

Middletown

Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Meeting Notes

Downtown Revitalization Initiative Middletown, NY

Local Planning Committee Meeting 1
October 4, 2016, 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

1. Introductions

- Introduction of DRI and Middletown DRI Committee members, BFJ Planning and consultant team, and New York State representatives.

2. Recap of Middletown Planning Process: Mayor DeStefano/BFJ

- Overview of recent and current projects by Mayor DeStefano
- Recap of current Downtown initiatives included Heritage Trail and spurs, Woolworth's, Skateboard Park & Welcome Center, Transportation Hub, Middletown Community Campus

3. Program Overview: DOS/BFJ

- Jaime Ethier, DOS, provided an overview of the DRI program and process.
- Discussion of DRI project objectives, roles of the DRI Local Planning Committee and Consultants and Code of Ethics
- Susan Favate, BFJ Planning, discussed the objectives of the project: Where do we want to be? How are we going to get there? The process will take the community's vision, develop strategies and prioritize projects accordingly
- Stakeholder group engagement will be important in identifying options for community programs
- DRI Process will be fast-paced and seek ways to leverage \$10 million to drive revitalization

4. Visioning Activity and Community Engagement Strategy: BFJ/Fitzgerald & Halliday (FHI)

- Arnie Bloch, FHI, ran a visioning activity where committee members were asked to write down two words or phrases for the questions: where is Middletown today? And where do you want Middletown to be? The results are below:
 - Where is Middletown today?
 - Responses included: potential, community, busy, caring/safe, overlooked, city officials who love Middletown, Middletown has a lot to offer the youth, gritty, tough, forward-looking, evolving, growing, empty buildings, in transition, progressive, hopeful, investing in a "new tomorrow", resurging, emerging, diverse, opportunity, self-hating
 - Where do we want Middletown to be?
 - Responses included: populated, safe, regional hub, transportation, prosperous, trendy, a good place to work, cultural center, attractive to new families/homeowners, greater family and community engagement, place where people want to live and work, place people want to visit and shop, destination, livable, hip/attractive, intellectual, thriving, safe, opportunity for youth to live/work/play, partners with all three institutions of higher education, vibrant, young, prosperous, welcoming, academic/business, hub of NYS
- Mr. Bloch described the planned Community Engagement Strategy for the project and brainstormed some ideas for venues for engagement.

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5. Project Scope and Timeline: BFJ

- Noah Levine, BFJ Planning, provided an overview of the project timeline and key elements: 1) Prepare Downtown Area Profile to establish planning baseline, 2) Develop strategy to build on Middletown's DRI application and existing plans or projects, and 3) Develop detailed project profiles to ease implementation

6. Next Steps

- Ms. Favate discussed setting a time for monthly committee meetings- possibly changing from the first Tuesday to the first Wednesday of every month.
- Mr. Ethier to confirm date of Middletown Strategic Implementation Assessment Team (SIAT) presentation in Albany – depending on date, next Middletown LPC meeting will be Nov. 1 or Nov. 2, at Thrall Library.

Tentative Dates:

- Potential dates for first Public Engagement Events: October 22 Harvest Fest and YMCA event, October 23 interfaith event at SUNY Orange

7. Public Questions and Comments

- Consider involving service organizations (Kiwanis, Elk Club, Rotary Club)
- The head of the Middletown Historical Society suggested considering opportunities for the visual arts. The City currently lacks gallery space and opportunities for artists outside of the performing arts.
 - Response from Jerry Cammarata, CEO of Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine, Committee Member: mentioned that there is also an art historian at Touro College.
- Are there restrictions on how funds can be spent?
 - Response from Mr. Ethier, DOS: There are no restrictions. We encourage you to identify all of the potential projects and uses for funding through this and other sources.
- What about O&W Station?
 - Response from Mayor DeStefano: the cost of that renovation is estimated at over \$20 million, we are not interested in using the DRI funds for the restoration of that building.