

Village of Chittenango - NY Forward Local Planning Committee (LPC) Meeting #4

Meeting Notes

Date/Time: September 23, 2025 / 2:30-4:30pm

Place: Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum, 717 Lakeport Road

LPC Attendees: **Louis Cianfrocco**, Village of Chittenango Mayor, Co-Chair
Kipp Hicks, Madison County IDA, Co-Chair
John Bonura
Scott Baldwin
Dana Kent
Allison Lehr
Carrie Montroy
Jackie Mowers
Ashton Nelson
Ross Relyea
Deb Rose
Melissa Stanek
John VanDeusen

LPC Not in Attendance: **Ryan Powell**
Jacob Tanner

State/Consultant Team: **Lissa D'Aquanni**, New York State (NYS) Department of State (DOS)
Zach Becker, Empire State Development (ESD)
Melissa Davis, Empire State Development (ESD)
Phil Schaeffing, Stantec
Steve Kearney, Stantec

The Village of Chittenango's fourth NY Forward Local Planning Committee (LPC) meeting took place on Tuesday, September 23, 2025, at the Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum. The meeting's primary purpose was to share updates on the public engagement process, discuss project evaluation criteria, and review the projects submitted through the Open Call. Steve Kearney and Phil Schaeffing from the consultant team presented the attached slideshow. Three members of the public observed the committee's working meeting. The Village Administrator and two Madison County planning staff members also observed the meeting.

Planning Updates

- Steve Kearney shared an update from the pop-up event hosted by the project team at the August 19th Tuesdays in the Park which was well attended. The team passed out flyers promoting the September 23rd Open House and collected feedback from over thirty community members about their priorities for downtown. Supporting and growing businesses, renovating buildings, adding new jobs, and increasing amenities for kids and families such as a splash pad received the most support.
- Steve reminded LPC members that the Open House is this evening.

Draft Revitalization Strategies Discussion

- Steve reviewed the NYF project eligibility requirements and evaluation criteria.
- He then reshared the DOS DRI & NYF goals as well as the four Village goals developed by the LPC based on feedback from the community.

Proposed Projects

- Phil presented the proposed projects received during the Open Call. Sixteen projects were submitted, totaling \$12 million in total projects costs and \$7.6 million of NYF funds requested.
- Private Projects
 - Expand Sweet Tooth Bakery
 - Phil noted that two conceptual plans were submitted, and the project sponsor is working with an architect to finalize the project details
 - Another comment expressed concerns about the project's return on investment and would be in low support of it because the total project cost and NYF ask seems high
 - A question was posed about how many jobs would be created. Phil explained that in past years, most NYF projects do not create that many jobs. This project would so they could be open more days of the week
 - Another member asked what the sponsor's long-term vision is and expressed their feeling that the sponsor would need more capacity to do more.
 - Other comments included concerns about what happens if the project isn't successful. The NYS ESD team explained all NYF grants have a 5-year claw-back period if the sponsor sells or closes.
 - A Community Block Grant might be another source to leverage in the project
 - Improve 227 Genesee Street for Energy Efficiency
 - The LPC asked about the project's scope refinement. Phil explained the consultant team's suggestion to explore adding 1-2 floors to the building. Sponsor is investigating but unsure of potential.
 - One member asked if the design could become more appealing and whether the design can be used to enhance the public realm.
 - Another member asked about the difference between improvements and deferred maintenance. Generally, improvements are allowed for recently purchased buildings within a few years. Deferred maintenance typically not allowed for buildings owned by the sponsor for a longer period of time.
 - Did the sponsor have interest in leasing the commercial space but businesses turned it down because they were inefficient?
 - Create New Apartments at 254 Genesee Street
 - The LPC asked whether the property owner is new. They are.
 - One member commented on seeing the need to improve the interior space of the apartments but asked what the benefit is for spending money on the

- building exterior. Phil explained the need for improvements and to improve the overall visual quality of downtown. Enhancing curb appeal and improving older buildings.
 - Another comment mentioned that it would be good for building and life safety in terms of improving/upgrading dated building electrical
 - Comments about how getting more people living downtown will also make for a more vibrant downtown.
- Modernize Commercial and Housing Units at 236 Genesee Street – Same sponsor as 254 Genesee St
 - Questions asked about parking for both projects. There would be just a few additional parking spaces needed since most apartments are occupied now.
 - One member commented that modernizing existing apartments doesn't create new housing
 - LPC agreed the new event space could be a benefit
 - One of the LPC members mentioned they live there, and the apartments are in very bad shape. While they need to be fixed, what is the priority?
 - The LPC asked what the plan is for existing tenants – would improvements happen as they moved voluntarily, would they be relocated, or something else?
- Beautify 216 Genesee Street
 - No LPC comments
- Renovate 210 Genesee Street to Add Additional Apartments – same sponsor for 216 Genesee Street
 - LPC had concerns about potential for extra project costs and asked what happens if an expensive problem comes up during the project implementation process. Phil explained that there would not be additional grant funding and that the Sponsor would have to come up with any additionally required funds.
- Expand Sorbello's Gift and Garden for Community Programming
 - LPC members discussed how Sorbello's does really bring a lot of people downtown and that there would be a net benefit to the community.
 - One LPC member asked how many seats there are in the amphitheater and how many people it will be able to accommodate. Is it similar to what already exists in Dr. West Park? The consultant team will follow up with the sponsor.
- Create Outdoor Educational & Recreational Center at Canal Boat Museum
 - Phil noted that the project team is working with the museum to find other State funds and that the museum is also looking for philanthropic funds.
 - One LPC member remarked that the project rendering shows a beautiful looking structure
 - Another member mentioned that the project, while great, is a lot of money.
 - The LPC asked how Chittenango's museum and Erie Canal location compares to surrounding communities. According to a museum employee, the museum is similar to Syracuse in terms of numbers and also receives a lot of bicyclists. If they stop here, they can go to the Oz Museum. "We push them downtown."

- Someone else commented that a lot of people stop in the Canal Boat museum, but they don't like it when the Canal Museum is closed. The NYF project would allow the museum to be open more.
- Modernize QuickServe Market
 - One LPC member asked if they have a concept yet. Nothing shared with consultant team yet but will follow up with the sponsor.
- Construct New Multi-family Housing at 428 Genesee Street
 - Phil emphasized that the project costs will likely change as the sponsor is still working on a design concept
 - The LPC asked if the sponsor has previous experience on this type of project. SoulCraft, LLC is a new business but the owner has significant experience working with private builders. Their goal is to use this type of modular construction to build more workforce/middle housing in upstate NY. They have other projects that are getting closer to the construction phase.
- Improve the Visitor Experience at the All Things Oz Museum
 - The project team is working with the sponsor to look for additional state funding, philanthropic donations, and other financial resources.
 - DOS asked if the project proposal expands the second floor. By improving the space on the second floor, there will be more display space. Will it need an elevator? Yes. Consultant team will confirm that this cost is currently included in the project budget.
 - DOS also suggested CDBG funds might be able to be used for accessibility (new elevator)
- Enhance Darlene's Kitchen for Improved Customer Experience
 - No LPC comments
- Create New Upper Story Housing at 211 Genesee Street
 - Phil noted the scope is being refined and will include elements that improve access to the Creekwalk.
 - LPC asked what is meant by "improving access to Creekwalk."
- The LPC asked how much more detail it will get to help make decisions? Phil explained the process and where we are currently at.
- One member asked whether sponsors need to provide pre-approval from a lending source? Phil explained that the project team is working to vet funding sources and will need to see evidence of banking relationship, loan interest if funding awarded, etc.
- Public Projects
 - Expand and Improve Dr. West Park for Community Use
 - Phil explained the project's land swap concept. Area-wise the project will expand the park by one-third. The Fire station's door configuration will change so trucks exit the opposite side from where they do today.
 - The LPC had questions about the quantity and type of public restrooms being proposed. The two toilets will be heated and used all year round
 - Additional questions were related to the project specs. Russel Street will have to stay open but can be temporarily closed for events. The three small doors

- of the fire station cannot be moved. The park expansion will come within 25 feet of the fire station building.
 - The Village Administrator explained the renovations planned for the fire station.
 - The LPC generally felt this project is a great idea. “This is huge for the Village!”
- Implement Village Public Realm and Connectivity Improvements
 - One LPC member asked if there are other State grants for projects like these? Yes. The Village has already submitted an ‘I Love NY’ marketing grant. The village and consultant team are looking at other potential opportunities as well.
 - Another member expressed that this project gives the Village lot of bang for its buck.
 - A question was asked about if the project is awarded other grants, would the NYF funding ask come down. Phil said it could and that State agencies also talk to each other to coordinate funds.
- Create Chittenango Recreation Center
 - Phil noted the State also has NY BRICKS funding which could reduce the NYF request or increase the project size. The project will likely be sited at Stooks Park.
 - One LPC member asked the size of the building. The size of the building is based on the basketball court size with space for bleachers and chairs. There will be space for locker rooms and concessions. The Village would help with any site work.
 - The Village Administrator shared that he met with Town of Sullivan Parks and Recs, and they thought there is a real need for this project. Park and Recs would have priority over the schools for this building. There may also be potential to label it as a ‘cooling center’ to become eligible for another grant. There would also be a source of revenue from travel teams and birthday parties. The plan is to have the new Recreation Center building managed by Town Parks and Recs.
 - Another member asked if there would be space for a track for seniors and others to use in the winter? The village and town can explore that suggestion and think about what is needed. It was suggested to create a group to discuss the recreation center project concept.
 - Another commented that a Village Recreation Center has been needed for a long time.
 - Another question asked if it could double for performance space? Unless it was larger to include a stage and backstage area, it might be hard. Maybe if more funding could be identified.

- One LPC member felt that the estimated project cost (\$1,055,000) is low. Can the consultant team find out anything more about cost? Yes, the team's cost estimator is reviewing all cost estimates provided by sponsors.
- Small Project Fund
 - Phil explained how many projects were submitted and how the fund would work, noting it could be as large as \$600,000.
 - 11 small project letters of interest were submitted totaling \$742,000 in total project costs and \$513,000 in NYF fund requests.
 - The majority of LPC members had general consensus that a small project fund would be a good thing. Three LPC members expressed uncertainty.
 - Some members expressed concerns about funding things like business equipment (freezers, wash/dry machines, etc.) The LPC can develop parameters for the fund if desired.
 - DOS mentioned that some projects could be moved to the small project funds list. Phil added that some projects could also be moved to the 'unfunded but supported' list within the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) to demonstrate support for other funding sources.

Next Steps

- Phil confirmed that the project team will share the LPC's questions with project sponsors.
- The team will continue working with sponsors to refine project details, explore funding sources, confirm cost and request amount, create project rendering, etc.
- Sponsors will provide team with additional information as requested.
- The next committee meetings will focus on further reviewing and evaluating projects.
 - Goal is that by LPC #5 a draft slate of projects will be formed, pending final updates at last meeting
 - At LPC #6 final project updates will be shared and the LPC will vote on the final project slate to be submitted to State. Roadmap projects will also be discussed.

Public Comment

There was a public comment period at the end of the LPC meeting. No additional public comments were made.

The meeting adjourned at 4:25pm.

Please send corrections, questions, or comments regarding the meeting notes to Phil Schaeffing, project manager for the State's consultant team (philip.schaeffing(at)stantec.com).

Stantec Consulting Services Inc.