



# TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

## LOCAL WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM UPDATE

### MEETING SUMMARY

**Purpose:** Local Waterfront Revitalization Advisory Group (LWRAG) Meeting #3  
**Date and Time:** October 3, 2016 3:00-5:00 pm  
**Location:** Town Hall, Room 101, 445 Delaware Avenue  
**Attendees:** See Attached

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
Welcome	Ms. Hakes (MJ) provided a short meeting introduction and reviewed the meeting agenda.	N/A
Recent Events/Activities	<p>Mr. Leslie (Town) and Ms. Staubach (Town) provided a summary of recent events and activities occurring within or that may have the potential to impact the waterfront area. More detailed information can be found in the attached powerpoint presentation.</p> <p><u>Port of Albany Expansion</u>            The Port of Albany has reached a tentative agreement to purchase 80 acres of land in the Town of Bethlehem. The Port would purchase the land for \$9.3 million and anticipates investing another \$25 million to get the property ready for tenants. Expansion of the Port is supported by the Capital 20.20 Upstate Revitalization Initiative Plan as well as the Regional Freight and Goods Movement Plan. The Port applied for CFA funding to offset purchase and development costs.</p> <p>Supporting this expansion is the identification of the Beacon Harbor property as an underutilized economic asset by the Town of Bethlehem’s Economic Development Strategy. The draft local waterfront revitalization program (LWRP) identifies the land for industrial uses.</p> <p>The Port is currently in an eight (8) month due diligence period and is reviewing responses to a Request for Proposals (RFP) for site evaluation, feasibility and master planning services. The selected consultant will be responsible for the completion of a</p>	

	<p>Generic Environmental Impact Station (GEIS). The GEIS will address transportation/traffic, wetlands, coastal consistency, etc. If expansion were to occur at the Beacon Harbor Site, land and port owned buildings would be tax exempt, but privately owned buildings would be fully taxable.</p> <p>Below is a sample comparison using a current assessment:  <i>Current Assessment:</i> \$2,750,000  <i>Town/County Taxes:</i> \$20,080.61  <i>School Taxes:</i> \$60,156.58  <i>Total:</i> \$80,247.19</p> <p><i>Assessment of 1 Privately Owned Warehouse (100K SF):</i> \$5,000,000  <i>Town/County Taxes:</i> \$36,845  <i>School Taxes:</i> \$104,400  <i>Total:</i> \$141,245</p> <p>It was noted that the actions taking place by the Port of Albany are aligned with current zoning and initiatives by the Upstate Revitalization Initiative (URI) for the Port of Albany. Additionally, this expansion aligns with the Town’s Economic Development Strategy.</p> <p>A question was raised by the LWRAG regarding the applicability of the coastal consistency requirements of an LWRP for a public authority, such as the Port of Albany.</p> <p><u>Hudson River Anchorage/Barge Sites</u>  This item was raised as a concern at LWRAG Meeting #2. The Town followed up on the issue and found the following.</p> <p>Due to Federal travel restrictions placed on commercial vessels and the tidal nature of the Hudson River, large commercial vessels are often unable to travel north to Albany.</p> <p>The lack of designated anchorage sites have caused vessels to anchor outside of designated areas in the Lower Hudson Valley resulting in complaints from residents of these communities.</p> <p>The Maritime Association, Port of NY/NJ Tug and Barge Committee, Hudson River Port Pilots Association and the American Waterways Operators made a formal request to the US Coast Guard for the creation of additional anchorage sites.</p> <p>As a result, the Coast Guard is proposing the creation of 10 new anchorage sites between Kingston and Yonkers. The 10 proposed anchorage sites would provide 40 berths or parking spaces, for</p>	<p>MJ to confirm with DOS the coastal consistency requirements for a public authority (i.e. the Port of Albany)</p>
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commercial vessels up to 600 feet long. Each berth will allow for a swing radius of 1,200 feet with one (1) location offering a radius of 1,800 feet. The width of the Hudson River at these sites ranges from 2,800 to 11,000 feet across. The width of the Hudson River in Bethlehem is approximately 1,200 feet across. Based on the available information, there is not anticipated threat of additional anchorage sites being located in the Bethlehem/Albany area of the River.

It was noted that the comment period for this project has been extended an additional 90 days. Also, while there may not be direct impacts on the Town, those on the LWRAG may wish to submit comments and/or have the Coast Guard set up a meeting to discuss.

A concern was raised about the potential impact of increased barge traffic on the Hudson and the increased deterioration of the shoreline. A discussion took place about the importance of balancing environmental protection needs with barge access to support industry dependent on the water access.

#### Bethlehem Conservation Easement Exemption

This exemption offers property owners a reduction in property taxes in exchange for a commitment to preserve undeveloped land, at a minimum of five (5) acres, through a Conservation Easement Agreement. This provides a vital tool to conserve open space and maintain the character of our Town by providing financial incentive and assistance to landowners willing to conserve their land.

In 2009, the NYS legislature added Section 491 to the NYS Real Property Tax Law, allowing this new exemption, but only for the towns of Orchard Park and Elma in Erie County. In 2014, under legislation sponsored by Senator Breslin and Assemblywoman Fahy, the NYS Legislature authorized the Town of Bethlehem to offer a conservation easement exemption under Section 491. The Town Board adopted Local Law #2 on August 27, 2014, establishing the exemption that applies to Town and Special District taxes. State Law (Section 491) provides that school districts and the County must opt in to the exemption for it to affect their taxable values.

On September 7, 2016, the Town of Bethlehem Central School District Board of Education voted to opt-in to the Conservation Easement Program. Participating properties will now receive an exemption on Town and School Taxes.

The following list identifies the percentage of exemption based

	<p>on the conservation easement agreement commitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 15-29 years = 50%</li> <li>▪ 30-49 years = 75%</li> <li>▪ 50-75 years = 85%</li> <li>▪ Perpetual = 90%</li> </ul> <p><u>Pilgrim Pipeline</u></p> <p>As co-lead agencies, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA) have determined that the Pilgrim Pipeline project may have a significant impact on the environment and that a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) will be prepared. The proposed action includes the construction of two (2) new, buried parallel pipelines from Albany to Linden, New Jersey. The pipeline would traverse the counties of Albany, Rensselaer, Greene, Ulster, Orange, and Rockland. One (1) pipeline would carry crude oil southbound from Albany and one (1) pipeline would carry refined petroleum products (gasoline, diesel, heating oil and kerosene) northbound from Linden. Each pipeline would be approximately 169.89 miles long with 79% of the pipeline installed within the New York State Thruway right-of-way.</p> <p>The Town would likely be an Involved Agency under SEQRA and could provide input in that capacity. The proposed WRA boundary has been expanded to include areas that may be impacted by the pipeline.</p>	
<p>Overview of Section II Inventory and Analysis</p>	<p>Section II of the LWRP includes the Inventory and Analysis. This provides a baseline from which to make decisions about future of land uses and projects related to the waterfront vision. A series of maps and supporting text evaluate the following topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Land Use and Development</li> <li>2. Water Dependent Uses</li> <li>3. Zoning and Local Land Use Controls</li> <li>4. Infrastructure</li> <li>5. Natural and Environmental Resources</li> <li>6. Water Quality</li> <li>7. Historic, Cultural, and Scenic Resources</li> <li>8. Open Space, Public Access, Recreation, and Tourism</li> <li>9. Physical Connections</li> <li>10. Economic Development</li> <li>11. Risk Assessment and Resiliency</li> <li>12. Agencies and Authorities with Jurisdiction</li> <li>13. Waterfront Revitalization Area Partners</li> <li>14. Overview of Local and Regional Plans (<i>forthcoming</i>)</li> </ol>	<p>Town staff/DOS to review draft.</p> <p>MJ to make edits based on comments and provide to LWRAG for review and comment.</p>

	<p>Preliminary needs and opportunities for the Waterfront Revitalization Area (WRA) were introduced in the draft Inventory and Analysis. Additional information will be gathered through the LWRAG review of the draft as well as public input received at the public engagement event.</p> <p>Ms. Hakes (MJ) reviewed highlights of the Inventory and Analysis with the LWRAG as identified in the attached powerpoint presentation.</p>	
<p>Henry Hudson Park Interactive Discussion</p>	<p>An important task in the LWRP update is to also update the Henry Hudson Park Master Plan. MJ team member PLACE Alliance is the task lead. Mr. Law from PLACE lead an interactive discussion with the LWRAG focused on the following questions about Henry Hudson Park.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Favorite/Least favorite thing about the Park?</li> <li>2. Which areas of the Park are utilized most/least?</li> <li>3. What are the key Park elements at the park now? (walking paths, seating areas, playground, bathroom facilities, etc)</li> <li>4. What park elements do you wish were at the Park?</li> <li>5. Biggest maintenance issue(s)? (mowing, snow removal, vandalism, etc.)</li> <li>6. How is the Park currently used? What times of the year? Different seasons? Weekends vs Weekdays?</li> <li>7. Who uses the Park? (seniors, teens, adults, families, etc.)</li> <li>8. What are the different activities that take place at the Park? Special events? What events would you like to see take place?</li> <li>9. How do people get to the Park? (car, walk, bike, etc.) Is there enough parking? Bicycle racks?</li> <li>10. Is it safe?</li> </ol> <p>The LWRAG offered the following input:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Park is a great asset.</li> <li>▪ The Park does not have easy bicycle access. Entry to the park relies heavily on use of a car.</li> <li>▪ The chain link fence along the shoreline is not visually appealing. It is understood that this is a safety feature.</li> <li>▪ Both Town residents and non-Town residents utilize the Park facilities.</li> <li>▪ It will be important to understand what amenities extend the duration of a visit</li> <li>▪ How to link assets within the Park</li> </ul>	<p>Project Team to meet with Town at Henry Hudson Park to learn more about the Park and existing conditions and prepare for the public Walk &amp; Talk event.</p>

<p>Public Workshop #1 Preparation</p>	<p>The public workshop will take place on Wednesday, October 19, 2016 at the Cedar Hill Schoolhouse. It will be an all-day open house (11 a.m. – 8 p.m.) to include a series of activity stations to gather input.</p> <p>The stations are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Welcome Table</li> <li>▪ About the Project</li> <li>▪ Waterfront Revitalization Area</li> <li>▪ Vision</li> <li>▪ Existing Conditions</li> <li>▪ Needs</li> <li>▪ Opportunities</li> </ul> <p>A Walk and Talk at Henry Hudson Park will take place concurrently at 12 p.m. – 1 p.m.</p> <p>A formal presentation will take place 7 p.m. – 8 p.m. This presentation will provide a project overview, to aid those who could not attend the all-day open house portion of the event, and a summary of what was learned throughout the open house. Additionally, this presentation will include a summary of draft concepts based on input received at the walk and talk for the Henry Hudson Park Master Plan Update.</p> <p>Publicity for the event was discussed. A flyer will be provided to the LWRAG to distribute to their contacts. A press release will be distributed to local news media. The Town has a booth at the Farmers’ Market on October 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> to promote the project and the event. The event has been posted to the Town website.</p>	<p>MJ to coordinate with Town regarding Public Workshop materials.</p>
<p>Next Steps</p>	<p>Review of the Draft Section II Inventory and Analysis by the Town, DOS and LWRAG.</p> <p>The Public Workshop materials will be prepared.</p> <p>Public Workshop #1 will take place on Wednesday, 10/19.</p> <p>The next LWRAG meeting will be scheduled by a doodle poll. This meeting will include a vision brainstorming discussion, a public engagement summary, and a review of Section III - LWRP Policies.</p>	<p>MJ to coordinate with Town and NYSDOS about Inventory and Analysis review.</p> <p>MJ to coordinate with Town and NYSDOS about Public Workshop preparation and approvals.</p>

		Town to schedule LWRAG Meeting #4.
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This meeting summary conveys our understanding of the items discussed and agreements reached at this meeting. Please forward any additions, corrections and/or questions to my attention.

Submitted by:

Kristen Gaynor  
Planner

cc: Town of Bethlehem Planning Division Staff, Local Waterfront Revitalization Advisory Group (LWRAG), New York State Department of State (NYS DOS) Representative, File

For additional project information, please visit the following link:

<http://www.townofbethlehem.org/746/Local-Waterfront-Revitalization-Advisory>



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 October 3, 2016  
 Town Hall, Room 101, 445 Delaware Avenue

Please sign in

Name	Affiliation	Email
Zary Van Luván	Town Board	
Joann Dawson		
Joan Garralik	Friends of Bethlehem Parks and Recreation	jsg85@aol.com
Mike Snyder	1	
Ira Evans	River Dweller	Ievans7@aol.com
John Clarkson		
John Sherman		
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