

July 30, 2004

MEETING MINUTES

SUBJECT: TONAWANDA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Comprehensive Plan Board (CPB) Meeting
Meeting Date: June 29, 2004

ATTENDANCE: Edward Umiker; George Melrose; Robert Dimmig; Jo Nasoff; Robert Mayer; Drew Reilly; Ellen Parker

I. Introduction: In request for information on issues or news about the Town, the following was mentioned:

- In a recent *Buffalo News* article, the Town of Tonawanda was listed as third fastest population decline in the region. The CPB noted that the reason was possibly due to changing family structure.
- The North Youngmann Commerce Center project is moving forward.
- Definity Health is being built on 9 acres at Colvin Woods. They will employ 400 employees initially, and another 350 new jobs are expected. Ciminelli is getting better than expected demand, with a better mix of office and flex than they expected. A total of 30 acres is available at Colvin Woods.
- Danforth is planning an expansion to the west of the rail line near Definity site.
- There is no available data on vacancy among existing industrial and commercial properties in Town.
- NOCO spent \$1 million in rail improvements on their property to enable better multi-modal shipping of their product.

II. Status of Project: WD reported on the status of the project. There were comments on the drafts provided, and it was noted that the remaining inventory sections will be forthcoming (NOTE: all inventory sections have been distributed at this time). Any CPB member with additional comments or revisions should forward them to Ellen Parker at WD.

III. Special Investigation Topics: A preliminary outline of ideas for the special investigation topics was distributed (see attached). The Committee went over the ideas for the identified areas:

Transportation

- Include a listing of problem intersections—Belmont at Delaware Road and at Sheridan should be included.
- Sheridan Drive—traffic signal synchronization is a problem
- East – west routes through Town are limited—Brighton, Sheridan and Kenmore are the major routes. Harrison is the only street south of Sheridan that cuts through Town. The “Harrison Hump” is a problem, with the change in grade over the rail corridor.
- Public transit for industrial parks is underserved.
- Sidewalks exist throughout most of the Town, but need to make sure they are maintained and cleared. Sidewalk ordinance exists.
- Are sidewalks needed at industrial sites?
- Senior transportation is an issue (transportation to medical appointments, etc.)

Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization

- A benefit is that housing in the Town is generally very well maintained.
- Most houses are of good quality, and are able to be expanded.

- Include information on new housing being built by Community Development.
- Kenmore has been doing streetscape, revitalization of business district.
- Given demographics, there is going to be a significant turnover in housing over the next decade—how do you plan for the turnover, and what are the implications for the Town. (e.g. if more young families buy the homes, what are the impacts on the school district?)
- Lincoln Park is in transition—increasing problems, particularly with absentee landlord-owned homes. (inadequate screening of tenants)
- Encourage homeownership—what about the possibility of “zero-lot line” condos (duplexes with each unit independently owned).
- Identify opportunities to connect neighborhoods—crosswalks, traffic calming, etc.
- Identify major opportunities to link neighborhoods.
- Cars parked on both sides of roads—safety issue. Town Board needs 70% of residents in favor of one-side parking, and often they are resistant (inconvenience).

Zoning

- Two commercial districts are not enough for the Town—need to be more specific.
- Sheridan Drive, and to a lesser degree, Delaware Avenue, is a mish-mash of zoning districts, with awkward situations/ conflicts in areas. Should be looked at objectively.
- Non-conforming uses
- There should be no non-zoned areas.
- Special Use permit process should be addresses.
- Building inspector has more authority than is common—difficult issue
- Signage
- Aesthetics
- Utility lines along Niagara Falls Boulevard are unsightly.
- Is there a need for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) district? It would enable a future mixed-use development. Need specific standards in place.

Miscellaneous

- Linear infrastructure corridors (pipelines, transmission lines, etc.) should be protected for potential future technology or use (e.g. fiber optic corridors)

IV. Next Steps: The CPB provided excellent input and ideas, which are being incorporated into our recommendations. A special **CPB meeting** has been scheduled for **Tuesday, August 3, 2004** at 3:00 p.m. at the Sheridan Parkside Community Center. The CPB is an important means for us to get input from a variety of perspectives. All members are urged to attend, or to send a representative to the next meeting. This meeting is necessary to ensure that the Plan is taking the right direction and addresses priority issues.

Respectively submitted,

WENDEL DUCHSCHERER

Ellen L. Parker, AICP