



# **ADVANCE SENECA FALLS**

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **TOWN OF SENECA FALLS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE Kick-Off Meeting**

**9:00 A.M.**

**December 21, 2022**

**Seneca Falls Community Center**

The Town of Seneca Falls Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee held its kick-off meeting on Wednesday, December 21, 2022 at 9:00 A.M. at Seneca Falls Community Center, 35 Water Street, Seneca Falls, NY.

Present were Town Manager Dr. Peter Soscia; Matt Horn, MRB Group Consultant; Secretary Melissa Howell, and Committee members: Kaitlyn Laskoski, Town Councilmember; Dan Emmo, Town Zoning Board Chairperson; Frank Ruzicka, Town Planning Board Chairperson; Dr. Michelle Reed, Superintendent of Seneca Falls Central School District; Greg Zellers, Seneca Falls Development Corporation; Jill Henry, Seneca County Planning Department; Sheila Giovannini, Seneca Museum of Waterways and Industry; BJ Radford, Cayuga Nation; Lisa Fitzgerald, ITT/Goulds Pumps; Rev. Leah Ntuala, First Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls; Christine Van Dusen, Owner, Blush; Jamie Docteur, Resident; Ryan Hunt, Resident; and Fred Capozzi, Resident. Absent were Dawn Dyson, Town Councilmember; Anwei Law, It's A Wonderful Life Museum, and Amy Pedulla, DA's Liquor.

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

Town Manager Dr. Peter Soscia introduced himself to the committee and welcomed everyone. The members introduced themselves to one another.

#### **Overview of Current Comprehensive Plan & Looking Ahead**

Dr. Soscia stated that the current plan in place was created in 2006 by the former Village and the Town, and it is unclear whether it was formally adopted at that time. Having such a plan while not required by town law, is important when the town applies for funding.

The key question when updating the plan is "How do we envision a town 20-30 years from now where he residents can flourish?" said Soscia. 17% of New York State lost residents aged 17-28 and Seneca Falls is the oldest community by Census. How do we attract people? How do we keep people?

#### **The Role of the Steering Committee**

Dr. Soscia said the committee's main role is to set priorities. The work has to be done by the community with the formation of sub-committees. Soscia introduced a podcast excerpt by video of Richard Florida, a researcher and professor at the University of Toronto, the author of numerous books—including the modern classic, *The Rise of the Creative Class*—and the co-founder of [CityLab](#) being interviewed by Chuck Marohn, President of Strong Towns, a 501(c)3 nonprofit media advocacy organization.



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In the podcast, Florida says 'people's views influence how they live.' The clustering of companies and talent in urban areas drives innovation and economic growth. Soccia said that the comprehensive plan should be built for the dynamic people that live here and want to live here.

#### **Project Foundations**

Matt Horn, of MRB Group, presented the committee with the concept of thinking about the boundary of the entire town and its individual neighborhoods to 'create a great place to live.' You want to attract workforce, invest in public parks, schools, downtown, and quality of life to draw people to Seneca Falls.

He shared an overview of the mechanics of the comprehensive plan including such components as:

- Strong data
- Visioning – Authentic, Robust, Meaningful
- Implementation – Avoid 'paralysis by analysis'
- Existing Condition – Where do you want to be?
- Engagement – Connect with the Public
- Public Implementation

Mr. Zellers asked if the committee would be incorporating youth perspectives in the process. Dr. Soccia said that he is working with Dr. Reed to organize a youth council from the high school.

#### **Other Business**

Dr. Soccia reviewed the Google Workspace which has been setup to create a common resource for the planning process.

#### **Action Items**

The committee was asked to propose potential candidates for the sub-committees and to establish leadership roles for the Steering Committee.

#### **Next Meeting**

The Steering Committee will meet on Wednesday, January 19 at 9:00 AM at the Board of Education.