

Organization River Area Council of Governments

Board Retail Development

Date and Time Wednesday, January 15 2003 at 5:00 PM

Place Town of Champion Offices Board Room (rear of building) 10 N Broad St, West Carthage NY

Contact [Chris Vargulick](#) Town Clerk Phone (315) 493-3240 Fax(315) 493-2900

Minutes

RACOG Regional Retail Committee Meeting

Date: January 15, 2002

Location: Town of Champion Municipal Building

Time: 5:30 P.M.

Attendees: Pat Kehoe, Herb Kraft, Ray Powers, Bruce Armstrong, John Peck, Frank Koster, Dave Zembiec, Tim Wright, Ron Blinebry, and Kathy Riches-Amyot

Absent: Rebecca Vary, Rick Novy, & Scott Burto

Kathy facilitated an informal discussion of the committee, beginning with an overview of why and how the committee was formed, its purpose, and revitalization reports and initiatives to build upon in identifying next steps - "Downtown Revitalization Plan for the Villages of Carthage and West Carthage" and the "Retail Analysis Plan for Carthage/West Carthage Downtown," CDBG Façade & Public Improvement Program, Carthage Furniture Store Project and a scheduled Retail Workshop. Emphasis was placed upon the role of each member to maintain a flow of communication between the activities of the committee and the entity they represent.

In opening the discussion, each representative was invited to share their perspective and comments related to regional retail development. Members of the committee agreed the recent closure of the Ames Department Store and absence of retail development in the downtown area further emphasized the need for a regional response to identify local and regional incentives to attract future retail development. The following includes various topics for consideration:

- Pat Kehoe stated Ames Department Store grossed approximately \$4 million annually in Carthage and suggested it could serve as an incentive to attract other retail stores as well as the now vacant space it once occupied.
- Herb Kraft commented on the newspaper article announcing the opening of Wise Buys Chain at identified locations that used to house Ames. He suggested a conversation with the investors might prove beneficial in attracting it to the Carthage area.
- Ray Powers stated he represents NYS DOT's interest related to low vehicular traffic and its affect on retail development to the area.
- Bruce Armstrong stated the county brings to the table resources to assist the committee in its tasks and suggested representatives may want to identify as approach in determining next steps.
- Frank Koster referenced the vacant retail space along outer State Street in Watertown to emphasize the challenges facing investors and the importance of location, location, location.
- John Peck identified regional culture, community resources, and development opportunities that could play an important role in attracting future development.
- Dave Zembiec contributed the resources of the Tug Hill Commission as the committee advances its role and referenced regional initiatives to assist in next steps. .
- Tim Wright emphasized the importance of industrial development as a key to attracting retail development to the area.
- Ron Blinebry reiterated the importance of location in attracting development while emphasizing visual enhancements to facades, streetscape, and downtown area to attract a customer base built upon environmental conditions that reflect success.

Kathy provided committee members with relevant information from the "Downtown Revitalization Plan for the Villages of Carthage and West Carthage" and excerpts from the "Retail Downtown Development Plan for Carthage and West Carthage" to assist the committee in identifying opportunities for retail development.

Dave Zembiec disseminated brochures announcing "America's Downtown Renaissance: Retail Revitalization & More" workshop to be held April 10th from 6-9:00 P.M at the Best Western Carriage House, Washington Street, Watertown, NY. In a summary of information Dave stated, the emphasis of the workshop is being placed upon retail strategies and practices.

Each committee member agreed to assess and identify a list of community attributes that would attract retail investment in preparation for the next meeting.

The **next meeting** is scheduled for **February 12, 2003 at 7:00 P.M. at the Town of Champion Municipal Building.**