

Page One

/ News / Page One /

« Legislature Fails To Agree T...

Digging For Answers»

- Page One
- Local News
- Obituaries
- Community
- Business
- Opinion
- Briefly
- Most Wanted
- Stay and Play
- Police Reports
- Corrections
- New York News
- National News
- International News
- Community Journal
- Special Sections
- SUBMIT News

Charting Progress

Committee Balances Development, Recreation, Green Spaces On The Chadakoin River

April 25, 2012

By Hillary Scott (hscott@post-journal.com) , The Post-Journal

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Consultants working on the Chadakoin River Revitalization Study are trying to balance development, recreation and green spaces going forward.

The first public meeting addressing the City of Jamestown Chadakoin River Revitalization Study was held at the Robert H. Jackson Center on Tuesday.

The Chadakoin River Revitalization Study is a 16-month planning effort focused on identifying opportunities for economic development and recreation along the Chadakoin riverfront through Jamestown.

This first meeting served as a forum for public discussion about the riverfront and its potential to become a greater community asset.

"We do other planning projects in communities of this size and we rarely get a turnout this big, especially for a first meeting," said Edward Flynn, LaBella Associates senior planner. "It looks like you truly care about your community and that's really an important part about doing this revitalization study that we get community input."

THE PLAN

LaBella Associates, the lead consultant on the study, in conjunction with the project's subconsultants, introduced to the overall study, project vision and the work team.

Jamestown was recently awarded three state planning grants targeted at the Chadakoin River and the properties near the River. These grants include two Brownfield Opportunity Area studies and a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program study.

The EPA defines a "brownfield site" as real property, the expansion, redevelopment or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

"Don't be afraid of contaminated property," said Robert Murray, an attorney at Harris Beach PLLC. As one of the consultants on the project, he explained that Brownfield Cleanup Program tax credits refund 22 to 50 percent of all cleanup costs. The program also comes with liability relief, he said.

Dan Riker, LaBella Associates senior geologist and project manager, said that the project's goal is to make the waterfront a destination for development and for community recreation.

He noted that as manufacturing has declined over the years and is predicted to continue declining, the health care and professional employment sector has grown. The consultants want to fill many of the empty manufacturing buildings on the waterfront with health care and professional employment uses.

The legion of consultants gave a general overview of their roles in the study. These include conservation planning, characterizing and

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The Chadakoin River and development around it is being dis...



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analyzing transportation, market and economic analysis, obtaining Brownfield and economic financial incentives, and community outreach.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The consultants asked the public to identify the biggest opportunities areas, the biggest challenges, highest priority areas and the types of uses they want more and less of.

"If the water isn't clean, nobody is going to want to come near it," said John Gallagher, Conewango Creek Watershed Association director. He said the litter that collects at the Warner Dam needs to be addressed.

Greg Jones, a retired local resident, said it has been a 50-year dream of his for there to be access to Jamestown from Chautauqua Lake by navigating through the outlet. Many others in attendance echoed this sentiment, as well as the his desire for walking and biking paths along the river.

People repeated "we want as much green as possible" over and over, championing that green spaces should take priority during the revitalization.

Ruth Lundin, Jamestown Audubon Society president, said they should utilize the space to provide people the opportunity to be part of the natural world.

Those in attendance also expressed a desire for recreation opportunities, including parks, kayaking destinations, fishing spots and trails.

"What is the destination?" asked John Zabrodsky, BPU board chairman. He pointed out that there needs to be a destination to get people into the green spaces. He advised that the consultants not only look at market analysis, but competitive analysis with other green spaces, including Kinzua, Allegany State Park and state parks on both Lake Erie and Chautauqua lakes.

One of the challenges that was brought up was the train tracks, as it's difficult to build near train tracks and they will disturb the green areas' natural qualities.

The next public meeting is planned for August. For information on the project, visit www.chadakoinrevitalization.com.

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