

Dunkirk Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Local Planning Committee Meeting #4 Summary

August 22, 2023. 4:00-6:30 PM | Clarion Hotel, Bayside Ballroom | 30 Lake Shore Dr E., Dunkirk, NY 14048

Attendees

Local Planning Committee

- Honorable Wilfred Rosas, Mayor
- Mike Metzger, WNY Regional Economic Development Council
- Liz Cardona, Dunkirk Housing Authority
- Rebecca Ruiz, Chautauqua Center
- Nathan Aldrich, Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth
- Gina Paradis, Chautauqua County Land Bank
- Dan Beckley, Advanced Production Group, LLC
- Rebecca Wurster, Chautauqua County Dept. of Planning & Development
- Thomas Panasci, Pizza Village
- Miriam Lugo-Alfaro, Dunkirk High School
- Frank Torain, Open Door Church of God in Christ
- Virginia Harper, Resident
- Ellen Luczkowiak, Dunkirk Community Chamber of Commerce
- Beth Starks, Jamestown Community College

City of Dunkirk

- Vince DeJoy, Planning and Development
- EJ Hayes, Planning and Development

State Partners

- Ben Bidell, NYS Department of State (DOS)
- Lenny Skrill, NYS Homes & Community Renewal (HCR)
- Erin Corraro, Empire State Development (ESD)
- Mo Sumbundu, Governor's Office

Consultant Team

- WSP
- Highland Planning
- Prospect Hill Consulting

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome & Introductions

- Mayor Rosas (LPC Co-chair) called the meeting to order and thanked the LPC for their dedication throughout the process. Mike Metzger, LPC Co-chair, read the code of conduct and reminded LPC members to recuse themselves from any votes or discussions on projects that they may have a real or perceived interest in to prevent any potential conflicts of interest. LPC members, representatives of the City of Dunkirk, and representatives of the State then introduced themselves, and LPC members indicate which projects they are recused from. The following recusals are on record:

- Liz Cardona recused herself from the Dunkirk Housing Authority (DHA)-sponsored project.
- Beth Starks recused herself from the Jamestown Community College (JCC)-sponsored project.
- Gina Paradis recused herself from the Ehlers Building project and the Coburn Block project.
- Miriam Lugo-Alfaro recused herself from the JCC-sponsored project.
- Mike Metzger recused himself from the Fredonia Technology Incubator Wet Labs project.

2. LPC Meetings and Planning Process

- Stephanie Camay (WSP/DRI Consultant) noted the meeting is a working committee meeting and that members of the public will be able to make comments at the end of the meeting. The meeting will include a 3-minute presentation on each proposed project from applicants. Katie O’Sullivan (WSP/DRI consultant) provided project applicants with a sheet detailing the presentation order.
- Stephanie provided an update on the status of the six-month DRI process to develop a Strategic Investment Plan that will be submitted to the Department of State for review. She then recapped the agenda and decision points from the previous meeting (LPC Meeting #3) and summarized the agenda for today’s meeting (LPC Meeting #4) and the forthcoming LPC Meeting #5 on September 26.

3. Engagement Updates

- Katie presented highlights of the results of the public survey, which was open from July 8 to August 15 in English and Spanish. There were 292 responses; 74% of respondents were Dunkirk residents and 21% identified as Hispanic/Latino. The LPC will receive the full survey results prior to their individual project evaluations.
- Katie shared opportunities for public feedback on the proposed DRI projects. There is a [Project Feedback Form on the website](#) that will be available from August 22 to September 19. There will also be in-person events to collect public feedback on the projects including:
 - Pop-up event at Back to School Bash, August 28
 - Public workshop #2, September 14, 5pm-7pm at the Clarion Hotel
 - Dunkirk High School senior class engagement, September 14

4. DRI Strategies and Evaluation Criteria

- Katie presented the Dunkirk DRI revitalization strategies for the LPC’s review. The strategies were unchanged from the previous LPC meeting as no comments were received. The LPC voted to confirm the revitalization strategies as final. The vision, goals, and strategies have now all been finalized.
- Katie presented the local evaluation criteria to the LPC, based on feedback gathered from the last LPC meeting. The LPC voted to confirm them as final, with the addition of the following criterion:
 - “Synergy: The project interacts with other DRI or non-DRI projects to create a combined effect that is greater than the sum of the individual projects.”

5. Project Proposals

- Katie provided an overview of the DRI projects and their locations within the DRI boundary. At this stage in the DRI process, there are 24 projects under consideration totaling over \$27 million in requested DRI funds. Among the 29 initial project submissions, two were excluded at the previous meeting due to being located outside the DRI boundary or the project sponsor lacking site control, and four projects have been grouped into the Small Project Fund as example projects for potential future funding consideration.
- Project applicants were invited to give a brief presentation (up to three minutes) on their project. The LPC documented questions and comments for project applicants on a handout that the consultant team collected to synthesize feedback and follow up with applicants to address LPC questions.
- Vince Dejoy (City of Dunkirk) noted that the City is working to find new project sponsors for the two projects proposed by Savarino Companies, LLC: Redevelop Lake Shore National Savings Bank and

Redevelop the Dunkirk Macaroni Building. The company publicly announced on August 22 that it will be ceasing operations. In addition, Vince noted that Nostra Development adjusted their DRI request for the Construct Central Ave Mixed Use Development from \$2,500,000 to \$4,500,000.

6. Next Steps

- Stephanie provided an overview of the project evaluation timeline. Before the next LPC Meeting (#5 on September 26), LPC members will review the consultants' project evaluations and complete their own evaluations using the online form. The consultant team will also follow up with projects sponsors to answer any additional questions from the LPC.
- Stephanie presented upcoming events, which include the following:
 - Pop-up event at Back to School Bash, August 28
 - Dunkirk High School senior class engagement, September 14
 - Public Workshop #2, September 14, 5pm-7pm at the Clarion Hotel
 - LPC Meeting #5, September 26
 - LPC Meeting #6, October 24

7. Public Comment

- Prior to opening up the meeting to public comment, Stephanie asked if the LPC members had any final questions or comments.
 - Rebecca Wurster (Chautauqua County Dept. of Planning & Development) noted a common question she had for many DRI applicants: If a project is not fully funded, will it move forward?
 - Nathan Aldrich (Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth) commented that applicants should be made aware of project requirements and the DRI timeline. Ben Bidell (Department of State) replied that project sponsors can reach out to for clarification on requirements such as Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) procurement goals and decarbonization requirements, and the relevant State agencies can also provide sample grant agreements upon request.
- Stephanie opened the floor to public comment. The following comment was made:
 - A member of the public asked whether a project had been submitted for Brooks Memorial Hospital once it closes. Stephanie responded that no DRI application has been submitted for the hospital, but it may qualify for other grant opportunities. Mayor Rosas responded that Brooks Memorial Hospital is still a fully functioning hospital, but if the hospital is ever relocated, the City will be in charge of its redevelopment.

Other Information
