

Project Name: NY Forward: Farmingdale
Subject: Local Planning Committee Meeting #6

Meeting Location: Farmingdale Village Hall (361 Main Street)
Meeting Date: November 5, 2025
Meeting Time: 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Participants: **Local Planning Committee**
Mayor Ralph Ekstrand, Co-Chair
Peter Elkowitz, Co-Chair
Eric Anderson
Anthony Bartone
Debbie Podolski
Chris Werle
Paul Defendini
Nick DeVito
William Sklar
George Graf

Not present: Adrienne Esposito

New York State

Pape Cisse, Department of State (DOS)
Brandon Gimpelman, Empire State Development (ESD)
Joseph Ramirez, Nassau County Regional Representative

Consultant Team

Noah Levine, Associate Principal, BFJ Planning
Suzanne Goldberg, Senior Planner, BFJ Planning
Eshti Sookram, Planner, BFJ Planning

Note: comments made by LPC Members and members of the public have been paraphrased for clarity and summary purposes.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss any final updates on submitted projects from the Open Call for Projects, review design guidelines for the Small Project Fund, and vote on the final slate of projects. Approximately 3 members of the public were in attendance. The presentation is posted on the [Farmingdale NYF website](#) and can be referenced for additional details.

Introductions and NYF Code of Conduct

- Members of the public were reminded that LPC meetings are working sessions, and there is an opportunity for the public to share comments at the end of the meeting.
- The BFJ Planning consultant team and State team introduced themselves.
- Co-Chair and Mayor Ralph Ekstrand read aloud the NYF Code of Conduct, reminding members of their obligation to act in the public interest and to recuse themselves when necessary.
- It was noted that LPC member Chris Werle would need to recuse himself from discussions of Croxley's and Zuzu on Main.

Planning Process

- Suzanne Goldberg of BFJ Planning provided an overview of the NYF timeline, noting that the process is nearing its conclusion with this final LPC meeting, the finalization of project profiles, and the compilation of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP).
- After the planning process concludes, State agencies will evaluate the projects recommended by the LPC. Funding announcements are expected in Spring 2026, followed by contract execution and the start of project implementation in the ensuing months.
 - It was asked whether projects must begin as soon as the contract is received. It was clarified that projects cannot start until the contract is executed, though an estimated start date will be provided.
 - A question was raised about whether private projects receive contracts directly or through the Village. It was explained that the Village will contract through DOS, while private projects will contract through ESD or HCR, with the appropriate agency issuing an Implementation Plan.
 - It was asked if billing could begin once awards are received and whether there is any risk with contracting. It was noted that it is best to wait until the contract is executed, as issues can arise; contracts are often backdated to account for early work. DOS expects to have a work plan and budget ready by June next year, allowing them to begin coordination with the Village even if the formal contract execution is still pending.

Overview of Public Projects

Performing Arts Center:

New construction of an 8,000 sq ft performing arts center on South Front Street (currently the northern portion of Parking Lot 3), with approximately 275 seats. This is proposed to be operated by the Studio Theatre of Long Island. The project could result in the loss of approximately 40 parking spaces; however, the Village has relocated 15 trucks to Lot 9, and plans to add spaces near the theater, utilize nearby LIRR parking lots, and continue exploring options to replace parking.

Streetscape, Signage, and Village Green:

Improvements include restriping and safety enhancements at the Main Street and South Front Street pedestrian crossings, replacing the fence along South Front Street in coordination with the LIRR, and adding gateway signage at five Village entry points, including a gateway sign at the Conklin Avenue

trestle. Additional upgrades include a new retaining wall with plantings and Farmingdale signage at the Village Green, as well as landscaping and streetscape enhancements along Moby Way, featuring updated curbs, sidewalks, landscaping, and street furniture. Based on public feedback, there is also interest in improving the alleyway between iSmash and the physical therapy office (leading to Parking Lot 2) to create a more inviting and functional pedestrian connection.

Pedestrian Safety and Traffic Calming:

Improvements at the key intersections of Fulton and Main Street and Fulton and Staples Street are proposed to increase pedestrian safety. Since Fulton Street is a NYS roadway, this project requires further coordination with NYS DOT.

Historic Thomas Powell House Repairs & Renovations:

Interior and exterior renovations aimed at rehabilitating the structure and preserving the historic home. In a second phase, which is not part of this funding request, the Village plans to operate the restored home as a museum and visitors center. Additional funding sources and partnerships should also be explored.

Overview of Private Projects

L.I. McGrath's:

Addition of solar panels, other energy efficient improvements (doors/windows, appliances, plumbing, HVAC system), and a mural on the side of the building.

The Barnyard Caribbean Soul Bistro:

Installation of new, energy efficient HVAC system, updated exterior improvements (awnings, signage, lighting), and replacement of outdated windows and doors with energy efficient alternatives.

Croxley's

Tinting of windows for energy-efficiency, replacement of awnings, installation of a new sanitizer walk-in box, and upgrade of the security system.

Zuzu on Main

Installation of a water circulating tower, installation of new water lines, and installation of a new roof rack for the water tower. The project team noted that the sponsor added a new water heater with increased capacity to the project.

Other Projects:

Small Project Fund:

A fund that could support a range of improvements for buildings and businesses, with totals of less than \$75,000.

Noah Levine of BFJ Planning noted that the Small Project Fund could prioritize funding for projects that align with the vision developed by the LPC through the planning process. He also explained that design guidelines could be established to help implement the Village's vision and ensure visual continuity among various elements. The Village's highest priority would be rear façade improvements, as current CDBG funding for façades and awnings cannot be applied to rear façades.

This is particularly important in Farmingdale, where the majority of public parking is located behind businesses, making rear façades the first impression for many visitors.

Roadmap for Continued Revitalization/ “Pipeline Projects”

Mr. Levine also discussed the concept of roadmap and pipeline projects—initiatives that the Village intends to pursue following the conclusion of the NYF planning process. While these projects are not part of the official funding slate, the LPC may acknowledge them for their potential to advance the NYF goals. Additionally, the Department of State (DOS) may consider funding projects from the roadmap if any projects on the approved slate are unable to move forward.

The following projects are included as Pipeline Projects:

- Phase 2: Thomas Powell House Museum/Education Center
- Median Landscaping on Fulton Street
- Pedestrian Safety Improvements at Intersection of Conklin Street and Secatogue Avenue

LPC Vote

The LPC concluded the meeting with a vote on the final slate of projects.

- The vote is conducted by slate rather than project-by-project. The LPC does not prioritize individual projects but instead votes on the entire slate as a whole.
- LPC members were provided with ballots to vote on the full slate of projects. Members were instructed to recuse themselves from voting on any projects where a conflict of interest may exist.

General Questions from the Public/LPC:

- It was asked how approval is confirmed once all materials are reviewed and whether another meeting occurs. It was explained that there will be a quiet period after submission of the SIP to the State. The State will take several months to review the plan, coordinate with agencies, and assign leads for each project. A public announcement is expected in late spring, after which the contracting process will begin.
- A question was raised about how the public will know when private projects are being implemented. It was noted that private projects will contract directly with ESD, which will manage execution and ensure proper oversight. These projects must be fully executed before reimbursement is issued.
- It was reiterated that project funding is reimbursement-based—the Village or sponsor must pay costs upfront, and the State will reimburse expenses based on the approved contract and budget.
- A question was raised about what happens if a business does not proceed with its project. It was explained that remaining funds could be reallocated to other vetted projects, based on which ones most need the additional funding.
- It was clarified that only projects included in or approved as part of the SIP are eligible for funding.
- A question was raised about rear façade improvements and how businesses can access that work. It was noted that the Village may begin preliminary coordination before full implementation.

Next Steps

- BFJ will send a fillable PDF ballot to the LPC member not present for the final vote. These ballots will be utilized as the official voting record.
- Consultants will continue coordinating with project sponsors to finalize project details and address any minor cost estimate adjustments.
- By the end of November, BFJ will submit the Draft Strategic Investment Plan to the State.
- The Final NY Forward Strategic Investment Plan is due to the State by mid-December.