

Orleans County Sub-Regional Forum

Wednesday, October 21, 2015

Batavia City Hall

Moderator: Jayme Thomann, Senior Planner, G/FLRPC

Note Taker: Razy Kased, Planner, G/FLRPC

Attendees:

Jim Bensley, Orleans County Planning

Jim Whipple, Orleans County IDA

Brownfields

- Orleans County has applied three times to the EPA discovery funds, odds don't seem in Orleans County favor to receive funding because of a lack of density of sites, e.g. a total amount or even a cluster of sites to be of interest.
- Contemplating to apply for funding to work on BOAs in County.

Economic Development

- Have an infrastructure plan is available in PDF in addition to the comprehensive plans
- One of the biggest issues County at times deals with is the lack of updated inventory data of what is being grown in the County to better connect with buyers in the market
- There has been a resurgence in agricultural in Orleans County recently and working with companies to identify key areas of development e.g. business park
- As part of IDA, identified the municipalities that had infrastructure, only a handful of municipalities have necessary infrastructure that allows for shovel ready project, e.g. Medina
- Light industrial is main focus along with ethanol plant.
- Animal waste and other recycle food goes back to into animal feed and energy.

Downtown

- Village of Albion, Holley and Medina, Lyndonville are focus areas
- A section in Comp plan has focus on Downtown.
- Discussion on rehabilitation efforts of store fronts in Medina (Specific report?)
Current program they have been working on is identifying store fronts that are vacant and finding a new business to occupy. They have conducted research on rental rates to provide most competitive pricing to attract new businesses as well as a grant that can provide \$10,000 -\$15,000 for basic repairs and updates. They mentioned that this was one of few plans in (Not sure at which level, National/State etc...) that exist in encouraging new businesses to relocate into empty store fronts (Historical significance?)
- A project/plan was cited, release was circa 2003, title - Comprehensive Economic Development in Downtown?
- A short discussion on efforts of Medina Historic Society attempts in getting Cinema/Theatre and receiving a (CFA application awarded ~\$8,000).
- Difficulties in old schools, e.g. Holley/Medina asbestos in school

- Medina has an active downtown group, Holley somewhat, Albion not so much.

Tourism and Recreation

- Last action plan 1996, last one complete, nothing since.
- Focus is on sports fishing, in oak orchard river, Lake Ontario, around Carlton. Point Breeze area where the river empties in the harbor;
- Must keep harbor dredged, been an issue since Core of Engineers stopped dredging recreational harbors.
- There needs to be dredging every 5 years for recreational boaters. Some work has been done to the major restaurant, working with a branded hotel in Medina. There is a shortage of bed and breakfast. Issue many corporate recruitments restrict stay in B&B. No chain in County.
- Sports fishing is big driver, IDA is involved because of the corporate stuff. Talking to Baxter, Brunner other corporations and they have to stay in Brockport/Batavia
- Only a few rooms available in Medina/Village Albion/Town Gaines.
- They have a fledgling Wine Trail (Schwenk), they have a Meadery (make alcohol from Honey) in Downtown Medina and a company that grows hops.
- Trying to get more usage out Erie Canal, not too much boat traffic currently.
- Closing lift bridge near Murray at 6pm, has potential negative impact.
- Most lift bridges on canal are needed for ag-transportation across canal.

Waterfronts

- Applied for CFA for a waterfront, LWRP related.
- Lake level concerns have costal erosion issues in Orleans County.
- Planning on attending a CEHA workshop in Orleans County in October, discussion on flood plain erosion areas in Orleans County.
- Flooding not a major issue, not a substantial amount of claims per municipality, most flooding near creek. They may have a planner for management facilities to manage the water, some flooding if heavy rain experienced.

Environmental/Water Resources

- Black creek small portion of County. No other planning documents for resources other than the basin report back in 2005.
- Lack human infrastructure/staff specific to sewer/water infrastructure meeting/tasks, a lack of resources on soil/water so the work needed to be suspended.
- Water quality in watershed, long-term sustainability issue. It is not a need for drinking purpose, but perhaps water quality issues.
- Have difficulty in finding residents to serve on various boards, municipalities looking to consolidate boards for lack of volunteers.
- Manure contamination in water wells. Pumping out manure, big storm that contaminated shallow water wells, forced Yates to receive emergency funding to tie in residents to existing water lines. In general not a problem.
- Contamination in the soils in Johnson near Lyndonville, agriculture runoff and sprayer.

Natural Resources/Energy

- No other plans than identified in Wildlife refuge plan.

Land Use

- Lack of resources, expertise, time/staff for Code Enforcements.
- There are many Comprehensive plans across county, not sure if in digital form. Town/Village of Albion. Barre updated their own plan, agricultural and, Holley, Murray, Clarendon, Kendall all have Comp plans, not so much detail relative to urban areas. Gaines, has a proposal in October. Don't have many maps.
- Looking to do a Land Use plan, focus on agricultural. Have not been able to obtain agricultural and markets plan funding, looking to apply/complete in 2016
- Also, conducting an LWRP on the Erie Canal through the County focus on the Villages and the Towns involved as well. Two main plans for Land Use (KFC? Plan)
- The canal infrastructure is important, currently looking to submit an application to repurpose a couple of lanes along the parkway (through UPWP-GTC), to conduct a study to close a couple of lanes and to reduce maintenance. It isn't going to expand to Niagara Falls etc... ends currently at agricultural location.
- Not interested in privatization of parkway
- All about rail spurs in County, putting more spurs back in. Not enough interest in filling gap currently between Orleans and Monroe County rail.
- Mainly bulk commodities for transportation. Helena fertilizer company looking to install new spur, ethanol plant help somewhat on the rail lines, but local suppliers couldn't keep up with need to get the ethanol plant to the rail. Local farmers have met some need and trucking to ethanol. Issue getting soybeans and corn, apple orchards over the bridge etc.
- Bridges across the Canal are an issue

Other Plans

- Not planning on updating All-Hazard Mitigation, they conducted a first round of all-hazard mitigation but were not able to have any funding to implement any of those plans suggestions.
- They are not interested in updating because they wouldn't have funds to implement. Former Director and Emergency met previously to work with SEMO and had a plan but no funding of implementation. What's the next step? What was the benefit? They had to move on.