

**Ballston Spa  
Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee  
Social Considerations II  
October 6, 2022**

Present in Person: John Cromie, Jared Iacolucci, Peter Martin, Ellen Mottola, Jackie Pelliccia, Steve Springer, John Behan, and Amy Fitzgerald.

Present on Zoom: Carrie Chapman, Monique Cohen, Marilyn Stephenson, Jon Taisey, and Michael Allen.

Excused: Scott Burlingame, Bob Bush, Nafeesa Koslik, Karen Martell.

Observers in Person: Liz Kormos, Frank Rossi, Jr.

Observers on Zoom: None

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 by John Cromie, due to the absence of Karen Martell, who was unable to attend. Minutes of September 15 were reviewed. Peter Martin moved they be approved as presented, Jackie Pelliccia seconded, passed.

The meeting was turned over to John Behan to lead the discussion of how the committee's past observations relate to land use. The discussion will cover results of a pictorial preference survey of buildings, which that had been sent to members of the committee, and potential future patterns of use and whether they should be encouraged or discouraged.

The most favorable responses to the pictorial preference survey were to a treed, well maintained residential scene. Pictures which received the next most favorable reviews were a conversion of a former factory building which maintained many original elements and a creek trail that was defined by pavilions, stonework, and other architectural elements.

The least favorable view was of a converted single family with most of its design features removed, surrounded by asphalt. John mentioned that photo was included to show what can happen without design guidelines.

It was noted most residents want to keep things the way they are, and guidelines in the code will help. There seems to be a consensus in neighborhoods that Ballston Spa should not try to be like other communities. There is a wide variety among village neighborhoods, some may be amenable to have businesses operating from homes, others not. It will be imperative to obtain the views of residents when considering land use changes.

The creeks provide an opportunity to add trail systems, especially on the trolley bed along the Kayaderosseras. If the trolley bed could be accessed from Axe Street, it would give residents of Kelly Square and Colonial Hills another way of walking downtown other than in streets where there are no sidewalks.

The former nursing home site is zoned R-1 and could be used for single family housing. It is possible lands on the site could be made into a park for area residents.

Development along the northern Rte. 50 entry to the village should be required to add greenery, low level lighting, red brick structures, etc. that would signal to motorists they have entered Ballston Spa. The southern Rte. 50 entrance rapidly transitions to residential when entering the village and creates a satisfactory image of the village.

The committee's response to commercial buildings in the pictorial survey was not positive, indicating large commercial buildings are not favored. However, large commercial buildings already exist along the northern entry along Rte. 50. The area can be made more attractive.

John Behan noted trail corridors on the map were drawn without looking at property ownership and feasibility. The Garden Club's efforts rejuvenating the garden by the RR embankment at Iron Spring Park have greatly added to the attractiveness of the streetscape. There are other places for flowers, for instance along the Gordon Creek at Hamilton Street. A foot bridge over the Kayaderosseras can be used to better connect the north end with downtown.

Two possible transition zones between CBD and purely residential areas could be the Bath Street area and lower Malta Ave., which could offer home-oriented businesses. The intensity of the businesses would have to be gaged to specific properties and probably not include intensive uses like restaurants. If the Angelica property were to become retail establishments, it may encourage landowners along Bath Street to seek more intensive retail uses. Guidelines for the Planning Board should ensure a

proposed property use will not adversely affect neighboring properties. The R-2 area south of the CBD can also be a transition zone like the Bath Street area.

If the underpass at the end of Washington Street is opened to pedestrian traffic it will encourage commercial uses on western Washington Street and create a loop with Front Street.

Lower Malta Ave. has a mix of one, two, and multifamily housing. It could also act as a transition zone and be benefited by the Zim Smith Trail if it is brought into Ballston Spa. Malta Ave. is one of the major entries to the village, and the housing along lower Malta Ave seems ripe for modified uses. South of the housing on Malta Ave. is open, undeveloped land which can be developed. Lower Malta Ave. can be quite congested, and additional businesses could make a bad condition worse. The opinions of property owners and investors should be solicited before changes are made. It has been apparent for decades those properties are not bringing in enough value to justify major improvements and allowing retail/commercial uses in the structures will add value. Design/site plan guidelines will be essential to ensure the buildings are not replaced by structures inappropriate to a neighborhood including residences.

The former Maplewood Manor site is improved by a single-purpose building, which presents challenges to repurpose the structure. Due to the costs of removal of the building, it is very likely any developer will seek a more intensive use of the property than allowed in R-1. Single family homes would be preferred, but the estimated cost of \$3M to remove the building and the current asking price make single family homes unfeasible. Perhaps the asking price is too high. Given its location, residential homes would be in keeping with the surrounding area. Perhaps a more intensive use can be devised, but apartment style buildings are to be avoided.

There being insufficient time to explore the issue of accessory housing, the committee was polled whether or not to support the concept of allowing accessory units in some areas of the R-1 zone with appropriate restrictions. All members were in favor of the concept. Behan Associates will survey members to flesh out details on the topic. Meeting adjourned.

John J. Cromie, Secretary