

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: GASLIGHT VILLAGE AD HOC

DATE: JUNE 2, 2010

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS KENNY
MONROE
THOMAS
MERLINO
BELDEN
MCCOY
CONOVER

OTHERS PRESENT:

PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY/COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE
& FISCAL SERVICES
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS BENTLEY
CHAMPAGNE
GIRARD
LOEB
PITKIN
STEC
STRAINER
TAYLOR
VANNESS

KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR, TOURISM DEPARTMENT
WILLIAM LAMY, SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
ROBERT BLAIS, MAYOR, VILLAGE OF LAKE GEORGE
LEN FOSBROOK, PRESIDENT, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
PETER BAUER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FUND FOR LAKE GEORGE
WALT LENDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LAKE GEORGE ASSOCIATION
LUISA CRAIGE-SHERMAN, LAKE GEORGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
DAVE CEDERSTROM, *THE CHRONICLE*
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
THOM RANDALL, *THE ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*
AMANDA ALLEN, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST
Please see the sign-in sheet for additional meeting attendees.

Mr. Kenny called the meeting of the Gaslight Village Ad Hoc Committee to order at 10:15 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the prior Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Mr. Kenny noted the purpose of the meeting was for discussion and approval of parking plans for the Gaslight Village property. He then proceeded to provide a brief history of discussion held by the Committee during past meetings relative to retention/demolition of buildings located on the property which included intentions to demolish the Opera House Building and reserve decision on the Cavalcade of Cars Building until the results of the study being performed by the EDC (Economic Development Corporation) were received, which they anticipated would be in late July. Mr. Kenny apprised that an informal meeting had been held by representatives of the 3M's (Municipalities - Warren County, Town of Lake George and the Village of Lake George) during which a compromise had been suggested that would call for the Cavalcade of Cars Building to be transformed into a pavilion structure. He said the suggestion had been introduced at both the Village and Town Board meetings and the compromise had been approved by the Village Board, but rejected by the Town Board.

During Mr. Kenny's opening statements, Mr. Merlino objected to the mention of prior business concerning decisions on the Gaslight buildings when the intent of the meeting was to discuss parking arrangements and exited the

meeting at 10:20 a.m.

Resuming discussion, Mr. Kenny noted that he had received several inquiries as to how the Cavalcade of Cars Building would be utilized if retained as an enclosed structure and he asked Mr. McCoy to comment on this issue. Mr. McCoy replied the Town of Lake George envisioned the building would be used as a trade show and community center, allowing the availability of climate controlled space for large events or gatherings such as those that might be held by senior citizens groups, the Youth Commission and other community groups. He added the building would be available for use by Town of Lake George residents when not being used for trade shows. Mr. Champagne questioned whether the building would be available for those County residents not living within the Town of Lake George and Mr. McCoy replied affirmatively, noting that all Warren County residents would have access to the building.

Mr. Kenny advised that immediately preceding the meeting he had received an email referring to funding for demolition costs and he asked Paul Dusek, County Attorney/Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, to expound upon the matter.

Mr. Dusek explained the email had been sent subsequent to a meeting held between the 3M's and the 3E's (Environmental groups - the Fund for Lake George, the Lake George Association and the Lake George Land Conservancy) to discuss demolition and project plans for the Gaslight Village property, during which it had been determined there was a problem with the \$600,000 NYSDOT (New York State Department of Transportation) grant funding. He reminded the Committee that the original plan had been to demolish all of the buildings on the property, aside from those they had decided to retain, and begin the land improvement work on the south parcel. Since the NYSDOT grant funding was not currently available, and would not become available until at least August, Mr. Dusek said it was suggested that the project plans be altered to begin with the demolition of the buildings located on the south parcel and complete the rough grading work for that area, at which point they could re-evaluate the project to determine whether the balance of the funds available should be used to continue the land improvements to the south parcel, or to demolish other buildings on the property. He stated this seemed to be a reasonable approach as they anticipated costs in the vicinity of \$700,000 to \$800,000 to complete the rough grading work, leaving a significant amount of the \$1.2 million demolition grant unspent. Mr. Dusek said they had also explored the fact that even if all of the grant money was expended for work on the south parcel, there was the possibility of using part of the \$2.5 million grant received by the Village of Lake George to cover demolition costs.

The email, from Dave Decker, the engineer for the project, raised some concerns regarding prior discussions between the 3M's and 3E's, Mr. Dusek apprised. In response, he said he had called Mr. Decker and explained the plans to proceed with work on the south parcel initially and then re-evaluate the situation, to which Mr. Decker had responded that while in theory this might seem to be a reasonable solution, there were some issues that could arise during the rough grading process and prevent the work from proceeding as desired. Mr. Dusek said some of the potential issues pointed out by Mr. Decker included the presence of ground water, broken pipes or any number of other issues that could force the project to proceed from the rough grading work directly into the next stages of the project, utilizing all of the grant funding available. He advised that as they discussed the matter further, it became clear that while this may be true, there was also good news in that demolition of the buildings on the south parcel probably would not be completed until mid-August based on the current status of the project. Mr. Dusek said it seemed to him that they would still be in roughly the same situation which was to review the project in mid-August and make a determination as to the availability of NYSDOT grant funding, allowing the 3M's and 3E's to make further decisions at that point. He stated an acceptable solution to this issue might be to revisit the funding issues when the building demolition work was finished for the south parcel and make further decisions at that point, rather than beginning the rough grading work which could lead to more costly work.

Chairman Monroe questioned whether it might be possible to sign the contracts for demolition contingent upon receipt of NYSDOT grant funding and revisit the entire issue again in mid-August. Mr. Dusek responded that the demolition schedule would begin in July and conclude in mid-August, so it would not be possible to delay the building demolition and maintain the project schedule.

Mr. Belden said it was his understanding that the NYSDOT grant could not be used to demolish the buildings on the north parcel and Mr. Dusek advised this was correct. Mr. Belden then questioned who would be responsible for the costs of demolition on the north parcel if the Village did not provide funding from their \$2.5 million grant, as well as how operations on the south parcel would be funded if the NYSDOT grant was not received.

Chairman Monroe advised he had contacted Robert Blais, Mayor of the Village of Lake George, to determine if the Village was willing to commit to providing funds from their grant for demolition costs on the north parcel. Mayor Blais said that during the meeting of the 3M's and 3E's it had been decided that they would use a portion of the \$1.2 million NYSDOT grant to demolish the buildings on the south parcel in the first phase of the project. He added that they had a general estimate for the demolition costs and if the bids received were higher, they could be rejected. The second step, Mayor Blais noted, was to begin the rough grading process, which he felt was extremely important as residents had been waiting for work to begin on the property for some time; he added that if they did not move forward they risked considerable delays for the environmental portion of the project. With respect to concerns that there would not be sufficient funds available to complete the entire project, Mayor Blais said this was not a big concern for the 3M's as the \$2.5 million grant received by the Village should be sufficient to complete all of the work planned for the north parcel. He advised that if shortages were to occur it would likely be for work on the south parcel, which was the responsibility of the 3E's. Mayor Blais said that while he did not disagree with Mr. Decker's indications that they might incur unforeseen expenses when ground work began, he preferred to see the project move forward in stages, rather than delayed for further consideration.

Moving on, Mr. Kenny noted the parking season was rapidly approaching and a policy was required to govern the amounts charged, as well as the number of parking attendants needed.

Mr. McCoy apprised that during the prior year they had used three parking attendants on busy days and only one or two attendants for days with lesser traffic; he added that \$5 per vehicle had been charged for the 2009 season. Mayor Blais interjected that they had paid the Village staff parking cars \$8.50 per hour and had not allowed overtime pay. Mr. McCoy stated the Town had paid their employees a slightly higher wage for parking cars, but were willing to accept reimbursement for an \$8.50 hourly wage and fund the difference at the Town level.

Mr. Belden said it was important for concise records to be kept pertaining to the number of cars parked, revenues received and salaries paid in order to provide a clear picture of revenues received and expenses incurred, in order to determine the direction for 2011. Mr. McCoy responded that a ticketing system was used in which the attendant retained a ticket stub for each vehicle parked and at the end of the day the number of ticket stubs were reconciled against the amount of money collected. He noted that the parking revenues received far exceeded the staffing costs for events such as Americade and the car show, as well on the nights with fireworks. Mr. VanNess questioned whether parking signs had been placed and Mr. McCoy replied affirmatively noting that large 4' by 8' signs had been placed to advertise the availability of parking.

Motion was made by Mr. McCoy, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to approve parking procedures that would include a \$5 per vehicle fee for parking and allowing an hourly pay rate of \$8.50 per hour for parking attendants with the number of attendants used and hours of operation varying commensurate with the demand for parking and the necessary resolution was authorized for the June 18th Board meeting.

Returning to the previous discussion, Mr. Dusek said the plans for demolition should also be adopted in the form of a resolution which he would share with both the Town and Village of Lake George. When asked for clarification on the plan being adopted, Mr. Dusek said it was his understanding that the consensus was to move ahead with the project, with the RFP for demolition costs being released for all buildings on the property, leaving the option of excluding those buildings they decided to retain. He further noted the project would commence with the demolition of buildings on the South parcel, with a meeting between the 3M's and 3E's to follow for determination as to how the project would proceed.

Mr. Conover entered the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

Mr. Pitkin questioned whether the resolution should clarify that the work being performed on the south parcel was the financial responsibility of the 3E's and Peter Bauer, Executive Director of the Fund for Lake George, advised that this language was clearly indicated in the easement documentation. Chairman Monroe reiterated his earlier remarks that a written agreement should be established with the Village of Lake George confirming that if no alternate grant funding was available, a portion of their \$2.5 million grant would be used to fund the demolition of buildings on the north parcel.

Mr. Thomas pointed out that there were actually three grants associated with the Gaslight Village project, those being the \$1.2 million demolition grant, the \$2.5 million grant received by the Village and \$600,000 NYSDOT grant and Mr. Kenny confirmed these totals.

Mr. Belden questioned whether the Village's \$2.5 million grant included specific usage rules and Mayor Blais replied that it could be used for demolition and creation of a park, but could not be used for the environmental initiatives. Mayor Blais advised that this was a NYSDOT improvement grant and noted that they had signed all of the necessary contracts to receive the grant; however, he said, the documentation had not been returned with the State's final approval. Chairman Monroe said that in previous discussions it had been noted that if the grant funds were used for improvements on the north parcel then the 3M's could not charge for parking on that site; he then questioned whether using the funds for demolition on the north parcel would lead to the same inability to assess fees for parking in that area. Mayor Blais replied that he did not know if this was the case, but advised there had not been any direction noting that they would be unable to charge for parking if the grant funds were used for improvements to the north parcel, but rather they were not permitted to lease or allow the property to be used by a private operator to make a profit and that all fees assessed with use of the parcel had to be used to support upkeep and maintenance of the property. Mr. McCoy pointed out that although this would not affect the ability to charge for parking, it would hamper the ability to rent the Cavalcade of Cars Building for commercial events or charge for vendor space during trade shows. Mayor Blais apprised that the grant funds were intended for the procurement of a parkland and not to be used within the festival space; he added that if the Cavalcade of Cars Building was retained, the grant funding could not be used in that area. When clarification on this issue was requested, Mayor Blais advised that if any of the buildings within the festival space area were retained, the grant funds could not be used in that area.

Walt Lender, Executive Director of the Lake George Association, advised the grant was written in such a manner that it only allowed the funding to be used if all the buildings located on the parcel were being removed and the vacant festival space included in the overall parkland area. He said that if any of the buildings were retained for the purpose of using them for trade shows and rental to vendors, thereby precluding public use, none of the grant funding could be used in that area. Mr. Lender apprised the use of the grant funds to demolish all of the buildings on the property would not prevent the 3M's from assessing fees for parking on the property.

Mr. Pitkin pointed out there seemed to be a lot of confusion regarding what areas the various grant funding could be used in, as well as the restrictions involved. In order to clarify the issues, he suggested that each involved party be asked to sign a document stating and confirming their understanding of these issues. Mr. Loeb agreed and opined that a document be developed outlining all of the grant funding available and the acceptable uses to serve as a reference document for all parties involved. Mr. Taylor added that a map specifically reflecting the areas the grants could be used in would be beneficial.

A lengthy discussion ensued.

Mr. Thomas suggested they proceed in authorizing the 3E's to release the RFP for demolition in order to gain a better understanding of the costs associated with this work. Mr. Kenny said it was his understanding that the 3Es intended to release the RFP following the June 18th Board meeting and Mr. Bauer confirmed this, noting they planned to release two RFP's, one for the demolition of the Charley's Saloon Building and another for the rough grading work, as these were the two items they hoped to complete in 2010. He added their next goal was to begin demolition on the north parcel once the availability of grant funding was confirmed. For the time being, Mr. Bauer stated they needed to begin work on the south parcel to maintain the project schedule.

Mr. Bentley questioned why County approval was required for the 3E's to release a demolition RFP which would expend their grant money for work on the south parcel and Mr. Dusek replied that the County had oversight abilities for the entire parcel and this provision was added to ensure knowledge, oversight and control over activities on the Gaslight Village property.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously to authorize the 3E's to release an RFP for demolition of buildings on both the north and south Gaslight Village parcels, allowing for certain buildings to be excluded from demolition plans, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the June 18th Board meeting.

As there was no further business to come before the Committee, on motion made by Mr. Belden and seconded by Mr. Conover, Mr. Kenny adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Allen, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist