

Minutes

Planning & Economic Development Committee

October 17, 6:00 pm, Room 331

Gerace Office Building, Mayville, NY

Members Present: Odell, Chagnon, O'Connell

Members Absent: Starks, Himelein

Others: Tampio, Ames, Dennison, Geise, McCord, Bowen, Beth Starks

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

Approval of Minutes (09/19/18)

MOVED by Legislator O'Connell, SECONDED by Legislator Chagnon

Unanimously Carried

Privilege of the Floor

I'm Doug Bowen and I'm the Supervisor for the Town of Ripley. I am here tonight to speak in support of the added staffing position for the County Planning Department. The County Planning Department is an important resource for local government. They provide expertise and training to the local volunteer Planning Boards and Zoning Boards along with the local governments themselves. In 1998 and for the following five years when I was appointed as the Town of Ripley Planning Board member, I attended numerous training sessions that were put on by the Chautauqua County Planning Department. I know since then those opportunities have increased substantially over the years as staffing has decreased as well in the Planning Department. In 2016 the County planners helped the Town of Ripley develop an application (*inaudible*) CFA around for main street revitalization plan development. The application was successful and the Town of Ripley was awarded \$36,000 grant for main street plan development. In 2017, the County Planning Department assisted the Town of Ripley in writing CFA application for Ripley beach revitalization. Again, we were successful in the Town of Ripley in receiving a \$240,000 grant for the Ripley beach project. Both projects were greatly improved by the assistance from the County Planning Board. Our local communities, especially our small rural communities need this assistance to be successful in both developing and implementing their comprehensive plans. The County Planning resource can be an effective way to save tax dollars when looking at collective County and local budgets together. For example, if a municipality has to hire a consultant, the money spent on the consultant is no longer available to spend on implementing the project and with proper staffing, I think that our County planners can do great things for the County and local governments. When the department is short staffed, they will fall short. There is not enough manpower to get all the work done that is needed. And just

food for thought. I don't know if everybody is aware but in 1977, there were 31 employees in the County Planning and Economic Development Department. In 2009, when I first became the County Planning Board Chairman, there were nine and today there are six positions in that department and we need to improve on that and provide the manpower for them to move the County forward and in our efforts. Thank you.

Chairman Odell: Anyone else to speak under privilege of the floor? Seeing none, we'll move onto resolutions.

Proposed Resolution- Confirm Appointment – Southern Tier Extension Railroad Authority Board of Directors

Chairman Odell: No one here to speak to this one but at the request of County Executive Borrello and I guess we'll take his good judgment on that and applaud anyone that takes these volunteer board positions as they are vital to County operations and advisement. Any discussion or comments?

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution- Authorize Lease Agreement for Department of Planning and Development at Welch Foods Building in Westfield, New York

Mr. McCord: The resolution that you have before you is for the potential to lease space at the Welch Foods building which is located at the corner of Rt. 20 and 394 in the Village of Westfield. County Executive Borrello, when he came on board, expressed his interest in having more of a north County presence. When we looked at the County we currently have offices in Dunkirk and Jamestown and it was his recommendation actually after spending a fair amount of time both during the campaign and afterwards, that we consider Westfield as making a triangular area within the County. You just heard Supervisor Bowen talking about what we've done with the Town of Ripley in the last couple of years. It's our belief that the Planning Department which will be primarily located within the building over here, will be closer to its customer base which is really the smaller communities. Both of our cities have Planning and Development staff. We do get along quite well with them but we don't usually work on projects together. It's more of almost a social thing. We do lunch and opportunities like that to network with them different situations. We've also noticed that we believe this is going make it easier for us to attract planning talent. UB is our closet campus that has a planning program and we've had some trouble in the current location where we are right now attracting candidates to replace Mr. Gooch's position, Senior Planner, even though we did open that up to a Junior Planner possibility. Still the response to that and request in that advertisement has been extremely small. Really our big thing going into 2019 is to think about community development and helping these communities that are struggling with limited capacity to build some of their capacity and do community outreach. So, I do have one amendment that I would like to request on the resolution. In the first RESOLVED, second line, it states, "negotiate and enter into a lease for office space" and I would like added "with the Town of Westfield". The Town of Westfield is the current building owner and although they have some space leased out to Welch Foods, we would be making payment to the Town of Westfield.

Chairman Odell: Enter into a lease with the Town of Westfield is what we want to add there, right?

Mr. McCord: Yes. For office space.

Legislator O'Connell: So this building is just called the Welch Food building. It's not owned by Welch?

Mr. McCord: No, Welch Foods sold it to a developer or owned it for a while and then eventually sold it to the Town of Westfield and the Town of Westfield's been attempting to market the property and find a developer for it for a number of years now.

Legislator O'Connell: Is there anybody else in the building or will we be the only tenant?

Mr. McCord: No, they have a computer firm, Plantrol, is on the second floor and National Grape takes up half of the first floor and we would be on the first floor in what would be the southern end of the building.

Chairman Odell: O.k., anything to add Mr. Geise? This affects the IDA.

Mr. Geise: Yeah, I mean, this really fulfills the wishes of the County Executive who really wanted to have our services more broadly spread around the County. There is kind of a gap in the west part of the County, Mayville, Westfield, so this fills that gap. The IDA, Economic Development will have an office there as well so we'll be rotating people through that so we also have the presence there. I might add also that there is a future development that might be occurring there with a developer and certainly doesn't hurt that future developer is looking at this property to have another tenant in the building.

Legislator Chagnon: So the 1,441 square feet also has room for Economic Development staff and IDA staff to be there?

Mr. Giese: Yes.

Mr. McCord: There will be a single office for them.

Mr. Giese: And we're going to rotate Kristine Morbito over there, Linda Burns, myself, maybe Rig so we'll be rotating through that office so that - I won't say at all times there will be somebody from Economic Development and IDA there but most of the time.

Chairman Odell: So it's a shared service basically between departments. This is conversely Planning needs to be at BWB or (*inaudible*) incubator right now.

Mr. McCord: Yeah, the one position that we'll rotate particular in and out of the BWB is Dave McCoy because the Alliance is going to retain space there at least in the interim until they have future plans, we want that relationship to continue. Dave still will come to Westfield also.

It's not that – because he's a countywide Watershed Coordinator so there is the Lake Erie Management Commission and others that he works with.

Mr. Geise: So we'll have an office in BWB for Dave rotating through there and there as well.

Legislator Chagnon: So this is an increase in your rent of 11 1/2%?

Mr. McCord: I hadn't figured it out percentage wise but that sounds about right.

Legislator Chagnon: And currently the County is sub-leasing from the IDA?

Chairman Odell: Currently, yes.

Legislator Chagnon: And the BWB building. So, is the IDA o.k. with the County breaking their sub-lease?

Mr. Geise: Yes. We're going to do our best to sub-lease it. Yes, we can make it work.

Chairman Odell: There is one more month on the lease technically, right?

Mr. McCord: I was going to say it's a year to year lease.

Chairman Odell: Lease is through the end of this year. How many staff right now that we'll be pulling from Jamestown to Westfield?

Mr. McCord: Based upon the outcome of the 2019 budget or based upon where we are today, because there was an additional spot, staff is moved around so much, it's like this shell game.

Legislator Chagnon: Don't say that.

Mr. McCord: Bad choice of words but you know what I mean Pierre. Currently, let me go to 2019. We have six and a half budgeted and five and a half of those would be in Westfield. Before we had (*cross talk*)...

Chairman Odell: (*Cross talk*).. very comfortable in thinking (*cross talk*).

Mr. McCord: We're at an administrative change and the previous administration had its priorities and under that half of my salary was in Development and that was prior to Mark coming onboard, half of Rosie's, so that's why it's hard to calculate.

Chairman Odell: But that side is getting cleaned up.

Mr. McCord: This evolution is cleaning this up a great deal to make it much easier to understand where all of this is going.

Legislator Chagnon: So 5 ½ bodies out of 6 1/2 is it, what I heard you say?

Mr. McCord: Yes.

Legislator Chagnon: Could you described the 5 ½?

Mr. McCord: Sure. It's Director, 2 Junior Planners, Planning Technician, Dave, maybe I missed one and half of the –

Mr. Geise: So it's the Director, 2 Junior Planners, Technician, and then half of a part time person, .5 and then Dave will be rotating. So 4 ½ and a rotator. Plus the IDA office. But there is four offices and then there is going to be a couple of cubicles.

Mr. McCord: We're going to have to have cubicles. There is a large open area that amounts to 600 square feet of the 1,441. It's going to be copier, storage, cubicles.

Legislator Chagnon: So it's 5 ½ out of 5 ½?

Mr. McCord: Yes. My confusion was with what Mark's positions used to be with us and now we're in the County Executive's office.

Chairman Odell: Any other questions? Can't wait to see what we negotiate for the leased space with the IDA. I'll have to recuse myself as I sit on the board.

Legislator Chagnon: What is our expectation for the lease cost going forward?

Mr. McCord: We are uncertain of that. There are a couple of ways to approach that. One of the ways to approach that is to perhaps to negotiate currently with the Town of Westfield because the lease go with the building if they are willing to do that. Then the other consideration is that the actual move costs is not that substantial. Some of the investment that we have to make largely is in I.T. and the largest investment in I.T. is a movable investment because we have to buy a special wireless router, we have to buy switch gear, but those are all things that would transfer to any future location if this did become too exorbitant and we couldn't negotiate a fair lease going forward.

Chairman Odell: Now the regional economic development award, is that through the Town of Westfield for the rehab or the rehabilitation of that building?

Mr. Geise: It's directly with Landmark. That is the developer.

Chairman Odell: O.k., they (*inaudible*) to procure the building from the Town. Just trying to think downstream of the semantics of how that would work through.

Mr. McCord: And just to caution and everyone is very optimistic, until the awards are formally announced, right now it's just a (*inaudible*) project which doesn't guarantee it.

Legislator Chagnon: If it's awarded then the developer still has to go through the process to acquire the building. So you're right, there is a lot of water yet to go under that bridge.

Mr. McCord: That's right but we're all hopeful.

Chairman Odell: We'll attest to Mr. Bowen's statement earlier, the small communities especially along the Lake Erie shore, do rely on the technical expertise of your department. The Town of Portland, I know, and many of the other ones up and down the lakeshore particularly. So strategically I think that is a good move. I give it a little thought from what was discussed on the talent pool side and how to draw people in and growing up in Cassadaga, I know someone doesn't really want (*inaudible*) Dunkirk and ride through Cassadaga to get to Jamestown in the wintertime. I can understand and appreciate a nice long drive on the flats from Buffalo to Westfield. It might help but fill a (*inaudible*) which I know you have had trouble filling over the course of last year. It's sudden and unexpected but I'm not opposed. Do you have anything else to add?

Mrs. Dennison: I have a question. I'm sorry, the second to the last WHEREAS clause, it says Welch Foods has agreed to lease. Should that say Town of Westfield?

Mr. McCord: No. This is kind of an interesting scenario. And I will explain the amendment. The Town of Westfield owns the building but Welch Foods currently has a long term lease with that. They have moved the division that they have in there, out of the building but they still have to meet the lease requirements which are, I think, pretty substantial. So, the way that Welch has asked us and they did this with Plantrol. Plantrol also had to negotiate with Welch's to come to a price agreement and then they make a payment to the Town of Westfield who reduces the lease payment from Welch's to the Town. That is how the scenario would happen here. It was an unusual lease negotiation process to get to the agreed upon price because we were working with Welch's out of Concord, Mass., and the Town at the same time. So, that has been the request on both the Town's part and Martha Bills has contacted me and that's how the negotiations occurred.

Chairman Odell: In the end though Don, you think this will make you more efficient?

Mr. McCord: Yes.

Chairman Odell: Mark, you're still good with this?

Mr. Geise: Yes.

Chairman Odell: Now, madam Clerk, we'll walk through the amendment. First I guess we'll entertain a motion to amend the first RESOLVED clause to state that the County Executive is hereby authorized and empowered to negotiate and enter into a lease with the amendment of, with the Town of Westfield, for office space at 2 South Portage Street, Westfield, New York, on substantially the following terms and conditions.

Legislator Chagnon: I would make that motion.

Legislator O’Connell: Second.

Chairman Odell: Now on the motion to amend?

Unanimously Carried – amendment

Chairman Odell: Now on the resolution as amended. All those in favor?

Unanimously Carried

Chairman Odell: On a sidebar I did have lunch at Parkview for an anniversary lunch today and I was gazing across there and it’s not a bad thing.

Mr. McCord: It’s great to see something happening.

Legislator Chagnon: Good luck with your sub-lease.

Mr. Geise: Thank you. If you have any ideas, if you know anybody.

Legislator Chagnon: Sorry, it’s not our budget.

Proposed Resolution- Authorize Application for Grant Funding from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to Update the Chautauqua County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

Mr. McCord: Chautauqua County has had a long history of having agricultural community here. It’s a strong part of our heritage as a County. It’s a large business that you have heard Emily Reynolds talk about Cornell Cooperative Extension. From a land mass perspective, it’s our largest industry that we have. The industries that we have are commodity based in both the dairy and grapes primarily our farming industry. They had faced challenges in particular in the last few years. We had a Farmland Protection plan that was written in 2000. At the time of the writing of the original plan, the philosophy amongst folks who were trying to do farmland protection and help farmers were to do something called, purchase of development rights, because they believed if you purchase development rights then there wouldn’t be development pressure on farms and the farms wouldn’t be sold for other purposes. That didn’t really completely work across the State after they heavily implemented that as far as a plan perspective and a tool perspective. What they found in many areas especially areas like ours that didn’t have the same type of development pressures as say, a Hudson Valley or New York City did, the farms were still decreasing. So, the philosophy changed and really I have to give Kathy credit, she brought it to the County Planning Board a number of years ago. She went and attended a workshop and bought the information back. The philosophy changed and really does make – it’s just a common sense philosophy and that is, if you can help a farmer become profitable with his land, he’s much less likely to sell it. So, farmland protection plans across the State are being updated over the past 7 to 8 years and while there still technically (*inaudible*) farmland protection plans real focus is agriculture as economic development and trying to find new markets and value added products and diversified crops that can help farmers remain profitable.

We were able to secure a \$30,000 grant through the Community Foundation to fund the local share portion of this. We will be requesting a \$50,000 grant from New York State Ag and Markets and that is the maximum they will allow for this and we'll also contribute some in-kind from both Cornell Cooperative Extension and ourselves in regards to staff time to make up the difference for an overall value of \$100,000. So we're excited about the potential for the project. We do need to have this as part of the grant application before we actually put the application in. That is the reason for the resolution.

Chairman Odell: Thank you very much. Just need participation from the Legislature for that. So happy to support that Don and thank you very much for the explanation. Any questions?

Legislator Chagnon: Just to confirm Don, this is a question for tomorrow morning but there is no local share?

Mr. McCord: No, there is no local share.

Chairman Odell: It's been already covered by the \$30,000 Community grant and in-kind services from staff.

Mr. McCord: That's right.

Chairman Odell: And we'll assume that Emily is on board. Very good. No other questions of comments, all in favor?

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution - Close Capital Projects

Chairman Odell: I know this is a favorite of Pierre's. Good housekeeping. I'm kind of surprised not to see more of these yet this year. I know that we did quite a few closing last year.

Mrs. Dennison: I think we're up to date on this but as you said Mr. Chairman, this is a housekeeping item. The Department of Planning and Development had inquired about this capital project a couple of months ago and we found in doing our research that we could not find any record that it was closed by resolution. It was, as you can see from the title, initiated in 1994, the last time that there was any activity or charges to the capital project was in February 2016. So it was closed by Finance Director Button, closed from an accounting standpoint, at the end of 2017 and he completed his capitalization but as I said, didn't find a resolution closing it so we just wanted to make it official.

Chairman Odell: Very good, thank you for the explanation. Any questions?

Legislator Chagnon: That was on my list from several years ago. Happy to see this one done.

Chairman Odell: All in favor?

Unanimously Carried

Legislator Chagnon: Thank you Kathleen.

Chairman Odell: Thank you very much Kathleen.

Other

Chairman Odell: Under “other” this evening, I’m pleased to introduce Beth Starks, an Associate Professor at JCC for Early Childhood Education.

Legislator Chagnon: Move to adjourn.

Legislator O’Connell: Second.

Unanimously Carried (6:52 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted and Transcribed,
Olivia Ames, Committee Secretary, Lori J. Foster, Deputy Clerk/Secretary to the Legislature