

---

<b>Date/Time</b>	Wednesday, November 15, 2023, 10:00 AM		
<b>Location</b>	Steele Memorial Library, 101 East Church Street, Elmira, New York		
<b>Attendees</b>	Eric Barton	(EBarton)	River Rescue Task Force / Deputy Chief, Elmira Fire Department
	Dan Mandell	(DMandell)	Mayor, City of Elmira
	Andy Avery	(AAvery)	Commissioner of Public Works, Chemung County Department of Public Works
	Elizabeth Zilinski	(EZilinski)	Executive Director, Friends of Chemung River Watershed
	Bruce Whitmarsh	(BWhitmarsh)	Director, Chemung Valley History Museum
	Corey Cooke	(CCooke)	City Councilman, City of Elmira
	Emma Miran	(EMiran)	Director of Community Development, City of Elmira
	Janet Thigpen*	(JThigpen)	Flood Mitigation Specialist, Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board (STC)
	Kylene Kiah*	(KKiah)	Executive Director, Elmira Downtown Development
	Chris Coletta*	(CColetta)	Vice President and Commercial Loan Office II, Chemung Canal Trust Company
	Karl Schweisinger*	(KSchweisinger)	Elmira Community Cycle / Project Manager, Fagan Engineers
	Joshua Hunn*	(JHunn)	New York State Department of State (DOS) – DOS Representative for Elmira LWRP
	Kevin Meindl	(KMeindl)	Commissioner of Planning, Chemung County Planning Department
	Emily Marino	(EMarino)	Grants Manager, Chemung County Planning Department
	Alison Herman	(AHerman)	Associate Planner, Chemung County Planning Department
	Frank Armento, AICP CEP	(FArmento)	Fisher Associates
	Sarah Martin, AICP	(SMartin)	Fisher Associates

*\* attended virtually*

---

<b>From</b>	Sarah Martin AICP, Associate Planner, Fisher Associates		
<b>Subject</b>	Chemung County: Development of a Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan   Waterfront Advisory Committee Kick-off Meeting		

---

### Introduction and Project Overview

- The meeting began with formal introductions of the project team members, Waterfront Advisory Committee (WAC) members, and DOS representative Joshua Hunn.
- Frank Armento (FArmento) began the meeting by stating that this meeting and subsequent meetings are meant to be collaborative conversations, and invited committee members to contribute their thoughts and ask questions during the course of the meeting.
- FArmento presented a PowerPoint presentation which reviewed various aspects of the project.
  - FArmento reviewed the timeline of how the grant was awarded and the project was initiated.

*Funding for this Program is provided by the New York State Department of State (NYSDOS) under the Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Grant Program.*



- FARmento reviewed the components of a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) including the boundaries of the Local Waterfront Revitalization Area (LWRA), the inventory of protected resources, statement of goals and objectives, uses and projects, implementation techniques, state and federal actions likely to affect implementation, local support and agency coordination, and the harbor management plan.
- FARmento reviewed the various benefits of implementing an LWRP (see PowerPoint slides)
- Kevin Meindl (KMeindl) indicated that the City of Elmira is the main agency driving the LWRP, and Chemung County is playing a supporting role.

#### **Roles and Requirements**

- WAC members asked what will be expected of them throughout the process. FARmento reviewed the information under “Roles and Responsibilities” (see “Detailed Meeting Agenda”). FARmento indicated the consultant team would complete most of the preliminary work and drafting of materials, and WAC members will review and provide input on those materials at each project phase. FARmento emphasized the importance of keeping lines of communication open.

#### **Site Conditions / Local Waterfront Revitalization Area**

- FARmento presented the preliminary LWRA boundary. KMeindl noted that this boundary was a very preliminary sketch of the LWRA which will need to be adjusted, particularly on the south side.
- An enlarged map of the City of Elmira and the preliminary study area boundary was available on the table for WAC members to review and discuss the project boundary.
  - Elizabeth Zilinski (EZilinski) asked whether certain parks, including the Jim Nelson Park (former Hudson Street Park) are included in the boundary. Based on the mapping, Jim Nelson Park is not currently in the preliminary boundary; however, the boundary will be adjusted to include it.
  - The WAC asked if the boundary could be expanded outside of the City of Elmira to include nearby amenities. KMeindl explained that the LWRP is limited by municipal boundaries and can't be extended outside the City limits. Andy Avery (AAvery) asked that the plan acknowledges nearby boat launches that are outside the boundary.
  - AAvery recommended the boundary be extended further south than Hudson Street, potentially to Mt. Zoar Street.
  - Josh Hunn (JHunn) noted that the feedback from the WAC during the boundary discussion is the type of feedback needed throughout the process.
- AAvery noted the flood of 1972 was very influential in the City of Elmira and needs to be acknowledged, and called the LWRP a “key moment” in the history of the river and the City.
- AAvery acknowledged that the Chemung River is very dangerous, and the fire departments nearby sometimes have to conduct rescues. There is a need to teach people to be safe in the river. FARmento noted that safety should be a component of the planning process.
- KMeindl asked if historical information would come out of the inventory. FARmento stated that is usually the first part of the inventory and will be covered accordingly.
- AAvery suggested the project team bring in Jim Lynch from the NYSDEC to discuss the floodwall (Jim Lynch was also involved in DRI projects near the floodwall). AAvery also suggested reaching out to the General Manager at the Elmira Water Board, and engaging the sewer district as they have a large CSO project underway. AAvery recommended these three individuals/organizations be added to the WAC.

#### **Data Collection**

- FARmento asked all members of the WAC to transmit any information they think is important to the project team to be reviewed and potentially included in the Inventory and Analysis.
- KMeindl suggested the project team review the DRI, Southside Rising, and Elmira Comp Plan (2016). Emma Miran (EMiran) noted the DRI was based on a BOA.
- AAvery suggested project team look at the Lake Street Pedestrian Bridge and will send project team a copy. Sarah Martin (SMartin) explained WAC members should send information to Alison to add to the SharePoint site.



- Bruce Whitmarsh (BWhitmarsh) asked for clarification of what the team is looking for, where does historical society fit in? FARmento and SMartin explained there is a variety of data we are looking for, which might include historical land uses and industry along river, reports, and historic photographs.
- Karl Schweisinger (KSchweisinger) will send information on glider sculpture in nearby park.
- Janet Thigpen (JThigpen) will send information about flood risks. Noted FEMA is working on analysis of levees which may impact flood maps. That project is expected to wrap up by the end of 2024.

#### **Expected Deliverables**

- FARmento reviewed list of expected deliverables (see “Detailed Meeting Agenda”).
- FARmento asked WAC members to think of recommendations for stakeholder list, including community organizations who would act as a liaison between the project team and their constituents.
- FARmento noted that Community Outreach Plan, adjusted LWRA boundary, and inventory and analysis are early tasks the project team is working on.
- FARmento reviewed the SEQRA process and noted that SEQR must be completed before municipal adoption of the LWRP. AAvery asked if SEQR applies to the plan or the projects? FARmento clarified SEQR relates to the plan.
- FARmento noted that conceptual graphics to get people excited about the plan will be part of the deliverables.
- FARmento noted that the Final LWRP will include all comments from the Department of State. After municipal adoption the LWRP will go to NOAA for review and approval.

#### **Next Steps**

- FARmento reviewed the list of upcoming deliverables on which the WAC should be prepared to provide comments (see “Detailed Meeting Agenda”). FARmento noted the draft Community Outreach Plan is targeted for a January completion date.

#### **Key Project Contact Information**

- FARmento noted that key project contact information is available at the end of the agenda (see “Detailed Meeting Agenda”).

#### **Project Schedule**

- WAC members attending in person were provided with a printed copy of the project schedule. FARmento reviewed the schedule and noted the expected completion date for local adoption of September 2025.
- AAvery asked about review process. FARmento explained that drafts will be reviewed by City / County, then WAC, then DOS before being finalized.

#### **Closing and Final Questions**

- BWhitmarsh asked what kinds of projects are covered under the LWRP. For instance, the historical society building is in the study area, is a County owned building, and the historical society is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. KMeindl and FARmento explained that it is possible, but it depends on whether the County applies for funding to make improvements to the building based on the LWRP.
- EMiran notes that money hasn’t gone into Riverfront Park in years and the park needs revitalization.
- In-person meeting attendees were asked to write comments on the study area map on the table. The study area tour was postponed due to weather conditions.

*The foregoing meeting minutes represent the writer’s interpretation and summary of the proceedings of the meeting. Please notify Fisher Associates of any additions or modifications.*

**Sarah Martin, AICP**  
Associate Planner



55 Chicago Street, Suite 200  
Buffalo, NY 14202  
716.858.1234 ext. 321 (office)  
smartin@fisherassoc.com  
www.fisherassoc.com

*Funding for this Program is provided by the New York State Department of State (NYSDOS) under the Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Grant Program.*