

City of Binghamton
FIRST WARD BOA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

APPENDIX C – PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

City of Binghamton
FIRST WARD BOA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Public Meeting #1
July 14, 2009

Imagine that you leave the First Ward today and come back in 2020...

What aspects of the neighborhood would you hope remain the same?

- The presence of small businesses along Clinton Street.
- On-going Front Street renovations have been completed.
- Houses and presence of families have been maintained.
- Same diversity of land uses have been preserved (i.e. 45.5% residential).
- Racial and ethnic diversity of the neighborhood still exists.
- Sense of safety within the neighborhood.
- Heritage of the First Ward continues to be recognized and celebrated.
- Strong sense of community.
- Ability of residents to take advantage of its close proximity to downtown Binghamton.
- Residents will still have access to public transit options.
- First Ward Park is still present and maintained.
- Multi-generational neighborhood with strong traditions.
- Senior Center is still open and thriving.
- First Ward still has easy access to major highways.
- There are still a multitude of diverse churches present within the First Ward, which contribute to neighborhood diversity.
- Spring Forest Cemetery is present and maintained.

What aspects of the neighborhood would you hope have changed?

- A grocery store and/or pharmacy is present in the neighborhood.
- Re-development of the Anitec site.
- There is a museum to celebrate and interpret the history of the First Ward neighborhood.
- Manufacturing and factories have returned to the neighborhood as they originally were – people live and work in same neighborhood.
- Empty and dilapidated properties have been eliminated and/or rehabilitated.
- There is a stronger police presence to reduce crime.
- There is special needs housing and supervised recovery housing available.
- Streetscape enhancements and aesthetic improvements made on Front Street and Clinton Street.

- Gateways from the City into the First Ward have been improved.
- The empty storefronts on Clinton Street and Glenwood Avenue have been filled with small businesses, cafes, and upper story apartments.
- The crime rate has been lowered.
- Parks and recreational areas are better distributed throughout the First Ward to create better access for area youth.
- More options for youth.
- The sidewalks along Prospect Street (and throughout neighborhood) have been replaced and improved.
- Fewer absentee landlords and property owners.
- There are more options for senior housing besides nursing homes and assisted living facilities.
- There is greater accessibility for handicapped residents (more ramps, ADA compliance, etc.).
- Improvements to the rail underpass.
- Passenger rail travel has been brought back.
- There is more parking on Clinton Street.
- Poor/dilapidated buildings have been converted to parks or recreational spaces.
- There are community gardens and a community center.
- Rail underpass has been fixed.
- Outdated drainage has been fixed.
- Junkyards in the neighborhood have been eliminated.
- Traffic calming measures have been implemented on Clinton Street to promote visitation to area businesses.
- Utility lines have been buried.
- Titcheners property has been converted into a community garden.
- Re-pave and widen area roads for better access.
- Charles Street Business Park has been fully developed.
- There are soccer fields and a skateboard park for neighborhood children.

City of Binghamton

FIRST WARD BOA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

MEETING MINUTES

Public Meeting #2
October 15, 2009

1. Introduction and Overview

Kimberly Baptiste opened the public meeting and welcomed attendees before moving on to a brief presentation of the project, including an introduction of the BOA program, program purpose, and an overview of the status of the First Ward Redevelopment Plan (Step 1).

2. Goals and Objectives

The overarching goal areas associated with the Plan were identified and a brief background of their intent and purpose was described.

3. Inventory and Key Findings

Bergmann Associates presented an overview of the Inventory and Key Findings that have been developed in association with the First Ward Redevelopment Plan. Topics that were covered in the presentation included:

- Boundary Description
- Community Overview
- Land Use
- Zoning
- Ownership
- Natural Resources
- Brownfield, Vacant, and Underutilized Sites

4. Opportunities

The preliminary opportunities identified as an outcome of the Inventory and Key Findings were presented.

5. Open House / Community Input

The second component of the Public Meeting provided meeting attendees with the opportunity to provide comments and feedback on various elements of the Plan in an interactive fashion. The preliminary recommendations and strategies were presented on boards for people to identify their level of agreement. Seven members of the public participated in this exercise. The only recommendations that received one or two “do not agree” votes were:

- Integrate recommendations for planning in the First Ward as presented in the City Comprehensive Plan (two “do not agree” votes); and

- Implement recommendations identified in the Broome County Greenway Plan (one “do not agree” vote).

All other recommendations presented received “Agree” votes from all contributing members of the public.

Attendees were also provided the opportunity to mark up an aerial map of the study area to indicate locations where they see future projects to be most desirable, or of highest priority. Highlights of input associated with this feedback opportunity include:

- Revitalization of the Clinton Hotel as a strategic building near the gateway of Clinton Street from Front Street and downtown. Current owners of the building were present at the meeting and are interested in working with the City to identify any potential opportunities for assistance in the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of this historic structure.
- Farmers market near the Charles Street business park, on north side of Phelps Street (vacant land).
- Opportunities for community gardens throughout the residential neighborhoods on City-owned land and small vacant parcels.
- Redevelopment of vacant parcel at the southeast corner of the intersection of Murray Street and Clinton Street.

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MEETING MINUTES

Public Meeting #3
February 15, 2010 at Boys and Girls Club

1. Open House

As attendees arrived at the meeting they were asked to sign-in and identify on a map where they lived, whether in the First Ward or in a surrounding community. They were directed to visit each of the stations that had been set up and to comment on proposed projects, recommendations, and next steps in the process. Approximately 35 people were in attendance at the meeting.

Results of this are tabulated below.

2. Overview and Question & Answer Period

Although no presentation was formally planned, it became evident that meeting attendees were looking for the opportunity to learn more about the program and to ask questions related to the planning process.

Caroline Quidort, AICP opened the question period with a brief introduction.

Kimberly Baptiste, AICP provided a summary of the BOA program and opened the floor to questions and answers. The public had a variety of questions which were fielded by representatives from the City and Bergmann Associates. Questions ranged from site specific inquiries to broader questions about the long-term benefits of the program. Key issues noted in the discussion were the low levels of owner occupancy in the neighborhood, the presence of sites on Clinton Street that are in various states of disrepair, and the lack of maintenance of some residential neighborhoods. Kimberly urged all attendees to document comments on the station boards and to contact the City or Bergmann Associates with any further comments or questions.

3. Tabulated Results

Where do you live?

Twenty-four attendees participated in this exercise. Approximately 2/3 lived in the First Ward, with others living in Johnson City, the north side of Binghamton, the south side of Binghamton, and the west side of Binghamton. Two attendees live in the First Ward but to the west of the current study area. It was noted that the current boundary excludes a portion of the "First Ward" neighborhood and a recommendation will be added to the Pre-Nomination Study to expand the current boundary.

Proposed Projects

Participants were asked to mark up a map of the study area with projects they would like to see implemented in the First Ward. Comments from this are summarized below:

- Retail on Glenwood
- Impacts to First Ward from Wal-Mart
- Need child drop-off, pick-up area in front of school
- Street pavement and curb improvements on Jarvis and Grace Streets
- Improve gateways under railroad
- Traffic concerns on Jarvis, Field, and in Charles Street Business Park associated with trucks
- Ramp from I-86
- Bus stops on Front Street
- New park space south of study area
- Expand First Ward Park to the east with playfields and a pavilion – may also be a place for a farmers market
- Traffic to Charles Street
- Possible road from Charles Street Business Park to Prospect Street
- Why does Elm Street still dead end at Charles Street Business Park?
- Park south of Charles Street Business Park on vacant land
- Industrial on south side of Clinton Street
- Road spur off Front Street before rail underpasses
- Riverwalk along Chenango River
- Enhance Valley Street park
- Gateway entrance at north end of Front Street

Recommendations

Quality of Life

Recommendations on the Quality of Life board were consistent with the recommendations in section 2.6 of the Pre-Nomination Study. All respondents were in agreement with all recommendations presented under this category. One “not sure” vote was marked for the following recommendation – “Adopt housing initiatives to preserve the historic housing stock and encourage ownership, owner occupancy, and reinvestment in the neighborhood.”

Comments generated on this board are listed below:

- Capitalize on Seniors Center as a neighborhood center
- Redesign First Ward park before it's too late
- Capitalize on ethnic diversity
- Work with First Ward Action Council on a Master Plan – City could initiate a housing management forum
- Major problem is absentee landlords
- We must find a way to increase owner occupancy

- Incentivize workers at Charles Street Business Park to live in neighborhood
- Expand Neighborhood Assembly dream with City initiatives
- Have a police beat
- Enforce drug laws
- Neighborhood Community Program
- Bicycle and walking path Master Plan
- Install bike racks along Clinton Street

Sustainability

Recommendations on the Sustainability board were consistent with the recommendations in section 2.6 of the Pre-Nomination Study. The majority of respondents were in agreement with all recommendations presented under this category, although each recommendation also had one “not sure” vote. There was one “disagree” vote for the following recommendation – “Continue to advocate for the development and implementation of a smart grid and smaller point-of-origin energy sources to increase viability of cogeneration plant within the First Ward.”

Comments generated on this board are listed below:

- Bike lanes or bike friendly roadways
- Build a new swimming pool
- Bike and walk paths / bridges
- Landscaping on corridors
- Potted plants, hanging baskets, and flags on corridors
- More trees on corridors
- Bigger trees on corridors
- Flowers on corridors
- Adapt Comp Plan recommendations as needed
- Farmers market across from St. Michaels
- Farmers market at lot across from mental health clinic
- Is there a long-term strategy to own and operate the co-gen plant?

Economic Revitalization

Recommendations on the Economic Revitalization board were consistent with the recommendations in section 2.6 of the Pre-Nomination Study. The majority of respondents were in agreement with all recommendations presented under this category, although each recommendation also received one “disagree” vote.

Comments generated on this board are listed below:

- Build covered bus shelters

- Need ice cream parlor
- Need bakery
- Focus on small, ethnically diverse businesses
- Some homes on Front Street need to be cleaned up
- Would compete with Downtown Plan – Attempt to develop light industry in specific areas, supported by energy generated at power plant on Charles Street
- Need trees, hanging baskets, flags and potted plants on Clinton and Front Streets
- Demolition and reconstruction – most buildings are beyond repair
- Lets bring business to the riverfront (like places in Europe)
- Need to consider floodwalls and their impact on useful development
- Need to improve zoning code to put teeth into enforcement that allows area to foster and maintain value
- Most of First Ward except Charles Street and south of Clinton should be residential
- Demolish block by block
- Rebuild new homes with larger lot sizes
- Clinton Street is a gateway to our great city

Business Development and Job Creation

Recommendations on the Business Development and Job Creation board were consistent with the recommendations in section 2.6 of the Pre-Nomination Study. The majority of respondents were in agreement with all recommendations presented under this category, although each recommendation also received one “not sure” vote. There were no “disagree” votes.

Comments generated on this board are listed below:

- Need small businesses to respond to demand generated by new businesses in Charles Street Business Park
- Need turn off for busses on Clinton Street
- Utilize cogeneration plant for municipal energy
- Keep trucks off Field Street and Jarvis Street
- Heavy trucks on city streets – over load weight – how will they get here

City of Binghamton
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APPENDIX D – STAKEHOLDER MEETING MINUTES

City of Binghamton
FIRST WARD BOA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

SUMMARY OF WRITTEN COMMENTS

Business Representatives

Comments provided by:

- Andre Blackwell
- Tanya Pickering
- Nora and Steve Heath

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

Imagine the First Ward in 2020 – What would you like to see stay the same? What would you like to see different?

Same

- Continuation of street fairs – one every six months.
- Integrity of the First Ward.
- Old town look and feel – it's a draw (Town of Owego has same old feel, but it has also been updated and buildings aren't dirty and falling apart).
- Continuation of property maintenance by residents and businesses.

Different

- Need banners with the names of businesses on them up and down the street.
- All the stores on Clinton Street filled.
- Crime rate improve.
- Appearance of buildings better.
- Overall look of the neighborhood updated.
- Improvements by 2020 will improve businesses.
- Need a community garden.
- Need museum of First Ward history.
- More landscaping, such as flowered medians.
- Hanging baskets of flowers along the street.
- Better lighting at night.

What are some of the specific issues facing small business owners and service providers in the First Ward neighborhood?

- Times are tough for small businesses. We need people to look in on them and talk to them and offer support. We want to make sure they don't go out of business.
- We need to have someone get with the business owners a couple times a week and get business owners to start attending key meetings.
- Drug deals on streets shy away customers.

- Perception of Clinton Street in general is “its scary”.
- Safety.
- Parking.
- High operating costs – taxes, utilities, etc.
- Competing with large chains.

What are some of the positive aspects associated with working, running, or owning a business in the First Ward?

- While I love the First Ward, there are really no positives today associated with owning a small business there.
- Very supportive and caring neighborhood.
- Everyone gets involved to help find a solution for a problem impacting an individual.
- History and ethnic roots.

What are some projects, improvements, or efforts that could be undertaken to improve small business conditions in the First Ward?

- Have someone from the City show they care about you and your business.
- Improvements on roadways.
- Improved parking conditions.
- Improved reputation of First Ward and Clinton Street.
- Needs to look welcoming and inviting to those passing by.
- Remove all blighted buildings.
- Maybe foot patrol police or a police sub-station would help.
- WiFi accessibility.

Does the City currently provide you, a business or service provider, incentives or benefits associated with your business? What incentives do you think would help the local business community?

- Need incentives associated with NYSEG and rent assistance.
- No incentives currently in place.
- No.

What types of businesses do you think are most appropriate in the First Ward?

- DMV, Blackwell’s, gas stations, cell phone store, churches, boys and girls club.
- New businesses are making Clinton look good – the “new downtown”.
- Need variety of businesses to attract a variety of people.
- New and different businesses have opened on Clinton Street, but some have also had to close.
- Retail

What are the three most important projects / initiatives you would like to see undertaken in the First ward in the next three years?

- No closed stores.
- No more empty lots.
- No more every man for himself – need to work together to stay alive.

- Conditions of buildings.
- Street maintenance improvements.
- More community programs.

- Titchener's – removed or utilized.
- Park and ride or several spaced out parking lots.
- Many more flowers and landscaping.

Additional comments:

- Clinton Street is coming along nice.
- We still have a lot of work to do. We can work together and go to meetings and get this on paper and then start working on this together.
- We love the First Ward. The community is wonderful and the streets are well traveled. If there were a few changes I think businesses here would thrive.

City of Binghamton

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MEETING MINUTES

City Leaders and Agencies Stakeholder Meeting
September 16, 2009

MEETING ATTENDEES

- Tim Cleary, Broome County Legislator, 2nd District
- Richard D'Attilio, BCIDA
- Barbara Furch, Representative of Assemblywoman Lupardo
- Caroline Quidort, City of Binghamton
- Kimberly Baptiste, Bergmann Associates

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

Assuming no constraints, and looking ahead 10-15 years, what is your ideal vision for the First Ward neighborhood?

- It should be the second downtown, the "other" business district
- Downtown west
- Clinton Street with its own niche – start to diversify
- Like Owego
- It's a clean sheet of paper
- Small, service-based businesses
- Needs a theme an character to build from
- NOT another Clinton Street run
- Unique
- More off-street parking available

What would you say are the greatest assets in the First Ward neighborhood?

- The people are the strength, they are committed to the community
- People want to stay and thrive
- New, positive additions create change
- Charles Street Business Park
 - Owned by IDA
 - Emerson is a \$10 million investment
 - IDA committed to high standards for build-out
 - Nothing new currently lined up
 - Site could house another 4-5 companies of similar size

What would you say are the biggest constraints or obstacles associated with revitalization of the First Ward?

- Buildings are old
- Neighborhood is old
- Not a critical mass of consumers
- Need seed money, hard to sustain a small business
- Façade program would improve look and feel
- Small business development is very hard
- Infrastructure
- Street network and links are bad
- Railroad needs to be addressed
- Off-street parking doesn't exist but is needed
- Front Street and Clinton Street appearance
- Tichener site
- Transportation issues on Charles Street side – access almost impossible on West Street – need to open throat on Charles Street
- Parking is too close to intersections – hard to see – creates blind spots

As a City leader or representative of a city / regional agency, what can you or your agency do to help further revitalization and redevelopment efforts in the First Ward?

- BCIDA – small business program
- County – invest in brownfield sites (Tichener site, still privately owned)
- Aquifer under Charles Street Business Park – one of most prolific – all this water and no place to use it – how do we capitalize on it – is it potable?
- State Assembly – capital projects and rehab projects - \$125,00 for new Boys and Girls Club

What are the most important projects / initiatives you would like to see undertaken in the First Ward in the next three years?

- Tichener property – need to know more about it and do something with it
- Transportation – unclog Clinton Street – get rid of through traffic as regular traffic is problem enough
- Rail overpass – trucks both ways instead of just one way
- Identify what to do with the co-generation plant – could generate power for business district – people think there is a lot of opportunity associated with that – originally built for steam for International Paper – may not be efficient today

City of Binghamton

FIRST WARD BOA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

MEETING MINUTES

Community Service Providers Stakeholder Meeting
September 16, 2009

MEETING ATTENDEES

- Steve Sedlock, Steering Committee Chair
- Marybeth Smith, Boys and Girls Club
- Jerry Willard, First Ward Action Council
- Caroline Quidort, City of Binghamton
- Kimberly Baptiste, Bergmann Associates

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

Imagine the First Ward in 2020 – What would you like to see stay the same? What would you like to see different?

Same

- Boys and Girls Club still there and doing well
- Boys and Girls Club having positive impact on community
- Continue expanding niche businesses – cards, video, etc. are doing well today

Different

- No more crime
- Safer
- Mindset – business owners look for trouble
- Aesthetics of Clinton Street
- People feel safe
- More positive and upbeat
- Stop blaming others for lack of success
- Change peoples' perception of First Ward
- More diversity in business types
- Not Antique Row anymore – this concept has changes (impacted by 9/11 and Ebay.com)

What are some of the obstacles and opportunities associated with running a business / service in the First Ward neighborhood?

Obstacles

- Some of the buildings are in poor condition
- How to motivate people to care what their property looks like
- Apathy

Opportunities

- Celebrate people who take care of their buildings
- Lots of traffic on Clinton is good for business
- People in the neighborhood
- Need to keep working with businesses – strive to be like Ithaca Commons

What are the three most important projects / initiatives you would like to see undertaken in the First Ward in the next three years?

- Traffic calming (not enough speed limit signs)
- Streetscape enhancements
- More trees and flowers
- Motivate business owners
- Easy to work with buildings, hard to work with people
- Fill gaps in community
- Vacant spaces would benefit from infill development

General Discussion

Boys and Girls Club

- For children 6-18 years
- Recreation and education programs
- Bus kids in
- Have dinner program
- Schoolwork, dance, sports, computer, cooking
- Open 3-8:30 weekdays and 7-5 weekends
- No geographic restrictions
- Not-for-profit
- 75 staff members, new business opportunities (35 per shift, average)
- Serve 110-175 kids per night

First Ward Action Council

- Renovate storefronts – seen as wasting tax dollars
- Develop housing, provide housing, assist homeowners
- Mixed use revitalization projects
- Healthy business district is part of a healthy neighborhood

First Ward Assembly

- Just held successful day-long street fair

Miscellaneous Comments

- Need façade improvement program but businesses have to be interested in participating and paying for portion of improvements – FWAC interested in this
- Rental rates are low - \$550-600 month for high quality space
- First Ward was “bar capital” from the 1920’s – 1950’s, only 3 bars left today

- Latin American grill didn't make it – in business about 1 year – reluctance of neighborhood to try something different
- Efforts to draw Binghamton University into First Ward
- Sunrise Diner is a local neighborhood market

City of Binghamton
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SUMMARY OF WRITTEN COMMENTS

Emerson Employees
December 7, 2009

ATTENDEES:

Kim Weinstein
Wendy Brown
Dennise Pezzolla
Denise Scordino
Joe Papso
Lillian Biefeldt
George Cummings
Gary Bleil

1. Do you currently live within the First Ward Neighborhood?

No participants in the meeting are residents of the First Ward. Only 1 employee currently resides in the neighborhood.

If no, where do you currently live? (please continue to question 3)

- Endicott
- Vestal
- Pennsylvania
- Endwell
- Town of Binghamton
- City of Binghamton

2. If you are a First Ward resident, what neighborhood characteristics made you decide to move here?

Not applicable.

3. If you are not a First Ward resident, what are your reasons for not living here?

- Bad reputation locally.

Would you consider relocating to the neighborhood to be closer to your employer? Why or why not?

- No, live only 15 minutes away.
- Houses are too old, too small, and its too hilly.
- Traffic is NOT an issue, there is none in the City – no need to move closer with such short commutes
- No, crime is rampant in the neighborhood

- I am not comfortable going for walks at lunchtime, would not be comfortable living here
- Just not an appealing neighborhood
- It looks rundown
- It's a very different neighborhood than 30 years ago – was much more robust – very active – in comparison, the parks and streets are empty today.
- No, people live in the communities they grew up in.
- No, school district is not as good.
- No, aesthetics
- No shopping nearby

What would you like to see change in the neighborhood in order for you to consider relocating?

- More of an activity base
- Cleaned up – it looks dirty
- More shopping options and services

4. As an employee in the neighborhood, do you think there are adequate goods and services nearby to meet your needs during the work day? If not, what goods and services would you like to have nearby?

- Pizza place
- Fast food
- Bakery
- Restaurants, not just diners
- Cyber café – mimic “Lost Dog Café”
- Banks
- Discount store
- Grocery store

5. What do you see as the biggest issues facing the neighborhood today? What are some of the positive things you have witnessed?

Issues

- Parking
- Security
- Mental health facilities on Clinton (two of them)
- Blight
- Crime
- No services

Positive

- Emerson's new facility
- Fire department nearby

6. Thinking ahead 10 years to 2020 what would be the top 3 changes you would see at the Charles Street Business Park and in the First Ward Neighborhood (examples - greenway network, access to waterfront, more commercial uses on Clinton Street, etc.)

- An antique center / multi-dealer mall – people want one stop shop – this would be that but still fit in with historical reputation of the neighborhood (example – “The Windmill”)
- Fitness center

7. With a vested interest in the future of the First Ward, would you be interested in getting involved in the BOA planning process to help further local revitalization efforts? How do you think you can help?

- No