



Town of Newfield Planning Board

Meeting Minutes
May 26, 2021

Opening

The regular meeting of the Town of Newfield Planning Board was called to order by Chairman Leo Tidd at 7:00 PM. The meeting was held virtually via ZOOM.

Present

Planning Board: Chairman Leo Tidd, Randy Brown, Justin Chandler, Jim Haustein, Brenda Lapp; Town Board: Mike Allinger, Joanne James, Christine Laughlin, Heather McCarty; Town Clerk: Karen Kenerson; Other (Zoom Display Name Indicated): “377942” (Jim and Karin Eisenberg), Anthea Fernandes, Catherine Shea, Donyan Shadions, Joleen, Joshua Coombs, Julia Jaffe, Kitty, Luke Slomba, Mark A. Savary, Patricia Meenen, Rufina, Seth Nichols, Sue and Jim Chaffee, Thomas Szebenyi, Tyler Kutu.

Newfield Hamlet Revitalization Plan (NEWHARP)/Cornell Design Connect

Introduction

As part of a planned Newfield Hamlet Revitalization Plan, the Town of Newfield Planning Board worked with the Cornell Design Connect to being an initial investigation to develop a plan to encourage a walkable, attractive, and vital downtown Hamlet.

Planning Board Chairman Leo Tidd discussed the function of the Planning Board; that is, a volunteer organization that engages in comprehensive planning to improve the community. The Hamlet revitalization plan is consistent with objectives of the Town Comprehensive Plan. Design Connect is a student-run organization that provides design and planning services to communities. Their work allows communities such as Newfield to get a “jump start” on certain planning and grant opportunities.

Cornell Design Connect Team Presentation

Several members of the Cornell Connect Design team discussed the PowerPoint presentation which has been prepared by Design Connect to summarize their work for a conceptual plan for the Hamlet.

A few salient points:

- Design Connect received approximately 110 responses to their survey.



- The Design Connect team spoke to 10 stakeholders directly.
- Though some key “voices” were missed, Design Connect was able to develop a good foundation for a conceptual plan for the Hamlet.
- The Newfield Library stood out as being the most important element within the Hamlet for a large portion of survey and stakeholder discussion responses.
- Main Street is designed to accommodate much higher speeds than the present 30 MPH speed limit and for significantly more traffic than it receives.
- Reducing the width of Main Street will allow for accommodation of pedestrians and parking and will aid to slow traffic.

Discussion and Questions

- Donyan Shadions stated that there is a lot of loud and fast traffic, including motorcycles, which may limit utilization of a seating area adjacent to the Covered Bridge Market due to the unpleasant nature of the noise. Speed bumps on Shaffer Road were mentioned by Donyan Shadions as a possible solution. The Planning Board is concerned that speed bumps may discourage Hamlet visitors and activity but is open to considering this option. Design Connect believes that grade changes or material changes are alternatives to speed bumps which would encourage traffic to slow down. Narrowing Main Street would also help.
- Randy Brown agreed with Donyan Shadions regarding motorcycle traffic and indicated that almost all vehicles coming from the direction of the School come to almost a complete stop to make a right turn onto Shaffer but then speed up.
- Randy Brown asked if the Planning Board should hire some outside party to assist with grant writing. Tyler Kutty (Cornell Design Connect) indicated he had experience with grant writing. Alternatively, Cornell Cooperative Extension could assist in getting the Planning Board started on grant writing. Empire State Development is another potential source of support.
- Mark A. Sarvany asked if there was a plan for the seating and stairs behind the Covered Bridge Market which goes down to the creek. Design Connect proposes that this space could be used to improve pedestrian walkways rather than be redesigned.
- Donyan Shadions liked the slide presentation and would like a copy of the presentation material and recording.



- Patricia Meenen also enjoyed the presentation. About 20 years ago Patricia was involved with trying to obtain similar grants for Newfield; however, there was resistance by the Town Board and store owners at that time. Patricia indicated it would be nice to have a student on board for work going forward to mature the Hamlet plan. Two inquiries were made by Patricia: (1) Plan for Parking near the Covered Bridge Market – Cornell Design Connect’s plan basically maintains the number of spots and does not change parking adjacent to the Covered Bridge Market but rather defines parking spaces; (2) Removing Parking in Front of the Library will be Problematic – a crosswalk is proposed that would complement additional parking across Main Street from the Library.
- Kitty wanted to know what the Covered Bridge Market owners and the Bank think of the plan. Design Connect was unable to speak to the Covered Bridge Market owners due to time constraints so such discussion will be needed in the future. There will be future conversations, visioning sessions, etc. with the Community. Design Connect was able to speak directly to the manager of the Covered Bridge Market and parking was a stated concern.
- Jim Eisenberg has lived in Newfield for many years and believes stop signs and more visible speed limit signs along Main Street at the Bridge Street/Shaffer Road intersection would be a low-cost initial step to slow down traffic.
- Catherine Shea, while working at Cayuga Medical, utilized Cornell for some design activities and grant assistance. Catherine believes speed bumps on Shaffer Road would be problematic for larger vehicles and trailers.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Leo Tidd at 7:58 PM. The next general meeting of the Newfield Planning Board will be at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, June 2, 2021, via Zoom.

Submitted by Jim Haustein