

DID YOU KNOW???

TRANSPORTATION CONSULTANT BRINGS NEW IDEAS TO MALONE

Is Malone a village that is easy to walk in? Is it a bikable village? Is it a village that outsiders might want to visit? These were some of the questions that Mark Fenton, public health, planning and transportation consultant, asked of the public officials and local business people during his visit to Malone in May.

Fenton speaks throughout the U.S., analyzing communities for their walkability, bikability, and their transportation assets and problems as he sees it. He looked at the condition of some of our sidewalks, crosswalks, and traffic flows.

We can look at what he (or any outsider) had to offer in two ways. We can look negatively, as “we don’t want an outsider telling us what to do”, or we can look positively, as “we welcome an outsider’s view on how he sees our village and appreciate any suggestions he may have”.

I was able to attend his session for elected officials from the village, town, and county as well as NYS DOT and invited others. With this group, Fenton gave a short presentation of healthy community design principles, prevailing best practices, and low-cost and even temporary approaches to demonstrating and implementing designs.

This session included a walk through Arsenal Green Park and along both sides of Main St between Arsenal Green and the Court House. The group was tasked with how each rated the various sections on a 1-10 scale relative to the principles of a walkable, desirable community likely to attract visitors as well as cater to its residents.

Arsenal Green scored relatively high as a nice place to walk with nice new sidewalks and lots of green but would have scored higher if it was complete with bike paths and benches.

On the other end of the scale, much of Main Street scored low with heavy, noisy traffic being a negative along with empty, dilapidated buildings. Debris and sand all along the way also contributed to a low score. Interestingly, the audible pedestrian crosswalk signals, countdown timers, and safety of crossing were positives.

On the following day, Fenton worked with some of the Middle School students, giving them hands-on experience with traffic calming measures such as bump outs, parklets, mini-roundabouts, and pedestrian islands. The students also experienced the results from traffic counts at the busy W. Main/Brewster/Academy street intersection.

Although Fenton’s visit was limited to the Village of Malone, everything that is good for the village is also good for the Town of Malone and Franklin County. His expertise and visions should be of benefit to all of us, elected officials and residents. One thing is certain – change is inevitable. As a community we should all embrace change but let’s make sure it is for the better. Let’s not “poo poo” suggestions but rather discuss them and see if it would be a good fit for Malone. It will be interesting to see what changes, if any, will be implemented.