

Local Planning Committee (LPC) Meeting #1

Wednesday, May 1, 2024, 6:00 to 8:00 pm | Montgomery Senior Center, 32 Bridge St, Montgomery, NY

Meeting Summary

Mayor Michael Hembury opened the meeting and announced a remarkable achievement for the Village of Montgomery, securing \$4.5 million in new funds through the NY Forward program. He emphasized that this investment represents unprecedented financial support for the Village, promising that the funds will be utilized in the right way. Dr. Kristine Young, Co-Chair of the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) and Co-Chair of the Montgomery NY Forward Local Planning Committee (LPC), also provided brief welcoming remarks and congratulated the village on this accomplishment.

Dr. Young provided an overview of the NY Forward nomination process. The nomination process involved virtual interviews and deliberations, resulting in the Mid-Hudson region nominating three communities for significant funding: one for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) for \$10 million and two, including the Village of Montgomery, for \$4.5 million each from the NY Forward program. These nominations were selected from 29 eligible applications across seven counties, with a particular focus on smaller, rural communities such as hamlets and villages. The Village of Montgomery stood out due to its readiness, strong sense of community, picturesque location along the Wallkill River, small-town charm, community events, and period architecture.

Brian Fitzpatrick, LPC Member, expressed gratitude to everyone involved and launched the premiere of the award-winning NY Forward Application video. Susan Landfried explained that the LPC is a state-approved body comprising diverse members to ensure all community voices are heard. The following LPC members introduced themselves: Sylvie Rainaldi, Jose Hernandez, Amy Frisbie, Sylvie Rainaldi, Amy Frisbie, Bob Reynolds Sr., Brian Fitzpatrick, Mayor Michael Hembury, and Dr. Kristine Young.

Susan Landfried, New York State Department of State (DOS) Project Manager for the NY Forward Round II communities, provided an overview of the NY Forward program, which was expanded in 2022 to support smaller, rural communities in creating vibrant downtowns. The process involves approximately eight months of planning, culminating in a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). Key points of the timeline include five to six LPC meetings and two public workshops, with the first workshop scheduled later this month. The SIP draft is expected in November, with the final version due to New York State in December. The project development process will involve public engagement to identify and refine eligible projects. An Open Call for Projects will be launched on June 11th, and public feedback will be crucial in shaping the final project list. The evaluation criteria will be based on state, regional, and local goals, community support, readiness, impact, and efficient use of public resources. Eligible projects include new development or rehabilitation of existing buildings, public improvements, small project funds, and branding and marketing initiatives. Ineligible projects include standalone planning studies, operational costs, and property acquisitions. Eligible projects must be shovel-ready within two years of the award and meet specific criteria, including sponsor capacity and financing.

Brian Fitzpatrick thanked everyone involved in the four years of work leading up to Montgomery's NY Forward Application. He outlined the NY Forward Boundary Area, which defines the area of targeted investment centered around Union and Clinton Streets and following the Wallkill River. Key public projects in the application

include upgrades to Veteran’s Memorial Park and Pleasure Ground, a pedestrian bridge across the Wallkill River, a linear park along the Wallkill River, a complete streets program, a wayfinding signage and branding campaign, and building improvement grants.

Christiana (Christie) Kastalek, Deputy Project Manager from VHB – the consulting firm that is leading the state and subconsultant project team, introduced two interactive activities for the LPC that included identifying opportunities and challenges in downtown Montgomery and envisioning the future of Montgomery. The results highlighted a desire for improved walkability, traffic flow, façade enhancements, and better access to parks and services, which build upon Montgomery’s vision statement included in the NY Forward application. The resulting feedback was fed into a word cloud graphic as shown below.



Christie went on to provide an overview of the engagement process, noting that public engagement will be facilitated through various channels, including a dedicated NY Forward Community Center at 32 Bridge Street, a project website, digital and paper flyering, targeted stakeholder coordination, social media posts, newsletters, and direct community outreach. The LPC discussed strategies to encourage broad participation, including engaging the Village’s youth population as well as residents who may not have access to a computer. Christie walked the LPC through the tentative meeting schedule for the project, confirmed the dates with the LPC, and emphasized key milestones including public engagement events, reviewing and incorporating public feedback, refining projects, selecting projects, and preparing the SIP. Following the night's first LPC meeting, subsequent LPC meetings are scheduled through November 2024. Public engagement will be ongoing, with additional opportunities to gather feedback and refine project proposals at several events. The first Public Workshop is scheduled for May 20, 2024 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. Prior to opening the meeting to public comments, Susan Landfried reiterated that the NY Forward process aims to be transparent and inclusive, ensuring that all community members have a voice in shaping the future of Montgomery. The final Strategic Investment Plan will be submitted to the state in mid-December, with funding announcements expected in the spring of the following year.

Prior to the close of the LPC meeting, the public comment portion was opened. Public comments are summarized below:

- What time will Susan be at the NY Forward Community Center tomorrow?
- Who is the Village’s Planning Board consultant?
- Will the presentation from tonight be shared?
- What is the address of the project webpage?
- Can you add another public workshop between May and October?
- Who is on the hook if a project budget goes over the final amount?

- Can the Village submit a project for an electronic billboard, similar to the one in front of Valley Central to advertise town events?
- When are you going to do the business interviews?
- The LPC should assign neighborhood/block captains to get the word out about the NY Forward process.
- Suggest that the Village's neighborhood and condo communities can use their HOAs to get info on the NY Forward process out to residents in apartment communities.
- The Conservation Advisory Council should be included in stakeholder list.
- Explore using fundraisers or pocket book bingo club to engage local parents to help get the word out.
- Identify active travel sport leagues with coaches that live here in the community.
- Local farmers meet regularly at the Iron Café in the mornings and are a wealth of knowledge for the Village and should be engaged.