

-VILLAGE OF MENANDS: STUDY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

Meeting 1 Summary Memorandum

Project Title: Village of Menands – Land Use Regulations and Zoning Update

Summary Writer: Krithika Prabhakaran

Issue Date: May 13, 2021

Study Advisory Committee (SAC) Attendees:

Megan Grenier - Village of Menands Mayor
Aileen Nicoll – Deputy Mayor/Village Trustee
Lyle Darmetko – Village Code Enforcement Officer
Nancy & Jerry Ruppert – Village Residents
Michael Williams – Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA)
Kate Maynard – Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC)
Sean Maguire – Town of Colonie Planning and Economic Department
Audrey Burneson – NYS Department of Transportation Region 1 Planning
Susan Olsen - NYS Department of Transportation Region 1 Planning
Sandy Misiewicz – Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC)
Rima Shamieh - Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC)
Paul Cummings – Chazen, A LaBella Company
Krithika Prabhakaran - Chazen, A LaBella Company

Meeting Notes

- SAC member introductions were made.
- Chazen provided an overview of SAC roles and responsibilities:
 - Project ambassadors for the public
 - Helping refine the public outreach process
 - Reviewing draft materials and providing feedback
- A few SAC members discussed how they were pleased with the other planning work Chazen has done in other communities and wanted to use similar language to enhance the Menands community.
- CDTC stated that they run three bus routes through Menands, they recently opened the Blue Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service, and they are excited to take advantage of synergies between high frequency, high-quality transit and transit-friendly zoning.

- The Town of Colonie Planning & Economic Development representative stated that though the Town does not have any direct control over land use in Menands, they do manage the Town Industrial Development Agency (IDA) and the Town Local Development Corporation (LDC), which support projects in the Village of Menands.
- Chazen reviewed the scope of work.
 - Chazen spoke about the existing zoning and existing land use in Menands. Unclear guidelines and comments from the community have shown a real need for this update.
 - Chazen reviewed the targeted goals for the land use and zoning update and the future land use vision
 - Clear and implementable
 - Easily administered
 - Aligned with community needs
 - Chazen provided an overview of the self-guided study area field visit, for the SAC to assess key sites throughout the Village with the guidance of an online survey to record results. Chazen reviewed the self-guided study area tour packet, which includes a site map identifying 8 key sites in each zoning district, a land use packet, site summary descriptions, and an online survey questionnaire to gather opinions on current zoning, potential of current sites, and current issues and opportunities.
 - CDTC suggested including an additional question in the survey that asks how people feel about current conditions on the ground and any issues/challenges they foresee in terms of making this land use and zoning update and vision a reality. Chazen stated that they will include an additional survey question to ensure this is addressed.
 - A SAC member asked if Chazen had considered water/floodplains when looking at zoning/development potential. Chazen replied that natural constraints were considered.
 - Chazen reviewed the public engagement plan and its various components, emphasizing that public engagement and outreach are crucial elements of the Plan.
 - The SAC suggested facilitating conversations with the development community to discuss their timelines, interests in development, incentives that would attract developers, and ways they can help to further the future vision of the Village.
 - Chazen asked the SAC to generate a list and provide names and contacts of individuals, community interest groups, businesses, investors/developers, and organizations to set up the next phase of the project, which consists of stakeholder interviews and focus groups.
 - Chazen stated that the focus groups will tentatively consist of niche groups, civic and nonprofit organizations, restaurants and business owners, while the stakeholders will consist of property owners, engaged residents on different Village boards, and interested developers.
 - The SAC discussed how the Village could provide better outreach within the community and have more people attend the public workshops, focus groups, and stakeholder interview sessions. The ideas mentioned are as follows:
 - Possible outreach events during the Village Summer concert series that starts on July 6th (runs for 6 weeks) and culminates with the Village Picnic on Aug 18th.

- Advertising the project in the Village newsletter/publication and post upcoming events.
- Possible outreach through flyers/announcements during Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings at the Menands School District.
- Possible outreach through flyers/newsletters/bulletins at religious institutions in and around Menands.
- Chazen provided the SAC with an overview of the content and instructions for the Village Webmaster, in order to format the project webpage on the Village website. Chazen also spoke about translation service efforts and the multi-lingual public outreach components of the project.
 - SAC members discussed how visuals would be an enticing element to add to the dedicated project website. Chazen agreed and stated that they will be incorporating visuals into the website.
 - Chazen discussed their collaboration with the translation company, All Language Translations, and how they would translate all project website content to make it as accessible and user-friendly as possible.
 - Chazen stated that they coordinated with the Menands School District to identify the following languages that are most commonly translated among their students and families: Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, Spanish, French, and Arabic.
 - The Committee stated that they would like to allow people who speak other languages, even if they are not the main six languages the project is focusing outreach on, to provide their input in other languages. Chazen will manage and coordinate translation services accordingly.
 - Chazen stated they would work with the Village webmaster to create a project portion on the Village's website that will include a project description summary in six different languages (other than English), as well as a comment box to allow the public to provide comments in their language of choice. This webpage will also include meeting flyers for upcoming project-related workshops and events.
- The SAC discussed committee members' desired outcomes for the project:
 - Clear planning guidelines to ensure interested developers and investors know what or what not to build and where.
 - Inclusive outreach strategy, such that the Menands' diverse community is able to contribute to the project in a meaningful manner.
 - Provide digestible content, transparent communication, and accessible information.
- Chazen reviewed previous plan summaries and provided the SAC with a document that summarized relevant plans and studies done for Menands and the surrounding region. The document includes hyperlinks, so that members are easily directed to the source document.
- Chazen spoke about proposing form-based code (FBC) along the Broadway corridor and employing standard zoning regulations for other areas of the Village.
 - The SAC emphasized the need to create a set of regulations that are enforceable, implementable, administered appropriately, and, most importantly, supported by the community. A few members requested that Chazen provide successful examples of FBC regulations to get an idea of how the regulations were flexible and tailored to a select community.

- To address this request, Chazen will suggest reducing the number of zoning districts to provide more clarity and better reflect existing land uses on the ground; however, Chazen stated that they will rely on the SAC's feedback through the online survey to see if that is the consensus.
- Chazen stated that they would provide the SAC with examples of form-based code that they have worked on and/or helped adopt.
- Chazen stated that the next SAC meeting will be tentatively scheduled for the week of 6/7/21. At this meeting, Chazen will review FBC examples, the results of the self-guided study area tour, and the names/contact and public outreach area list from the SAC. Chazen will then schedule focus groups and stakeholder interviews and provide outlines for the first public workshop.
- Chazen discussed their next steps after the meeting:
 - Draft and distribute SAC Meeting 1 Summary by 5/13/21
 - E-mail SAC homework assignments by 5/10/21
 - Finalize the All Language Translations contract
 - Revise & launch the project webpage
 - Analyze survey results from the self-guided study area visits
 - Schedule an interim TAC Meeting 2 (if needed)
 - Develop and share Preliminary Public Engagement Materials and Execute Select Action Items (e.g. Stakeholder Engagement, Public Workshop/Campaign)
 - Finalize and send an invite for 2nd SAC Meeting, scheduled tentatively for the week of 6/7/21