

Minutes

Planning & Economic Development Committee

January 15, 2020, 6:00 pm, Room 331

Gerace Office Building, Mayville, NY

Members Present: Odell, Starks, Muldowney, Harmon, Ward

Others: Tampio, Ames, Dennison, Nixon, McCoy, T. Odell, Horrigan, Reynolds, Rankin, Geise, Chagnon, McCord, Aldrich, Edwards

Chairman Odell called the meeting to order at 6:19 p.m.

Approval of Minutes (12/11/19)

MOVED by Legislator Starks, SECONDED by Legislator Muldowney.

Unanimously Carried

Privilege of the Floor

No one chose to speak at this time.

Proposed Resolution – Confirm Appointment and Re-Appointments – Chautauqua County Food Council

Mr. McCord: This is fairly straight forward. The four names on the resolution consist of people that are being either reappointed or appointed to the two vacancies that were left. I do ask under Linnea Carlson, that there was a typo. That date is supposed to be 12/31/2022 and not 2019.

Chairman Odell: And Kate Ewer remain the same too, in 2020?

Mr. McCord: Yes.

Chairman Odell: We'll treat that as a typo, makes sense because we are not doing this post facto. Does that bring us up to full speed now?

Mr. McCord: It does. We are in the process of filling the Legislative seat. Mr. Scudder has shown some interest in that.

Chairman Odell: Good. Any questions on this?

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution - Authorize Use of Chautauqua County 3% Occupancy Tax
Undesignated Off-Cycle Project Funding for the Chadakoin River
Business Plan

Mr. Geise: I guess I will start off by saying that, it's been a dream of many to someday have the ability to have boat traffic to travel either off of Chautauqua Lake and travel to downtown Jamestown, down to the basin, or even have recreational craft that could launch down there. Greg and I were talking, I think it was last maybe spring and we talked about, man, we really should try and do something with this, so we got talking and it ended up contracting, long story short, contracting with RTPI, working with RTPI, the Gebbie Foundation and the IDA pitched in. They did a bathometric survey, a sonar scan of the bottom of the river from McCrae Point down to the basin and the basin is that area behind the National Comedy Center. Because that would be the first big thing, the first big hurdle if there was any major obstructions or if it was too shallow or not wide enough or whatever, that would be may be the deal breaker but certainly make it a lot more challenging to try and do something like this. They completed that survey. They tried to do it last summer but they ended up carrying it over into this summer and finished the report and gave us a nice presentation and it basically came back that there are no major obstructions. It's got enough depth. There are areas where there are certainly challenges were it narrows like behind the BPU and there is a bridge behind the BPU where the clearance is only 6 feet and stuff having to do with like, when the lake drains that there is a quite a current coming down through there behind the BPU because it narrows but, for the most part, yes, it can be done. Our next phase is, well, o.k., if it can be done then what needs to be done in order to make that a reality? Things like, we're going to have to have buoys that run up along there that keep the boats in the channel. There is going to need to be docks down in the basin. There is going to be some debris that needs to be removed in the basin because there are some logs down there. There needs to be like a safety boom, if you will, in front of the Warner Dam so that people can't go any further than that. There probably needs to a warning system that lets boaters know that maybe it's not safe to go down there if there is in fact a large volume of water draining out of Chautauqua Lak because of the rapids and a number of other things even in environmental things with shoring up some of the banks and weather lighting and things like that. So, in order to really understand what those needs are, we really need to do a strategic business plan and when I say strategic business plan, it's really looking at what things need to be done in order to make this a reality, what do they look like, how much do they cost and then laying it out on a timeline to say, hey, over the next three to five years, what projects are we going to try and undertake in order to get that done, so we have something that we can take to funders and leverage in order to get the funding that we need in order to do that. So, that is what this is all about, is asking for \$10,000. We got commitments from and I will let you talk about maybe the commitments that we have gotten so far.

Mr. Edwards: This group that was assembled included Mark and his team from the IDA, the leader of the Roger Tory Peterson Institute, leadership of the BPU and also the Chief planner form the City of Jamestown. Really trying to get people to the table that have a direct interest in a capacity to move this along. In this group and Nate is there as well, we have identified about 14 different things that really ought to take place to begin to maximize this economic engine.

Because the southern part of the lake contains so much economy. I mean, all these second homes and the marinas and those sorts of things, is spreading that out and getting that into the city as certain a great positive economic move. Just this group of six or seven of us, came up with 14 different projects as Mark mentioned. We don't know really which one needs to go first. We really don't know how much that first one or that 14th one is really going to cost because it's going to involve some engineering, some analysis, and a great CFA, consolidated funding application, which is the most likely source of larger funding. There has to be business plan, a business process to get that done. So Mark is spot on that we had a target, dollars that might be needed to engage a professional firm to come in and target \$60,000. I've volunteered to reach out to people to try and recruit contributions to this and it has been very much a business effort, including going to private sector companies up and down and along the Chadakoin to identify that it's in their interest because as that economy grows, the value of their property grows and if they want to transition out into something else, there is an economy to do that. The Gebbie Foundation Board of Directors agreed to award up to \$10,000 to make this a reality. The BPU committed \$10,000 to make this a reality. The City of Jamestown already has \$60,000 awarded to two projects that we have identified here in the critical part of phase one/phase two so they have that skin in the game already and we're going to work them for a little bit of cash too just so we see them in that list as well. One private property owner has already pledged \$3,000, another property owner up on Celoron has pledged \$5,000. There are four other businesses I've talked to that have expressed interest in trying to help this be possible. We have costed all these things out, we've estimated what the total amount collected could be from these sources and it really does leave us about \$10,000 short of that \$60,000 target. Because with that, we can go out to the private sector and say, here is what we want you to do and we have \$60,000 invested in this, can you do that for that amount and we believe that's the amount that is going to attract the best and the brightest out there. It's not a nickel and dime thing, we want it professionally done, extensive and exhaustive analysis and I think we believe collectively that \$60,000 gets us there. We've done our analysis and it does appear to fit within the funding that you are considering this evening, that we could use from that fund to award some dollars towards this. None of us want to limit you to \$10,000 but that from our belief would be the amount that is significant. It matches the other major investors in this effort and ultimately as I was having a conversation with folks today, ultimately it's the County that benefits the most from our increase in valuations and sales tax, in general economy because it flows through the County.

Chairman Odell: More occupancy tax.

Mr. Edwards: Right, occupancy tax, all those things. So I think there is a strong business case to be made why this would be appropriate thing to consider and I appreciate you doing that. We'll try and answer any questions you may have.

Mr. Geise: What I gave you really is a copy of that letter requesting funding and then also a copy of, I guess it's in draft form still but the request for proposal which really lays out the project, the scope of work of the project. There is a number of attachments. You can see it's well done and ready to go. So once we have the funding, we've even got a timeline in here. So once we have the funding assembled, this will be administered through CREDC, through the IDA, Economic Development, and Nate's with our team as well and we feel we have the expertise to really do a great plan and get this thing going. Any questions?

Legislator Harmon: I have one question. The four to six month timeframe, is that the actual timeframe or just an estimated timeframe (*cross talk*).

Mr. Geise: The four to six months, I think that is realistic. Sometimes it's a give or take a month or two but it's probably close to the 6 month timeframe. You know, it depends, when we put this out, a request for proposal out, we'll get different responses about that. So, we just want it to be done right and the other thing is, we want to have some of the projects conceptualized before the plan is even done so that we can actually submit some of them in this year's CFA which is at the end of July. So it doesn't need to be completed and stamped as done in order for us to do that.

Legislator Starks: After the \$10,000, do we know what remains in that undesignated fund?

Chairman Odell: Right in the resolution –

Mr. Geise: Thirty eight thousand.

Chairman Odell: Thirty eight, one forty four. It's going to be \$28,144 for the remainder of the year.

Legislator Muldowney: How big of an area is this?

Mr. Geise: It's a mile and a half, isn't it?

Mr. Edward: Roughly, yes.

Legislator Muldowney: Is there a bike path (*inaudible*)?

Mr. Edward: Not directly continuous to the river because on one side, it's mostly owned by the railroad, the other side is, we'll call it developed. Some commercial, some residential. The ultimate goal is to work with the railroad and the railroad side to see if we can't free up some of that space that feasibly could be done.

Legislator Muldowney: Is there (*inaudible*) space now?

Mr. Edwards: There's space along the, what I'll call the north side of the river. There is space along this north side of the river here (showing map), that could be something that could add to the capacity there. Fortunately the City of Jamestown owns much of the property along what we'll call the west side or southwest side of the river, so that makes those available. Jamestown Awning, Tanner's garage, a couple of other spaces in there privately owned but as it evolves there has been conversations about how that could be appropriately developed. It's a beautiful space once you clear out some of the eyesores that are in there and as that (*cross talk*), grows up and down the river, it very feasibly could become a spot where residential development, those sorts of things could take place and really be an add to the city. It really gives this section of the river a purpose and growth opportunities. It also then makes the other half of

the Chadakoin going up to the southern basin lake which is a beautiful natural world, if virtually all publically, all of it is secured and I've never been to the Amazon but those who have traveled that say this is a mini version of that. Flora, fauna, spine back turtles, all those sorts of things are in there so you get the best of both worlds. You are going to get the natural world in the first half and that second mile is a more commercial side and so whether you have desires either way, Marlin Yonkers(?) is a very successful businessman, he bought the old marina which is right behind D&S Glass, it was just falling apart –

Mr. Geise: Fluvanna.

Mr. Edward: Fluvanna, right, and he's completely rebuilt it. If you drive down Fluvanna, you'll see the big blue and white, basically, also the tool barn, huge barns they put in there, that's a perfect wait point because it's almost half way there and so if you wanted to go north from there in a kayak and visit and experience that, you can. If you turn around and go the other direction down in the City, you can get out and have a bite to eat, see a show, do whatever, you can do that but, these are critical steps to making that happen. Just a point of interest, I can't help myself is, when RTPI did their analysis, what they discovered was there were very few impediments that would hamper the flow of water or boats. One of the things they noted that there was a couple of exposed logs in this basin behind the Comedy Center and what they determined is that probably from the 1800's, when that was an area where they collected the logs and shipped them off down the river and they found about a 100 of them with their sonar down there so we're also looking at how do we harvest out a couple of those, use those as educational pieces and that kind of history connection to the City as a reason for people to be down in there. So, there is all kinds of unique little things that have grown out of this project but it's critical to do this next step.

Mr. Geise: I thought that you were going to tell the story about when I told you to wear casual cloths a few years ago and I showed up with my little boat and we went from the McCrae Point down to the basin just to prove to ourselves it's doable. I have done it a couple of times but it's beautiful and activating a waterfront, is so important. We've seen it everywhere in every City. Obviously there is a lot going on down there with the boardwalk already down in the basin and the bridges and it's very consistent with the occupancy tax law. This is the type of stuff we should be doing.

Chairman Odell: Indeed. Other questions? When is the last time the bath(?) metric study had been done? That totally blew my mind, I expected to see rail cars in the water.

Mr. Edwards: It had never been done that I'm aware of. People are going by the assumptions that it had this or it had that or you couldn't put a boat down through there and so we held our breath when it was being done because we said it was either going to be a really good or bad story at the end and it far exceeded my hope that we'd find something that we really didn't have to invest in, the navigable part. What we had to do is make sure the banks are secure and there is docking facilities.

Chairman Odell: This is an amazing example of great leveraging but also balancing out between the foundations and other stakeholders, RPTI, and other municipalities. Great joint

venture that everyone is going to benefit from. We're talking, Bill Reynolds, (*cross talk*) marina, stuff like that, is all going to dovetail in my opinion. So I think this is great, \$60,000 total cap seems to be that number that we put on a lot of these studies, a lot of these different consulting firm and it seems to yield the results that we want. Less is always more, right?

Mr. Geise: The more money you have, the better it is so we'll get as much as we can and get what we can get.

Chairman Odell: We've demonstrated it several times with (*inaudible*) Associates and some of the others that we have done. You can't quantify what's not measured and did a great job measuring, we quantify it through the CFA process and could carry on. Nicely done, nicely presented, any other questions from the committee?

Mrs. Dennison: Mr. Chairman, I think it's something that you can consider a typo. There is one work missing in the second to last WHEREAS clause, it now says, 3% tax tourism promotion fund and all said appropriations currently, should be, is currently available.

Chairman Odell: O.k., with that amended addition.

Legislator Starks: That is why I had my question.

Chairman Odell: That's the thing that Vice Chair Starks usually picks out of those, so, with that correct, all in favor?

Unanimously Carried

Mr. Edwards: If when you are looking at that and if you have any questions, don't hesitate, you can give me a call, or Mark, or any of the team.

Legislator Starks: Just tell us when the boat come up and when we should get on.

Mr. Geise: And I have that survey too if anybody is interested in that. We can give you a copy of that as well.

Proposed Resolution – Authorize Use of Occupancy Tax Monies for Chautauqua County to Retain Professional Services to Advocate for Federal Projects and Funding

Mr. McCoy: We have this great occupancy tax (*inaudible*) the left hand side of the program. I administer the right hand side and we've been asked to protect our lakes and waterways with the resources that the 2% occupancy tax provides to us. We've been very good about learning how to leverage State funds and other opportunities with the occupancy tax funding. But we dream big and look to the future and we're trying very hard to bring Federal funding into Chautauqua County. We've been relatively successful with getting appropriations for projects like dredging Barcelona Harbor, the Dunkirk Harbor, we have some very big plans to do things here in Chautauqua Lake and other places but we're a long ways from Washington,

DC. I'm a fish out of water when I get down there, as most of us probably are. So, for the last four and a half years we've been working with NEXUS government relations. They are essentially a lobbying firms that helps position us for opportunities at the Federal level. When we research grant programs through the Army Corp of Engineers, we can go on the websites and see a lot of verbiage there but really you are at a disadvantage being here because you don't know the players. When we sit down with the Director of the Civil Works for the Army Corp, they say you came all this way to talk to us? And they remember us and it's starting to pay dividends. Last year we happened to be invited into Senator Minority chambers to sit down with Chuck Schumer and we talked a lot of about Chautauqua Lake and our north County harbors and he said, I know how much this means to you because you've come all this way. We're optimistic that some funding will shake loose in the very near future for some of our projects. This agreement with NEXUS is co-funded through the resources afforded to the Lake Erie Management Commission, \$5,000 there and \$10,000 comes from the occupancy tax reserve.

Chairman Odell: It's still Steve Dye(?), right, is our guy?

Mr. McCoy: Yes.

Chairman Odell: Like you said, he's done a great job getting us in the door and visible and having those connections, we otherwise couldn't do ourselves so this will be our third year with him?

Mr. McCoy: Fourth.

Chairman Odell: Any questions from the committee? I think Steve did make an appearance here in western New York a couple of times. I remember him on the Great Lake Adventure one year, we actually met.

Mr. McCoy: Yes, he was here yesterday.

Chairman Odell: Would have been better if he presented today, but that's o.k., you did a great job Dave, so thank you. Any other questions?

Unanimously Carried

Other

Discussion – Review of the 3% Occupancy Tax competitive applications and awards made – Andrew Nixon

Discussion - Review of the 3% Occupancy Tax competitive program – Mark Geise, Nate Aldrich

Discussion – Update on the Chautauqua Lake & Watershed Management Alliance – Vince Horigan

Update - Small Business Revolution - Fredonia – Legislator Starks

Legislator Starks: Move to adjourn.

Legislator Ward: Second.

Unanimously Carried (7:42 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted and transcribed,
Olivia Ames, Deputy Clerk/Lori J. Foster, Sr. Stenographer