

City of Olean

**Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
Council Chambers, Olean Municipal Building**

Thursday, February 15, 2007

7:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Mayor David Carucci

Dave McCoy, TVGA

Daniel Riker, TVGA

John Sayegh, Catt. Empire Zone

Mary George, City of Olean, CD Program Coordinator

Daniel DeRose, City of Olean Attorney

Jack Hart, Olean Urban Renewal Agency Attorney

George Fillgrove, Representing Senator Young

Raymond Wangelin, City of Olean Council President

John Padlo, City of Olean Alderman, Ward 7

Eric Wohlers, Catt. County Health Department

Mark Sabella, NeighborWorks Home Resources

Bob Groele, Henkel

Ed Giardini

Philip Smith, City of Olean Planning Board

Linda Witte, Catt. County Legislature

Jim Lapey, Catt. County Board of Health

Tom Biel, NYSDEC

Mark Sorgi, NYSDOT

Don Benson, Benson Construction

Staff: Keri Kerper, City of Olean Stenographer

Media: Kathy Kellogg, Buffalo News

I. Welcome/Introductions

John Sayegh called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and thanked everyone for taking time to attend this important meeting. Introductions were then made by representatives of the Agencies attending.

Mayor Carucci explained that he has been involved in this project since taking office and advised that the City, in securing funding under this State program, is now ready to move forward with this project. He thanked everyone in attendance for participating in the project.

Mr. Sayegh explained that the Steering Committee includes individuals representing community based organizations, area companies, local, county and state government and citizens in the area. He advised that the committee has been formed to oversee this process and develop a set of goals and objectives for redevelopment and revitalization of this study area.

Mr. Sayegh welcomed Mr. Fillgrove of Senator Young's office and noted that the Senator was instrumental in helping to secure the BOA grant funds as well as funding for the former Felmont site assessment project.

Mr. Sayegh referred the members to the BOA Area Study Map (500 acres). He pointed out the area to be addressed and explained that this will be a comprehensive planning approach on how to revitalize and promote the currently vacant, abandoned and underutilized properties.

Mr. Sayegh advised that the City has contracted with TVGA Consultants, an experienced consulting firm who has already assisted with environmental site assessment work on the former Felmont site. Mr. Sayegh indicated that Daniel Riker and Dave McCoy of TVGA are here tonight to explain the history of the geographic area and what the preliminary analysis will include.

II. Overview of BOA Program

Mr. Riker explained that the BOA is a new program that focuses on providing eligible communities with assistance to complete revitalization plans and implementation strategies for areas affected by brownfield sites.

Mr. Riker began reviewing a PowerPoint presentation (see attached) and explained the overall goals of the BOA Program including the program steps for the pre-nomination and nomination studies (purpose and outcomes) and strategies and/or site assessments.

III. Description of Project Area

Mr. McCoy referred to the BOA Area Study boundaries and explained that the map was generated in 2004 by aerial photography for the inclusion in the original BOA application. Mr. McCoy identified different landmarks (natural and manmade) that were used to delineate the proposed study area.

Mr. Padlo questioned if there were any residential properties from Avenue A & B, West Fall Road or Homer Street extension included in the boundary area. Mr. McCoy responded yes; however the boundaries shown are fluid and based on Steering Committee input, and properties can be added or removed. Mr. McCoy commented that land uses may change over time and at the time the boundaries were identified, it made sense to include the limited number of residential areas. Mr. Padlo responded that he has talked with many area residents and they are in favor of keeping those areas residential.

Mr. McCoy referred back to the PowerPoint presentation and explained the history of the former SOCONY-Vacuum Oil Refinery, Acme Oil Works, Felmont Oil Site and the Agway's Former Urea Prill Tower.

IV. Description of Olean BOA Project

In response to a question from Mark Sorgi, Mr. Sayegh explained that the BOA grant was awarded to the City/CEZ 1½ years ago in the amount of \$67,000 to conduct the study. Mr. Sayegh explained that the State contracts were signed only two weeks ago and City Officials have since met with representatives from the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Department of State to further outline the program's objectives and clarify participants' roles.

Mr. McCoy advised that once Step I is complete, additional funding will become available and then specific areas of sites can then be addressed. Mr. McCoy indicated that the Department of State will help market those properties to be addressed with the help of the Empire State Development Corporation.

Mr. Sayegh explained that with regard to the site assessment on the former Felmont parcels, conducted under the State's Environmental Restoration Program, in recent discussions with Exxon Mobil, they have agreed to help with remediation efforts. Mr. Sayegh advised that a draft remediation plan has been prepared with different clean-up options that could range from \$6-7 million to \$45 million depending on contamination and which cleaning method that best suits future use of the land. He indicated that in the last three months he has been contacted by three serious developers who are familiar with the State's brownfield programs, having used them successfully in the past. Mr. Sayegh informed the members that substantial tax credits are available to private developers under these programs. He commented that this project is encouraging because it is a manageable project in terms of cost and the area is prime for redevelopment.

In response to a question, Mr. Sayegh advised that the land is zoned Industrial.

Mr. Padlo explained that there are infrastructure problems near the Two Mile Creek and deteriorated sewer lines that residents in the West Fall Road area are suffering from, and he expressed concern that any future development could create a larger problem. Mr. Sayegh advised that these problem areas could be identified through this planning process. Mr. Sayegh advised that any issues/concerns thought to be part of this challenge should be put on a list of things to address.

Mr. McCoy explained that infrastructure issues are talked about in the City's Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) 2005-2025 and this is a great tool when applying for grants because the needs are already officially identified by the community. Ms. George referred the members to Part 4 of the CDP, the Implementation Plan included in the packet of information provided to the committee. She advised that this part of the Plan recommends a series of action steps that allow the City to move forward and achieve the goals and objectives agreed upon as a result of the visioning process. Ms. George advised that the CDP outlines specific economic strategies and actions for the development of this northwest corridor.

In response to Mr. Hart's question, Mr. Sayegh advised that the role of the Steering Committee is to work with the consultant and staff to achieve the goals that were identified in the original grant application and to be the "voice" of the process. Mr. Sayegh added that public hearings will be held in order to get input from the public, and noted all Steering Committee meetings are open to the public.

In response to a question, Mr. Sayegh advised that this Step I portion of this comprehensive planning process will take approximately nine months to one year.

Mr. Padlo questioned the possibility of connecting part of the recreation trail to this area and Ms. George indicated that this idea could be part of the community visioning process.

Mr. Benson questioned whether private landowners that own potentially environmentally challenged land could participate and Mr. Riker advised that they could. Mr. Benson asked if a private landowner did participate, would they incur liability? Tom Biel responded that he is not aware of this possibility but he would research the issue. Mr. Sayegh commented that Lou Magnano sent maps of properties that he owns so that they may be included. Mr. Riker commented that the landowner would not incur any more liability than what already exists.

Mr. Riker explained there is a Three Step program, and site assessments that can be done on properties owned by the City or *at the request* of private landowners during the third step of the program. He added that the State has a new program for private developers to foster redevelopment of properties with substantial tax credits and additional incentives to cover costs incurred (up to 22% tax credits).

Mr. Riker reiterated that the BOA is a new program and the City of Olean is one of the first municipalities to take advantage of this opportunity. He added that they have met with the Department of State Officials who have advised that the program, in its infancy, is designed to be flexible and meet the municipality's needs.

In response to City Attorney DeRose's question, Mr. McCoy advised that a brownfield may be defined as underutilized land, it is historically industrial and sometimes the contamination is only perceived. City Attorney DeRose asked if there is a statutory definition and Mr. McCoy responded no, that the concept and definition of "brownfields" is meant to be somewhat expansive.

V. Next Steps

Mr. Sayegh suggested the committee bring ideas to the next meeting in order to begin the process to address this area in a comprehensive fashion. Mr. McCoy stressed that efforts will be focused on the properties that can be developed first.

In response to Mr. Padlo's question, Mr. McCoy advised that this is a project that will happen in phases, not in mass. Mr. Riker reiterated that strategic sites should first be identified and then a decision made on which sites to immediately address.

VI. Future Meetings

Mr. Riker advised at the next meeting discussions should begin on addressing issues covered in the proposed scope of work and boundaries.

The next Steering Committee Meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, April 19, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers of the Olean Municipal Building.**

The Community Participation Meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, March 15, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers of the Olean Municipal Building.**

Mrs. Witte suggested that members share ideas through e-mail, similar to what occurred during the Comprehensive Development Plan process. Ms. George advised that staff will set up a group e-mail. Mrs. Witte commented that the CDP addressed a lot of issues and the City is making progress. Mr. Riker advised that Richard Swist of Swist Government Consulting Associates, Inc. (who acted as consultant to the City for the CDP) will be working with the committee on the project, also.

Mayor Carucci thanked the members for their input and interest in this project. He then declared the meeting closed at 8:09 p.m., as there were no further comments from the members.