

Minutes

Planning & Economic Development Committee

June 16, 2021, 6:00 pm, Rm #331

Streamlined on Facebook

Gerace Office Building, Mayville, NY

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

Member Absent: Muldowney, Lawton

Others: Ames, Chagnon, Dennison, Hemmer, Wendel, McCoy

Chairman Odell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes (6/16/21)

MOVED by Legislator Starks, SECONDED by Legislator Ward.

Unanimously Carried

Privilege of the Floor

Legislator Hemmer: I just want to put in a good word for the resolution tonight, concerning dredging of the harbor at Barcelona in Westfield.

Chairman Odell: Thank you Legislator Hemmer, anyone else? Seeing none, we'll close the privilege of the floor.

Proposed Resolution – Confirm Appointment - Chautauqua County Food Policy Council

Chairman Odell: I don't see anyone here to speak to that tonight so we will do that on Planning's behalf. Katy Urrers(?), is no longer going to be able to fill in that position and is being replaced by Molly Harvey. As everyone will recall, I think it was 2 years ago Molly joined us here with a bunch of kids and taught us how to (*inaudible*) work with the kids. That's the day we did robots here on the floor. We thought it would be a great way to settle debates on the floor but it didn't get legs but it was a lot of fun and we learned a lot. The kids did a great job and Molly is doing a great job with that program as well so I think it's a good thing to have her on this every expanding Food Policy Council as that team shapes up. So, any other discussion on that? All in favor?

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Authorize Use of Lake Erie Management Commission Capital Project H.8020.37011 Funds to Co-Fund Barcelona Harbor Dredging

Mr. McCoy: The Lake Erie Management Commission was approached by the Town of Westfield several months ago about how we might be able to help them improve the condition of Barcelona Harbor. Barcelona Harbor was hit very hard in the Fall of 2019 and 2020 with some - well they were a (*inaudible*) a big slouch of water in Lake Erie that run 16 to 17 feet (*inaudible*) and through all sorts of rocks and sediment, moving the harbor walls and obstructed the Federal channel with trees and brush and stumps, looking forward to a dismal season in 2021. The Town mobilized and put divers in the water and work collaboratively to pull as much of that stuff out of there as they could. But they still need to do a minor amount of dredging to open the channel up. The harbor has been extremely busy. People going up there and braving the challenges of getting in and getting out. There has been nicks and dings on some boats and propellers as a result but they go up there with the bite is on, the parking lot is full of fisherman.

Legislator Hemmer: It fills up completely with trailers right out to the road.

Legislator Harmon: How wide is that now? I guess navigable wise?

Mr. McCoy: The federal channel?

Legislator Harmon: Yes.

Mr. McCoy: Typically around 75-80' wide.

Legislator Harmon: That's what it should be?

Mr. McCoy: Yes.

Legislator Harmon: What is it now currently (*inaudible*)...

Mr. McCoy: (*Cross talk*) 20 foot boat.

Legislator Harmon: Do you think a lot of the issues they are having was when that – I know a few years back the wall was damaged heavily in that storm where a big chunk was missing (*inaudible*)...

Legislator Hemmer: Yes. The Army Corp came in and replaced that and also did dredge the federal navigation channel but that didn't last.

Legislator Harmon: Can we fault the Army Corp for the bad job they did (*inaudible*) done again?

Mr. McCoy: What they did was restore the facility to its original design. That harbor was built in the 80's I believe and there are a number of harbors that the Corp operates throughout the Great Lakes navigation system that were built around the same time with the same sort of construction. They only drive these sheet (*inaudible*) and fill them with ballast and they put a concrete (*inaudible*), but that's how that harbor was built. I mean there are others that are starting to see some corrosion at the water line and once water breaks in, the filling starts to leak out and things get (*inaudible*). We've been dialoging with the Army Corp about doing a feasibility study to upgrade that harbor to eliminate the need to dredge so often.

Legislator Harmon: How many boats are in and out of the harbor on a daily basis? Would someone have some kind of data on that?

Legislator Hemmer: I'm sure that the harbor master there does but it's a smaller number on a daily basis. It's when the fish are biting or when there is a tournament where they really get loaded up.

Legislator Harmon: It still needs to be accessible to the public.

Legislator Hemmer: Yes, there are a quite a number of boats that are docked there that use it regularly.

Mr. McCoy: So, we've been dialoging with the Army Corp about trying to get some funds program for 2022 and 2023. It's not currently on the President's list however, the last time it was dredged, it was dredged with monies that shock free from a project elsewhere that wasn't able to come to fruition. So we've got our feelers out and the Buffalo Corp is looking very hard for better (*inaudible*) opportunity.

Legislator Rankin: So it's maybe on their radar now because you've been talking about it.

Mr. McCoy: Absolutely, as a matter of fact, working with consultants, Steve Dye, with Nexis Government Relations, we've been able to get our three harbor projects that being Barcelona, Dunkirk, and Catt Creek, they are the top four earmark request and Senator Gillibrand's request for projects through the Energy and Transportation bill. We're also included in Senator Schumer's request so having both of those requesting at the same time is great. Dunkirk harbor, there is about \$700,000 that is programmed in the President's budget for 2022. So that will eliminate the earmark (*inaudible*) so maybe there will be an opportunity to bring some of those dollars elsewhere. We made it very clear to our Congressional reps and to the Corp, that Barcelona and Chautauqua Lake are two highest rated projects where we would want to focus.

Chairman Odell: And we are in the fourth quarter of the Federal fiscal year so that's when mysterious money sometimes does shake lose. I do know the Army Corp is actively seeking that, because it says here right in the resolution.

Mr. McCoy: Recreational boating in the last two years has really exploded. Whether you have a little cabin cruiser or a fishing boat or even if you have kayaks, the handicap accessible kayak launches that County Planning helped to bring forward and with the towns was a collaborative effort.

Legislator Harmon: We have one down at the end of Walnut Creek, Silver Creek where the ramp is down there and young kids can get in their kayak and (*inaudible*) get out of the kayak without any danger or any issue. It's amazing.

Mr. McCoy: You can get into kayaking for \$3-\$400 bucks. It's an investment that you have for a life time.

Legislator Ward: It's one of the good things that has come out of this pandemic, especially last summer was the increase in recreational boating, trailer usage and all of that stuff and so it's really important to be able to keep getting out there.

Mr. McCoy: I network regularly with all the lake agencies and all of them are saying that and even Findley Lake, are saying that there are so many people out on the lake and the cottages that used to be vacant, are seasonal short term rentals, so now that we have to deal with Air bnb to capture some of those occupancy tax revenues, our revenues should see a real pick up. The other thing is, it's creating, be careful what you wish for. On Chautauqua Lake there are so many people out there that people in the smaller crafts are starting to feel a little bit threatened. The regulars on Findley Lake, there is a little (*inaudible*) that says, when you go out for a pleasure cruise, you cruise counter clockwise around the lake. Not everybody knows that. So it's making some of the folks that are up there all the time a little concerned. So anyways, getting back to Barcelona. I think it's a good project. It will help make sure that they have a good season this year and hopefully it will last through early 2022 until we can get some Federal funding to get it cleanup up the way it needs to be cleanup.

Chairman Odell: I had a little bit of brief dialoged with Supervisor Bills on this and of course, that's why she sent the big gun, Legislator Hemmer here to help in her absence so thank you for that. So this does demonstrate though, as the U.S. Army Corp continues to diligently look for funds to shake lose, the fact that we're taking it into our own hands to address this matter, that all captures some great attention. That's why this committee back in 2020 was quite adamant about keeping this account segregated and separate for the Lake Erie Management Commission. Sorry Kathy, we know (*inaudible*) consolidation but this is the one we wanted to keep separated for exactly this reason. Any other discussion on this? All in favor?

Unanimously Carried

Other

Chairman Odell: I have some fun stuff to start off with. First, it's my pleasure that I have been able to fill in with some friends and interns for a Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy project called, "Drains to Lake", keep it clean. It's an initiative to – if anyone has seen our Facebook post from a couple of weeks back, it's putting bigger ones of these, (magnets), larger versions of these going into the initiative that is taking place in the City of Dunkirk, Village of Westfield, Village of Fredonia, and coming soon, Legislator Harmon, Silver Creek Town pavilion, July 28th at 10:00 a.m., will be the next one. Volunteers are needed, basically taking larger versions of these, (*inaudible*) by the drains put it on there, it says, "no dumping, drains to the lake, nice initiative. Young friend of mine is the intern, Haley Dahl(?). She goes to Costal Caroline University in South Carolina, majoring in marine science and minor in marine biology

has been running this initiative and is all hands on deck. I got the call and said sure, why not. So, a couple of hours of time, a little bit of an effect to make a difference and raise awareness. If anyone can participate, please do.

Legislator Ward: I saw the social media post when you put them out. I knew this was happening and I've been out in my runs and bike and I've seen them all over the place. Great work.

Chairman Odell: It's a lot of fun and good community spirit stuff. One more thing under "other". Miss Deputy Clerk, if I could ask you to give one to the Chairman and one for the Clerk of the Legislature. Mr. Chairman, I'm putting in your hands, with mixed emotion is my resignation from the Chautauqua County Legislature effective August 17th. My professional life it taking me out of district for considerable amount of my time, probably 80% and 20% back here. It's with heavy heart. I've enjoyed this, it's been a great run for the past 6 years but do not feel that I could be as effective as a Legislator if I'm just drafted off the bag in another capacity. So, again, not all of us have not been here before and all of us won't be here in the future so this is a continuum and that's why we have charters and Code of Ethics and conduct to move the ball forward. To the thousands of Facebook viewers out there today, is it 5 or 5,000 Oliva, I can't tell.

Legislator Starks: It's a lot.

Chairman Odell: It's a lot. I would like to express my deepest gratitude for the confidence of my constituents. I've had a great time learning along the way, being effective, getting a lot of good work done, especially in this committee, the largest committee in the Chautauqua County Legislature for a reason and thank you all. So, moving on. Anything else under "other"?

Chairman Chagnon: Mr. Chairman, if I might. I'm going to try and find somewhere where I would have the authority to reject this letter of resignation but since I don't know that I'll have that, thank you for your service. (applause).

Chairman Odell: Thank you Pierre, thank you Chairman. On a second note though, I am not selling any of my properties in Chautauqua County and we'll be keeping a mindful eye on the budget process because I know it intimately so if you get a call, that's why. Thank you. Any additional others?

Legislator Ward: I just want to thank you. I know what I've (*inaudible*) that perhaps officially in the future, but I have learned in my short time here so much from you with regards to not only the workings of the Legislature and this committee and committee work in general, but, your leadership skills have been exemplary and I've really wanted to tell you how much I appreciate that and have learned from it.

Chairman Odell: Thank you Bill and stuff like that, this is off topic but it's a pay it forward thing Bill. I didn't know a thing when I came into County government. Not one thing which actually is a good thing, I believe. But mentorship is huge. That guy right there, our Chairman, was my mentor. I came in and I knew corporate balance sheets, profit/loss statements, and I look at our County budget, Kathleen does a great job of deciphering it and trying to decode

it for us as best as possible and narrating it in laymen's terms but, going through that was something and Pierre was great and gave me a lot of generous time upfront decoding the budget book and making it all clear.

Legislator Starks: I think that we can all agree that you leave large shoes to fill and it's been my pleasure to have been your first tablemate and you will be sorely missed.

Chairman Odell: Thank you. But everyone needs to be mindful of whose shoes I filled, now Senator Borrello's. Those are bigger shoes to fill than I'll ever have. So, again, express my gratitude to George for giving me the helm four years ago and I think our Vice Chair is ready to step in in the interim. All those details will be worked out going forward. Anything else under "other".

Legislator Starks: I guess my other "other" would be, I guess you all just place trust in me to take over as Chair so I'm honored and (*inaudible*) and will do all I can to continue to serve this committee and County and again, you leave large shoes to fill and it's my privilege.

Chairman Odell: You got the largest committee to entertain and you are going to enjoy it. Senator Borrello enjoyed it immensely, he said you will and I did so just be effective in the meantime and you'll be great. Thank you very much. Anything else to bring under "other" then?

MOVED by Legislator Rankin, SECONDED by Legislator Harmon to adjourn.

Unanimously Carried (6:20 p.m.)

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