

A Work Session of the Town Board of the Town of Clarence was held on Wednesday, July 10, 2013, at Clarence Town Hall, One Town Place, Clarence, New York.

Supervisor David Hartzell called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. Members of the Town Board present were Councilmember's Bernard Kolber, Patrick Casilio, Peter DiCostanzo and Robert Geiger. Other Town Officials present were Director of Community Development James Callahan, Junior Planner Jonathan Bleuer, Town Attorney Lawrence Meckler, Town Engineer Timothy Lavocat, and Paralegal Cynthia Rosel.

Parks Crew Chief – James Burkard

Mr. Burkard distributed copies of a map/survey of the property the town purchased approximately three years ago at 10365 Main Street. Several of the pine trees have been dug up and placed in Memorial Park and Meadow Lakes Park. Approximately thirty more trees will be moved to Meadow Lakes Park within the next month. Clarence Fire Company has expressed an interest in some of the trees as well however Mr. Burkard suggested they contact the Town Board about this. Workers from Erie County Correctional Facility Service Action Corps will clear out the brush using the highway department's grinder.

The plan is to put two lacrosse fields on this property (the field at the front of the Park is also used for Lacrosse); their season runs from June until September. Once all the trees and brush have been removed, Mr. Burkard will have a better idea how to place the fields.

The house that is located on the property is falling into a state of disrepair. Mr. Burkard would like to see something done soon.

Councilman Kolber stated that there is a huge demand by groups for meeting space and suggested using the house for this type use. Parks Crew Chief James Burkard stated that the building would have to be brought up to code including making it ADA compliant. Not to mention this is another building for the Parks Department to maintain and clean.

Councilman Geiger stated that the building was constructed in the late 1900's and is part of the park campus. There are several groups interested in restoring the building; one group toured it last night however funding is an issue. The building is solid however the roof needs immediate attention. Mr. Burkard stated that the Town Board does not have five years to decide on what to do with the building and a decision has to be made to lease it, sell it or demo the building. Councilman Geiger further stated that "he would hate to unload town property adjoining a park. Once you sell it off, it is gone forever." He felt it would be more practical to utilize the building somehow or lease it out.

Councilman Casilio stated that it cost the Parks Department approximately \$25,000 per year to maintain the Gerber Library (landscaping, cleaning, maintenance etc.) and it is only used once per week. The house in question would add another \$25,000 to the Parks Department budget.

Town Engineer Lavocat stated the asbestos would have to be removed before the house could be demolished. Parks Crew Chief James Burkard stated that the Board has to make a decision one way or another whether they are going to keep the house or not. Keeping in mind the expense of bringing the house up to code and then upkeep (cleaning, maintenance, utilities etc.) year after year. Currently the Parks Department is using the garage for storage of equipment. Supervisor Hartzell stated that the house could be easily moved to another location.

Director of Community Development stated that the house is on the Historic Preservation list of designated landmarks.

Councilman Kolber stated that because the house is part of the park, the Town would have to go through the State Legislature to be able to sell the house. Supervisor Hartzell suggested Town Attorney Meckler research the legal ramifications of moving the house. Mr. Meckler suggested putting out an RFP to move the house from town property. The RFP could include different options – move the house, someone could agree to fix the house and lease it – the Town Board could accept or reject any offers. The Town Board agreed to have Town Attorney Meckler explore a RFP.

Parks Crew Chief James Burkard said that Hollow Fest cost the Parks Department more money than they originally proposed. They did not have any cleanup crews as planned so the Parks Department had their employees doing clean up every day of the event, the Fourth of July being the most expensive since that it was a holiday. Senior Clerk Typist Jean Ranney is compiling a list of expenses.

Economic Development Officer-Clarence IDA James Rash

Currently Mr. Rash is trying to match properties within the town with prospective businesses. Presently there are three businesses that Mr. Rash is working on bringing to Clarence: a retail company, a manufacturer from Niagara County looking for a large facility (40,000 – 50,000 square feet that would add 10 - 15 new jobs in addition to the current employees) and a manufacturer/electrical contractor looking to build a small “green” facility.

There are many general items going on relative to the IDA, they are scheduling a strategic planning session for September. Mr. Rash is also in the process of creating available commercial properties matrix for the IDA website. He is looking into promotions and advertising for the IDA as well.

Under Governor Cuomo’s budget, new laws went into effect in April essentially eliminating all retail IDA projects with three exceptions: tourism destination, services not currently provided in the area and adaptive reuse. The Clarence IDA is not currently looking at any retail projects. Supervisor Hartzell commented that the majority of Clarence IDA projects were retail, 50 jobs or less and that door is closed right now.

Mr. Rash stated that every IDA project has an “impact analysis” done and pretty much all the analysis is coming true in terms of employment and returns from taxes etc. Retail is an industry in the town of Clarence we cannot build “smoke stack” businesses. Everything is in the character of the town and in keeping with the Master Plan. Mr. Rash felt that he could still attract those types of businesses to the town in other ways without giving them IDA incentives.

There is legislation being introduced that would allow suburban rural towns that do not have IDA’s to connect to a current IDA so they can get the benefit as well.

Going forward, the key is to have a plan, to stick with the plan and to execute it and to continue to make the town gain a reputation of being more business friendly. Mr. Rash feels the town is on the right path but has a ways to go.

Supervisor David Hartzell

Clarence VFC donated a stage to the Town of Clarence which is currently stored at the Highway Department. There have been some requests by various service organizations for use of the

stage. Until it becomes an issue, the Board agreed to allow town organizations to use the stage free of charge as long as it is being used on town property.

Councilman DiCostanzo would like to hear back from Highway Superintendent Donner as to the cost to set the stage up. Councilman Kolber said his only concern is from a liability aspect. Town Attorney Meckler will look into the liability issue and develop a set of guidelines.

Lancaster Supervisor Fudoli ran into problems using his cell phone during a town board meeting and unfortunately it made The Buffalo News. Supervisor Hartzell surveyed the Board to see if cell phones should be restricted during Work Sessions and Town Board meetings. Councilman Casilio stated that when certain topics come up, he searches on-line to come up with the answer. Since it has not become an issue in Clarence, no further action will be taken.

Councilman Bernard Kolber

No report

Councilman Patrick Casilio

Councilman Casilio distributed a copy of the amended Disaster Plan. The Town Board was asked to review the plan and be ready to vote on this in two weeks.

Councilman Peter DiCostanzo

The joint Town Board/Planning Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 31, 2013.

Councilman DiCostanzo will be out of town for the July 24th Town Board meeting.

Councilman Robert Geiger

Councilman Geiger was approached by a resident on Elmcroft wondering when sewers are going to be installed on his street. Town Engineer Lavocat stated that the Town is at the end of the grant money, Brookhaven is the last project. Any future projects would have to be funded through a grant which is currently being worked on to get the remainder of Sewer District #9 (Alexander and Elmcroft) sewerred. The town is high on the list because of the consent order in SD#9.

Supervisor Hartzell asked if the Board wanted to raise the rate for use of the Clubhouse during holidays. Town Clerk Nancy Metzger said that most organizations do not use the Clubhouse during holidays. The issue only came up this year because of Hollow Fest using the small room at \$50 a day. Before a decision is made, Councilman Casilio suggested getting the cost figures from the Parks Department for their man hours during Hollow Fest.

Motion by Councilman Casilio, seconded by Supervisor Hartzell to adjourn the Work Session at 10:20 A.M. Upon roll call – Ayes: All; Noes: None. Motion carried.

Darcy A. Snyder
Deputy Town Clerk