

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: GASLIGHT VILLAGE AD HOC

DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 2010

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS KENNY
MONROE
THOMAS
MERLINO
BELDEN
MCCOY
CONOVER

OTHERS PRESENT:

WILLIAM LAMY, SUPERINTENDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF TOURISM
LEN FOSBROOK, PRESIDENT, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
SUPERVISORS BENTLEY
CHAMPAGNE
GOODSPEED
LOEB
PITKIN
STEC
STRAINER
TAYLOR
FRANK MOREHOUSE, SUPERINTENDENT OF BUILDINGS
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK, TOURISM
FRED AUSTIN, BUILDING PROJECTS COORDINATOR
DAVID DECKER, DIRECTOR, LAKE GEORGE WATERSHED COALITION
PETER BAUER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE FUND FOR LAKE GEORGE
ROBERT BLAIS, MAYOR, VILLAGE OF LAKE GEORGE
ROBERT FLACKE, PRESIDENT, FORT WILLIAM HENRY RESORT
JOANNE GAVIN, LAKE GEORGE CITIZENS GROUP
MARISA MURATORI, RESIDENT, VILLAGE OF LAKE GEORGE
JOHN CARR, RESIDENT, TOWN OF LAKE GEORGE
GEORGE MCGOWEN, RESIDENT, TOWN OF LAKE GEORGE
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
THOM RANDALL, *THE ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*
CHARLENE DIRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST
PLEASE SEE ATTACHED SIGN-IN SHEETS FOR ALL OTHER ATTENDEES

Mr. Kenny called the meeting of the Gaslight Village Ad Hoc Committee to order at 11:22 a.m.

Mr. Kenny said this was the initial meeting of the Committee and introduced the members. He explained the task of securing bids on code inspections for electrical, plumbing and structural integrity had been allocated to William Lamy, Superintendent of the Department of Public Works (DPW).

Mr. Lamy stated Frank Morehouse, Superintendent of Buildings, along with other qualified members of the DPW staff had visited the site several times and had generated a list of corrections necessary to meet the approval of Building Code Enforcement. He distributed a list of necessary renovations and approximate costs for the Opera House and Cavalcade of Cars buildings, which he reviewed in detail with the Committee; a copy of same is on file with the

minutes.

Concerning the Cavalcade of Cars building, Mr. Lamy noted the existing doors opened outward as required but needed panic hardware and handicap handles installed at an approximate cost of \$2,550 for six doors. He added two 42 inch doors would need to be installed on the outside of the building in order to comply with the code requirements for an occupancy of 1,486 people at an approximate cost of \$2,000. Pertaining to the bathrooms and plumbing, Mr. Lamy reported the plumbing for the bathrooms was buried in the concrete slab flooring and the toilet capacities did not meet the required 1.6 gallon flush requirements. He added the current toilet capacities did not meet the code requirements for the desired occupancy numbers and the septic or municipal sewer location was unknown. He explained there was a pump chamber that was connected to the sewer and a proper pump chamber with the necessary alarms would need to be installed. He advised it was unknown if any asbestos remained and the possible cost of abatement was also unknown. He added the existing bathrooms were not ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant. He said page 4 of the handout summarized the upgrade to the bathrooms at an approximate cost of \$56,000 for materials. Referring to the HVAC (Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning) System, Mr. Lamy stated there were four rooftop units which were manufactured around 1960 and the condition was unknown as they were unable to inspect them without access to the roof.

Mr. Morehouse elaborated the refrigerant that was used with the units was R-22 refrigerant which was no longer available for purchase and would most likely be outlawed in the coming year. He added usually it was not possible to recharge an older unit with the newer refrigerants which meant the compressors would require changing. Mr. Lamy interjected the cost of updating the HVAC System was unknown at this time. He added there was a chance that all four units would need replacement.

Pertaining to the sprinkler system, Mr. Lamy noted it had not been evaluated due to the fact that the building was not heated and therefore the water was not turned on during the winter. Mr. Morehouse apprised there was an existing sprinkler system in the Cavalcade of Cars building that appeared to be intact. He added Mahoney-Notify Plus, Inc. monitored the buildings previously and a proposal for future monitoring was included in the handout. He advised Mahoney-Notify Plus, Inc. would charge an installation fee of \$985 and a monthly monitoring fee of \$49. He reported the sprinkler system in the Opera House building was missing most components and would require replacement. Concerning the electrical system for the Cavalcade of Cars building, Mr. Lamy explained it was mostly serviceable and needed minor repairs. Mr. Morehouse elaborated there was some loose wiring hanging from the junction boxes.

Mr. Lamy said there had been suggestions pertaining to the possible use of the Cavalcade of Cars building in the winter and added they had been requested to research the removal of the facade. Mr. Morehouse stated there was no insulation in the building so the building would require the installation of insulation and sheeting. Mr. Lamy reported he had requested Mr. Morehouse make the cost estimates with the assumption that County or Town workforce would be utilized; however, he added, there would be an estimated cost of approximately \$6,500 for

disposal of demolition materials. Another unknown cost, he continued, was the cost of extermination as the building was inhabited by various pests. He noted they had not accounted for the cost of permits, drawings, or engineering work.

Mr. Kenny advised the Committee needed to develop short term and long term plans for the Cavalcade of Cars building. He noted everything on the list with the exception of the HVAC system would need to be completed in order to use the building on a short term basis. He asked if there was a total estimated cost to complete the repairs and Mr. Lamy replied approximately \$70,000 of identified costs, which did not include labor. He noted any of the items that did not list a dollar figure would require additional work in order to determine the cost. Mr. Kenny stated although there would still be some issues, the property could be used on a short term basis without the use of the buildings.

Mr. Kenny noted he received an email from Mr. Lamy concerning use of the property if the Opera House building remained. He reminded the Committee it had been previously decided to demolish the Opera House building; however, he added, the Board voted against the demolition at their last meeting. Grant funding was available to cover the cost of demolition, he continued, but a decision as to which buildings would be demolished would need to be reached by May.

Mr. Lamy said he was asked to evaluate the engineering work which was completed on the two buildings. He apprised the Town of Lake George commissioned a report by Charles Barrow, a licensed engineer; the County commissioned a report which was completed by Clark Patterson Lee; and the Village of Lake George commissioned a report completed by Finney Design Group. He added all the engineers had outlined issues which would need to be addressed in order to retain the buildings. He noted the sheeting on the outside of the Opera House building acted as bracing and it was no longer properly braced since the sheeting had been removed. He said both the Barrow report and the Clark Patterson Lee report had identified decayed and rotten wood in the Opera House building and both suggested the wood be replaced. He advised the roof had a significant amount of rotten wood, some of which was replaced. He added a membrane had been placed over the rotten wood encapsulating it at which point a new roof structure was partially completed. Purlins were nailed to the old roof, he continued, with tin placed on top. He explained this was merely a way to keep water out and did not add to the structural integrity of the building. When new wood was attached to old wood, he continued, the connection was important in order for the roof to be stable. He advised the roof was insufficient to hold a snow load and would bend under the weight. He stated if he had been involved in the reconstruction of the building he would have suggested the replacement of all rotten wood. He noted the arches were exposed to the weather due to the removal of the sheeting. He recommended the wood of the arches be evaluated if there was a desire to retain them.

Mr. Kenny reported the County had received the report from McGillivray Consulting Group which was a leisure and hospitality company based in Orlando, Florida. He said the County had contracted with the company to evaluate the Cavalcade of Cars and Opera House buildings to determine if they were suitable for theater productions and as multi-use facilities. He added

the company had reported the Cavalcade of Cars building was structurally sound and was a viable candidate to be reconfigured as a multi-purpose facility. The company also reported, he continued, that although it might be possible to repair the Opera House building, the expense would not be justified by the resulting asset. He added the company felt it was possible to replace the building for less cost than would be expended to bring the building up to code compliance. He appraised McGillivray Consulting Group suggested the Opera House be demolished and a new building be constructed to serve as storage and support for furnishings and equipment required to operate the multi-purpose facility (Cavalcade of Cars building).

Referring to the rotten wood in the Opera House building, Mr. Lamy stated, he could not stress enough that the connections needed to be made with a material that still retained structural integrity. He said by encapsulating the rotten wood it would lead to the forming of mold and mildew. He advised New York State rules and regulations required that once any modifications were completed to the structural integrity of a building, engineering plans had to be prepared, stamped and submitted to code enforcement. He reported Mr. McCoy had indicated that those plans were in existence; however, he added, the County was not in possession of any such plans.

Chairman Monroe explained there had been discussion pertaining to the Opera House building at a previous Committee meeting at which time it was decided the building would be demolished. He said he had received several calls prior to the February 19, 2010 Board meeting asking if the topic would be on the agenda. He appraised he had expected the resolution for the demolition of the Opera House building to be approved at the Board meeting; however, he added, public comments from those in favor of retaining the building had swayed the Board. Procedurally, he continued, the Board needed to discuss the issue further.

Mr. Kenny noted the County could incur a greater liability if the Opera House building was retained due to its unsafe condition. Paul Dusek, County Attorney, advised measures needed to be taken to ensure that no one went near the building until it was safe and any work done on the building be supervised by engineers. He added sufficient blockades, fencing and notices were required and no one should work on the building without the proper equipment and shoring.

Mr. Pitkin questioned why the County was involved in the Gaslight Village project given the current budget crisis. Mr. Kenny noted at one time the 3E's (three environmental groups) had expressed an interest in purchasing the County's share of the property. He said he had contacted a representative from one of the groups to determine if there was still an interest but he had not received a response. He added the only response he received was that purchasing the County's share of the property could be a possibility as part of a long term plan. He appraised he was unsure if selling the property was an option and asked Mr. Dusek if the County's share of the property was saleable. Mr. Dusek responded the County's share was saleable but it was a matter of who would be interested in the purchase. He added due to the conservation easement on the property an interested buyer would be difficult to find. Mr.

Belden expressed the County did not have the necessary funds to make improvements on the property given the current budget crisis. Mr. Kenny reiterated the Committee needed to develop short term and long term plans for the property and added there were meetings scheduled for the Committee for March, April and May. He advised the next meeting should be devoted to determining a 2010 plan for the property. Mr. Conover requested a more complete explanation of the demolition program and the deadlines necessitated by the Department of State (DOS) grant funding be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. He added this information would be necessary to better coordinate the demolition schedule with any events being held over the summer in Lake George.

David Decker, Director of the Lake George Watershed Coalition, distributed a project briefing and schedule overview to the Committee members; a copy of same is on file with the minutes. He said he was the Project Manager for the development of the demolition plan and for the expenditure of the funds awarded to the Town of Queensbury from the DOS for the demolition and some of the activities on the south parcel. He advised there were three phases of funding available which he listed as:

- Phase 1 - demolition with funding from the DOS Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) grant awarded to the Town of Queensbury in the amount of \$200,000;
- Phase 2 - rough grading and unit processes construction with funding from the DOT (Department of Transportation) in the amount of \$600,000; and
- Phase 3 - final construction, wetlands planting and project commissioning and start up with funding from the DOS in the amount of \$900,000.

Mr. Decker noted Phase 1 included demolition on both the north and south parcels including subsurface improvements, concrete pads and underground utilities. He advised Phase 2 consisted of the stormwater improvements to the south parcel. Referring to page 2 of the handout, Mr. Decker noted it was a project schedule which fit into the DOT schedule for the re-paving of Route 9. He added the RFP (Request for Proposal) for site demolition was scheduled for release on March 25, 2010 and a mandatory pre-bid meeting would be held onsite on April 9, 2010 with the bids being received on or about May 3, 2010. He noted they anticipated issuing the notice to proceed to the chosen contractor on or about May 24, 2010 and the County would need to make a decision on which buildings would be demolished prior to the notice to proceed. He said the contractor would be required to be substantially complete by mid-August. He noted the demolition contract would be in contemplation of future construction and advised the site would not be re-stabilized for use as a parking lot or any other type of facility. He mentioned the construction directed by the DOT on the south parcel was anticipated to commence in mid-September. The DOT would release the RFP in June, he continued, with a 45-day bidding period and would sign the contract with the chosen contractor in mid-August. He apprised at the conclusion of the site work on the south parcel the site would be stabilized for the winter and the balance of the site work and the final planting would commence in the spring of 2011.

Mr. Decker said he would need input from the Committee pertaining to any limitations to be

placed on the demolition contractor, such as calendar or weekday limitations, preferred routes for the removal of demolition materials, spacial limits for operations, possible use of adjacent properties during demolition activities and decisions on the north parcel building disposition. He added he would require the majority of the input before the end of March so it could be included as part of the RFP. He noted the RFP could be delayed a few weeks if it was necessary but they did not want to delay it too long. Mr. Kenny asked if the contract award would be in mid-August and Mr. Decker replied notice to proceed would be given on May 24, 2010. Mr. Decker stated they could specify the contractor to not begin prior to a certain date once the notice to proceed was given but since the work was scheduled to be completed by mid-August the contractor would want to commence as soon as possible.

Mr. McCoy reported some area business owners had voiced their concerns that demolition should not take place during the summer. He advised it was inappropriate for construction vehicles to haul debris off the property during tourist season. He recommended that demolition be delayed until September noting demolition in the summer would cause traffic issues in the Town. He further recommended they have two separate RFP's; one for the south parcel demolition and one for the north parcel. He added he felt they would get better prices with smaller contractors. Mr. Kenny questioned if it was possible to delay demolition until September. Mr. Decker replied affirmatively and added the delay would impact the work on the south parcel, including the paving to be completed by the DOT, which would be delayed until spring of 2011 and the final planting would be delayed until spring of 2012. He advised he was unsure of how the DOT would react to such a delay. Mr. Belden asked what work the DOT would complete on the south parcel and Mr. Decker explained the DOT had programmed \$600,000 of work for the south parcel and would complete all the excavation, rough grading and connections.

Mr. Conover questioned if there was a possibility of demolishing a portion of a building as opposed to the entire building. Mr. Decker responded affirmatively and added the current grant programming provided funds to remove 100% of the existing buildings as determined by the owners. Mr. Kenny clarified all of the buildings had been included in the demolition work and the Board had decided at the last Board meeting to opt out of demolishing the Opera House building.

Mr. McCoy asked if the Town of Lake George would be reimbursed for any demolition or asbestos abatement it had completed on the property. Mr. Decker replied he was unsure but any expenses that were considered valid would be reimbursable as long as they were expended after the announcement of the grant. Mr. Lamy noted there would probably be inspection and certification requirements as part of the grant in order to qualify for reimbursement.

Peter Bauer, Executive Director of The Fund for Lake George, stated the schedule was driven by the DOT who wanted to break ground the week following the Adirondack Nationals Car Show to be held on September 10-12, 2010. The purpose for breaking ground this fall, he continued, was to begin the rough grading for the stormwater treatment complex on the south

parcel so planting could be completed in spring of 2011. He added the wetland plant species required planting in spring. He advised that discussions with representatives from the 3M's (three municipalities) had determined that demolition should take place following Americade and prior to the Adirondack Nationals Car Show. He apprised due to the funding restrictions it would be difficult, if not impossible, to complete the work outside of the summer season. He added the DOT had been adamant if the work was not completed in a timely manner there would be no guarantee of funding. He advised the demolition schedule had been comprised so that demolition would take place in July and August and added criteria could be listed on the RFP to make the schedule more cohesive with the tourist season. He said the trucks would not drive through the center of Town but would instead use routes on the outskirts.

Mr. Belden questioned if representatives from both the 3E's and the 3M's had been present at meetings with the DOT and Mr. Bauer responded affirmatively and added DPW staff had been present to represent the 3M's. Robert Blais, Mayor of the Village of Lake George, stated the project was conceived over five years ago and several meetings had taken place with the DOT. He said it had been known for some time the demolition would take place in the summer and the County would re-pave Beach Road the following year in the summer. Mayor Blais voiced his opinion it was unlikely the Town of Lake George would be reimbursed for demolition and asbestos abatement work that was completed, as it was done prior to the signing of a contract.

Mr. Kenny said there had been discussions at prior meetings pertaining to the schedule for demolition and it had been determined that it would need to be completed in the summer. Chairman Monroe reported the Gaslight Village Management Group had met the previous week and there was an urgency to make final decisions. Mr. Kenny noted regardless of which decision was reached there would be members of the community who were unhappy. He added he received many emails in the last month from people wishing to retain all buildings as well as from people who wanted all the buildings demolished. He said the demolition schedule was detailed and the concern of the Committee was the demolition schedule and the inclusion or exclusion of buildings on the festival space. Mr. Champagne voiced his opinion that following the information received today many of the Supervisors would change their decision as to the demolition of the Opera House building. He said the decision was made without all of the information and he would like an opportunity to vote again. Chairman Monroe agreed the vote was premature and noted the public was represented at the Board meeting only by those in favor of retaining the Opera House building. Discussion ensued pertaining to the demolition of the Opera House. It was the consensus of the Committee to schedule another meeting on Thursday, March 4, 2010 to develop a short term plan for the festival space.

Mr. Geraghty asked if the estimated cost of \$100,000 for rehab of the buildings was accurate and Mr. Lamy responded it would cost at least \$100,000 and possibly more. Mr. Geraghty stated the County would not have available funds in 2010 and would most likely not have funds available in 2011. Mr. McCoy noted there had been proposals to use occupancy tax funding and Mr. Geraghty replied occupancy tax funding would not be available until 2011. Mr. Merlino said the amount could be bonded by the County in 2010 and repaid with occupancy tax funds in

2011. Mr. Geraghty countered that bonding would create an interest payment to be paid using County funds that were not available.

Mayor Blais apprised the Village of Lake George proposed the demolition of all of the buildings as was originally intended. He added grant funding was available to cover 100% of the cost of demolition and the local match was covered by the purchase price of the property. He noted there were ten existing privately owned venues in Warren County that could meet the needs of events. Referring to the Brookings Institute Research Paper, he stated, in 2005 through 2007 they reported the market for trade shows was diminishing. He recommended a marketing study be completed to determine who was interested in holding an event in Warren County and what their needs were. He added the Village of Lake George would contribute to the cost of the marketing study. He suggested all the buildings be demolished and construction be postponed until the economy improved and funds were available to use as matching funds for a grant. He added this would allow the 3M's to construct a building that would be visually appealing and meet the needs of events. He stated he had photos of Adirondack style pavilions he considered appropriate for the festival space. Mr. Taylor agreed with Mayor Blais's proposal and thanked him for his comments.

Robert Flacke, President of the Fort William Henry Resort and co-owner of the Lincoln Log Colony, voiced his opinion that the Opera House building should be demolished regardless of the decision reached on the Cavalcade of Cars building. He noted the Cavalcade of Cars building was erected in the 1960's as an exhibit room for antique automobiles. He added the building was an inexpensive box-type building for an amusement park, which it would continue to be regardless of how much money was invested. He recommended both buildings be demolished and a qualified architect be hired to construct new buildings the County could be proud of. He noted the most important issue was the preservation of Lake George and the stormwater treatment project would be beneficial.

Joanne Gavin, spokesperson for the Lake George Citizens Group, advised she would have been present at the last Board meeting if she had been aware of the resolution pertaining to the Opera House building. In 2000 there been a vision to design an environmental park, she continued, to help restore Lake George to the benefit the communities of Warren County. She added the Gaslight Village property had been sold and purchased with that goal in mind. She apprised the original vision had been changed over time. She voiced her opinion it was not necessary to retain the buildings which she referred to as old, hazardous and worthless buildings purposefully left by the previous owner to rot. She advised the original plan did not include buildings but she felt an Adirondack style pavilion could do well to promote the park and generate the necessary funds to cover the cost of maintenance.

Marisa Muratori, resident of the Village of Lake George, said she had been a previous Village Board member for five years and a Village Planning Board member for seven years. She stated the project had begun more than ten years ago. She apprised she supported Mayor Blais's proposal and added the Village had not wavered on their position for the project. She advised

a group of representatives consisting of all the interested parties of the property should be formed to make the necessary decisions. She gave a brief overview on the history of the project and voiced her opinion that the buildings on the property should be demolished. She said she felt the desire of people who wanted to retain the buildings was emotional and not practical.

John Carr, resident of the Town of Lake George, thanked the Committee for listening to the feedback of the community. He said the buildings were necessary in order to attract group events. He stated if the County had the necessary funds he would encourage them to demolish the buildings and construct new ones; however, he added, since the necessary funds were not available he recommended the existing buildings be rehabilitated to accommodate the events that needed to have a roof over their heads. He added modifications or replacement of the buildings should be reconsidered at a later date when funds were available.

George McGowan, resident of the Town of Lake George, said traditionally Public Works included water, sewer and roads which were burdens the public accepted as part of the general welfare. He added government was entering into private enterprises such as restaurants, railroads and ski centers and he urged the County to stop spending. He voiced his opinion there was nothing historical about Gaslight Village which he referred to as having been a successful carnival. He noted demolition contractors were efficient and it would not take long to complete the demolition on the property.

Mr. Kenny said the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) was working on short term and long term plans for the property. Len Fosbrook, President of the EDC, reported he had a proposal from ConsultEcon, Inc. of Cambridge, Massachusetts to prepare a tourism strategy for Warren County. He added the EDC would fund the tourism strategy in the amount of \$38,000 and the study would take 3 to 4 months to complete. He said he would present the proposal to the Planning & Community Development Committee at the March 1, 2010 meeting. He noted as part of the proposal ConsultEcon, Inc. would recommend the best uses for the Gaslight Village property.

Mr. Kenny reminded the Committee the decision on which buildings would be demolished would need to be reached because if the decision was made after May the demolition would not be covered by grant funds.

Mr. Dusek recommended the Opera House building be secured for safety and liability purposes. Mr. Lamy responded the Warren County DPW was not the contractor of record and if the Town of Lake George needed advice the DPW could provide them with it. He added if the Committee requested the DPW secure the building they would need to identify a source of funding as he did not have funds available in his budget. He noted the DPW had some fencing available but it was not a sufficient amount to secure the building. Mr. Dusek responded the immediate concern was safety and the building should be secured with fencing and notices should be posted.

Brief discussion ensued.

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously authorizing the Superintendent of the DPW to secure the Opera House building as necessary with a source of funding to be determined. *The necessary resolution was authorized for the March 19, 2010 Board meeting.*

As there was no further business to come before the Gaslight Village Ad Hoc Committee, on motion made by Mr. McCoy and seconded by Mr. Conover, Mr. Kenny adjourned the meeting at 1:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Senior Legislative Office Specialist