

# VILLAGE OF SHERMAN

## HOME OF THE YORKER MUSEUM

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October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Ms. Karen Utz, Regional Director  
Regional Economic Development Council  
95 Perry St., Ste. 500  
Buffalo, NY 14203

RE: NY FORWARD GRANT APPLICATION ROUND 3 – VILLAGE OF SHERMAN

Dear Ms. Utz

As the Chair of the Village of Sherman Planning Board, I wish to express our complete support for the application to the NY Forward Grant, Round 3. We concur with the Board of Trustees that revitalizing our Downtown Main Street area is a high priority, working toward the health, safety and wellness of the village, and for the protection of vulnerable aging buildings.

Along with the adoption of the Fair Housing Policy in 2017, and the adoption of the Pro-Housing Pledge in 2024, the village has taken proactive steps to manage and remediate blight and vacancy issues, with the implementation of the “Vacant, Abandoned, Boarded and Foreclosed Property” law. The village has submitted all the requirements to achieve our Pro-Housing certification and are aggressively pursuing ways to protect and increase our housing stock to meet the growing residential need. Under the leadership of Mayor Colleen Meeder, the Village of Sherman has undergone incredible transformation, not only aesthetically, but all in line with the vision to build a stable and sustainable future. This includes the complete renovation of both the water and sewer facilities, the first phase of the 5-year stormwater improvements project, installation of 2 electric vehicle charging stations, adding additional lighting at the I-86 off ramp, the development of 2 community solar arrays built to offset the public infrastructure debt service, single-family and mobile home improvement projects through grants from HCR, and renovating the façade along Main Street through NYMS grants, all leading to the addition of new businesses and restaurants investing into this community.

I'd like to reiterate how the Village of Sherman is dedicated to preservation, restoration, and development while understanding growth requires the ability to respond to a rapidly changing environment. The Village demonstrated its capacity to manage large infrastructure projects with the 2024 completion of the \$7M Wastewater Treatment Plant and \$2.2M Drinking Water Improvement Projects. In conjunction with these endeavors, the Village participated in and adopted the Chautauqua County Hazard Mitigation Plan and is beginning a Zoning Code Update including the future adoption of local stormwater management practices and regulations for the Village.

*“Preserving our Past... Working for our Future”*

THE HONORABLE COLLEEN MEEDER, MAYOR

DEPUTY MAYOR RYAN SANDERS

TRUSTEES DENNIS WATSON, GARY EMORY & DANIEL CRANE

THIS INSTITUTION IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER

Our vision is to capitalize on the unique, small-town, historic character of the village, while pursuing economic activity to create a community that is thriving, walkable, stable, and equitable. Building off recent commercial investment and growth, the Village seeks to become a destination and to gain its "Trail Town" designation, which will exponentially attract trail enthusiasts. Ecotourism brings visitor spending, drives labor income, and increases tax revenue for the communities along trails.

As a Planning Board member, I assure you that the Village of Sherman has actively engaged in implementing practices outlined in the policies as adopted to date in pursuit of improving the resiliency and sustainability for the livability and quality of life in Sherman. The Village Board of Trustees first adopted the Village of Sherman Comprehensive Plan in 2021, with a Climate Smart Communities Grant. As local priorities evolved, the Comprehensive Plan was amended in 2023 related to historic preservation, hazard mitigation, stormwater management, and Complete Streets policies.

The Planning Board is currently working on updating the 2009 Village Zoning Code with the Smart Growth Program to include: preserving the character of neighborhoods, creating a downtown 'business district', establishing design guidelines, updating language, addressing new legislation (i.e., cannabis), transitioning to green and alternative energy systems, and adopting stormwater management regulations to secure existing assets and new development. In the interim, the Village Board has adopted a series of timely amendments addressing safety and quality of life needs, including the local law 2021 Regulation of Solar Energy Systems.

The Planning Board is very supportive of the restoration and reuse of the many empty buildings, the preservation of our heritage at the French Creek Yorker Museum, the trail development, upgrades to the Minerva Free Library, and the creation of additional living spaces through mixed-use buildings and new developments. I believe these projects will all aid the stimulation of economic development and instill a renewed sense of pride in our village.

A NY Forward Grant would ensure the continued efforts to create a stable and sustainable community and expedite current projects which will not only benefit the Village of Sherman but advance economic prosperity, expand recreational opportunities, bring families, and supply a labor force contributing to the Live CHQ and Choose CHQ campaigns. All ensuring the continued advancement of economic development and revitalization of this whole area, benefiting this community and the greater area in Chautauqua County.

Awarding the NY Forward grant to the Village of Sherman would invigorate this small community, and outlying areas. I thank you for your favorable consideration for this critical grant.

Sincerely,



Brian Bates, Chair  
Planning Board, Village of Sherman

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