

A Special Meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Clarence was held on Thursday, June 20, 2013, at Clarence Town Hall, One Town Place, Clarence, New York.

Supervisor David Hartzell called the meeting to order at 1:30 P.M. Members of the Town Board present were Councilmember's Bernard Kolber, Patrick Casilio, Peter DiCostanzo and Robert Geiger. Other Town Officials present were Assistant Planner PT Michael Hutchinson, Town Attorney Lawrence Meckler, Assist Engineer Kathryn Vergo, and Planning Board Chairman Robert Sackett.

Clarence Football Association – Sunset Park

Councilman Kolber obtained "budget ball park" pricing for 2 full built-out football fields - 12" crown in the center plus another couple acres practice ground. The proposed site is west of the Clarence Public Library on 19 acres of vacant town owned land (between Old Goodrich Road and Thompson Road). The site is a flat site and is better than what the Clarence Little League Football Association currently has. The estimate provided was under \$300,000. – this figure did not include any paving/walkways or electric. Councilman Kolber found 8 stadium lights on e-bay for \$1,000.

Clarence Little League Football has the ability to build out one (100 yard) full size field and they would continue to use their practice areas at their current site. Parking is a concern; their primary parking area is across Wehrle Drive in a business complex. The business complex is for sale so there is a possibility they could lose their primary parking area.

Councilman Kolber has spoken with both James Dussing and Paul Englert, and they have indicated that they are flexible however their biggest motivating factor is they want something that guarantees long term success of the program. They would like a Class A facility, which they currently do not have at Sunset Park. The Town has provided tremendous facilities for baseball, softball and soccer but nothing for football.

Councilman Kolber's concern is that football moves forward with a new field house at Sunset Park and they lose their parking privileges. Supervisor Hartzell stated that he and Councilman Geiger walked Sunset Park and feel there are several areas that could be used to park cars.

Councilman Kolber is proposing moving Clarence Little League Football to an area that is "long term stable." If approval was given now, they could be playing on their new fields next year.

Councilman Geiger felt that there would be very little cost to the town by allowing football to stay in their current location.

Supervisor Hartzell said that this has been tossed around since 2006; Clarence Little League Football is tired of waiting. All they are requesting is approval to build their press box and extend the field. Councilman Kolber stated that what he has proposed would enable Clarence Little League Football to play on the new fields next year as long as it was put out to bid and got it moving now. Sodding the field would allow them to play on the fields next fall.

Supervisor Hartzell stated that Clarence Football asked for financial help in constructing the lavatory facilities which in the long run will benefit the town.

Councilman Kolber felt that Clarence Little League Football cannot be a first class operation at Sunset Park. His proposal calls for two full size completely developed playing fields (one of which could be used for practice or they could play on). They would also have several acres of practice space beyond that.

Councilman Casilio stated that he is not comfortable spending \$500,000 without first getting input from the Recreation Advisory Committee. He also suggested setting a Public Hearing so the residents who reside near the proposed site (Old Goodrich Road/Thompson Road) have their say.

Councilman DiCostanzo has talked with James Callahan and was informed that several years ago, there were plans to put Clarence Football at the Thompson Road site. He does not want to just put the fields somewhere without any forethought and then be in the same position we have now at Sunset Park.

Councilman Kolber said the CLLF is ready to make a significant investment in a temporary facility. Supervisor suggested letting CCLF go ahead with their plans at Sunset Park and put the Recreation Advisory Committee in charge of finding a good location so that in the next five to ten years we can have a first class facility.

There was a discussion regarding the two estimates obtained by Councilman Kolber. The price varied for the price of sod. Councilman Kolber offered his services to install the sod with his own equipment.

The current block building at Sunset Park is a concession stand used to sell food, it has a large freezer (that would be moved to the new facility) part of the building is used for storage. A garden shed was also added for storage of equipment.

Councilman Casilio suggested using a concession trailer temporarily to get the 100 yard field and move forward with the proper engineering and committee reviews of a future site for CLLF. If it takes 3 – 5 years to do it right, he would rather see it done that way.

Supervisor Hartzell stated that this is a million dollar project; he would like to put this to a vote and let the residents decide.

Councilman Kolber stated that he obtained estimates and the cost is nowhere near one million dollars. The biggest material cost is \$35,000 for stone. The Highway Department can install the parking lot. The driveway would come in off of Old Goodrich Road; there would be no exit or entrance off Thompson Road.

Supervisor Hartzell again suggested letting CLLF expand at Sunset Park, move ahead long range and work on finding another site over the next five years and then bid the project out.

Councilman Kolber stated that they could leave the press box as is at Sunset Park and build a very inexpensive 2 car garage type frame construction building (which volunteers could do). They do not have lavatories in the building they are planning on demolishing, they could use portable lavatories.

Councilman DiCostanzo stated that the lavatories in the current pavilion are in need of upgrades. If CLLF builds a new facility to include lavatories, they would be handicap accessible and will be there forever once football moves to a more permanent facility.

The concessions stands are open just about every day during football season which has enabled CLLF to raise the money needed to be able to build their proposed building. Rotary is also providing a \$50,000 grant. Football is more expensive than most sports each helmet costs between \$150 - \$200, there are many costs and the concession stand helps keep those costs down.

Councilman Kolber suggested CLLF build a simple structure without lavatories so they would not use up all their funds. The town could help them with that while looking for a more

permanent solution. The biggest cost of what they are proposing is putting in a septic system and bathrooms unless the town could help them with that as well.

Councilman Geiger said discussion regarding CLLF has been going on for six or seven years, he would like to see the field at Sunset Park expanded, tear down the current concession stand and work out something temporary for a new concession stand. He does not want to see this fall through the cracks; discussion should continue to find a permanent solution.

Councilman Casilio stated that he was not ready to spend \$300,000 without the Recreation Advisory Committee's input.

Town Attorney Meckler stated that the motion of June 12, 2013 approving expenditures for design and bid assistance for a football sports field must be rescinded.

Motion by Councilman Casilio, seconded by Councilman DiCostanzo to rescind the motion of June 12, 2013 approving the expenditure of up to \$35,000 for the design and bid assistance review of football sports fields. Upon roll call – Ayes: All; Noes: None. Motion carried.

Clarence Little League Football representative James Dussing arrived at 2:10PM.

Supervisor Hartzell informed Mr. Dussing of the Boards previous discussion regarding Clarence Little League Football. It was the consensus of the Town Board to allow CLLF to move forward with their plans at Sunset Park this year and the Board will request the Recreation Advisory Committee develop a long term plan. Councilman Kolber said he did not want to see a huge facility at Sunset Park, he asked that CLLF build something that will allow them to put in a 100 yard field and build a temporary structure for the concession stand until a better solution can be reached and their funds are not depleted.

James Dussing said their proposal will involve putting in a septic system. The current lavatory facility needs an upgrade. The capacity is not there when the park is being used for a family picnic or the recreation program. The lavatories are not big enough and there is very little privacy. The estimated cost of a new building (shell) will be approximately \$88,000, the septic system will cost between \$10,000 - \$15,000, utilities, the score board and the walk-in cooler have to be moved (received a quote of \$8,000 to move cooler), the kitchen, eating area and storage area are things the league needs now. On September 28, 2011 the Town Board approved CLLF concept plan for the construction of a concession/pavilion and press box. Since then the CLLF has spent two years of their time talking to contractors and architects to come up with a plan/design. By the time it is complete, the cost will be in excess of \$150,000. The project will be done in phases. The existing press box is approximately 10 years old, it could be relocated somewhere else to be used by another organization.

Ideally, Memorial Park would be the perfect location, all the infrastructure is there. Councilman Casilio asked if there was a way to construct a different structure. Mr. Dussing stated that it could be done; they could continue to use the current press box and build a garage behind it. Councilman Kolber suggested a one story mini park pavilion with siding and counter space. Mr. Dussing further stated that it is very time consuming and difficult to get anything accomplished with all the parties involved, they have already spent an enormous amount of time coming up with their current plans and design. If they have to go back to the drawing board, redesigning the building, looking into the possibility of trailer concessions etc. it will prolong the project even further.

Supervisor Hartzell stated that CLLF is willing to donate approximately \$150,000 to the Town to construct their field house, he suggested letting the league move forward with their plans. This has been talked about since 2006. It won't cost the town anything other than the cost to expand the football field and help them with the construction of the septic system.

Mr. Dussing stated that the proposed building is a story and a half pole barn construction. The second story will be used as the press box and storage. Their original start schedule was July 15th but they will now have to work around their contractor. This project will be phased in as money becomes available.

Motion by Supervisor Hartzell, seconded by Councilman Kolber to allow the Clarence Football Association to move forward with their plans to expand their football field this year, construct their pavilion/press box at Sunset Park and at the same time request the Recreation Advisory Committee research constructing a first class football facility somewhere in Clarence - to be determined to include lights, plumbing etc. to give them the best facility in Erie County. Upon roll call – Ayes: All; Noes: None. Motion carried.

Town Attorney Meckler has one Attorney-Client item to discuss.

Motion by Supervisor Hartzell, seconded by Councilman Casilio to adjourn the Special Meeting at 2:45 PM. Upon roll call – Ayes: All; Noes: None. Motion carried.

There being no further business, the Special Meeting adjourned at 2:45 PM.

Darcy A. Snyder
Deputy Town Clerk