanimously.

Review of July 13th Town Board presentation: Committee members commented that the presentation was very informational, was well-received and has begun to generate some public interest in the project and process. Articles were published in local papers, which will help spread the word and possibly generate more involvement.

MRB Group will provide more of the project flyers for committee members to distribute to residents, at the next meeting.

There was discussion about Sheldrake Point, and the need to ensure good representation of this area (neighborhood) either at a unique focus group meeting, or through strong participation in the Lake Resident Focus Group. It was noted that 30-40 residents live in that area, where congestion and encroachments are an issue. The area also includes the public boat launch, a contested issue since there was once a sign that it was only for Ovid residents. It is known that people come from all over to use. Some residents try to be vigilantes and record license plates to confirm residency.

It was noted that since many residents of the lake are seasonal, we should remain sensitive to the scheduling of focus groups to ensure participation is possible.

Focus Groups:

MRB Group provided each committee member a worksheet for gathering the contact information for suggested participants for focus groups. Each suggestion can be marked with the appropriate focus groups, so Connie can organize the information in her Tracking spreadsheet.

Rod stated that he has spoken to several teens about being involved in the town comprehensive plan. In order to ensure that graduating seniors who are leaving for college can remain connected, the committee will explore alternative (holiday break) dates, as well as consider "virtual" meetings online or group emails to allow participation remotely.

Plan / logistics for the Focus Groups: The committee agreed that MRB Group will conduct the focus group meetings on behalf of the committee, although committee members are encouraged to participate. Key questions will be provided to drive the discussion, and try to get to the heart of the actual issue.

For the next meeting, committee members will bring their list of suggested focus group participants. MRB Group will bring a draft invitation letter, to be personally addressed to each invitee from the committee, which specifies the level of commitment involved: meetings will be kept to an hour and a half, maximum, and likely only one meeting will be scheduled – but no more than two will take place. The target timeframe for focus groups is September and October, possibly extending into November to accommodate special needs.

Communications: Emails received through the website portal will be kept in a notebook for quick committee review, if needed. Website communications received to date numbered five, mostly indicating interest or asking for more representation of town businesses. One offered an opinion against any kind of land use regulations. One provided a community participation resource guide. Communications reviewed were from: Eric Holmberg (2 emails) , Skip Stamburg, Steve Zielinski, and Kenny Fellers.

STEPS Organization: Diana reached out to STEPS as directed by the Committee. The immediate response received from Lynne indicated they would be happy to be part of the inter-jurisdictional group. Diana also requested a copy of the visioning exercise report which, though a Village exercise, could still be a resource utilized by the Committee.

Diana indicated that other potential resources also exist on the STEPS website (www.SenecaSTEPS.org), and suggested that committee members take a look and help decipher which of them may be relevant to Ovid. For example, the website contains two separate listings of South Seneca businesses and organizations. John Hubbard will review those lists and look for good Ovid contacts to consider for Focus Groups.

Bridget Heenan: The Committee received a communication from Wayne Cooperative Extension Outreach Coordinator to promote consideration of New York State’s “Complete Streets” program for inclusion in the planning process. Diana suggested that she be invited to a future meeting to present her ideas as an additional resource.

Discussion about next steps: MRB Group shared an outline which showed a view of the planning process from a “task list” perspective. Diana referred to the July 13th “Town Board Meeting” presentation which suggested approximate dates for progress benchmarks, which may be helpful to committee members when discussing the coming steps. The steps and general benchmark dates noted were:

Community assessment: NOW

Defining the character of the community: Now - October

Community Engagement: September - November

Visioning: Spring

Drafting: Summer

Legal (SEQR) / County Review / Adoption: Fall of 2017

Responsibility: John Hubbard asked how much each committee member should be involved with the Data collection. Diana said, “As much as each member is willing,” but noted that MRB Group will provide demographics, maps, and helpful resources. MRB Group will also

begin to gather data on community infrastructure. Pat Nicoletta will need to contact the Village for much of that information.

It was clarified that Committee members would choose together the best utilization of potential focus group members, and invite them by letter, rather than verbally or by other means. General discussions about issues of interest or concern with community members are **greatly encouraged**, however, since public opinion can be gathered very effectively in this manner and shared with the committee.

There was a discussion about the risk of inadvertently forming a quorum of public board members in focus groups. That will be avoided in establishment of the groups.

It was agreed that business owners who do not live in Ovid are still investors in the community, and would not be excluded from participation in the focus groups.

NEXT MEETING: August 24th, 6pm, at the Fire House.

HOMEWORK: Each committee member was asked to bring back suggested names and addresses of possible focus group participants.