

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: GASLIGHT VILLAGE AD HOC

DATE: APRIL 27, 2012

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: OTHERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS MONROE
THOMAS
KENNY
DICKINSON

JEFFERY TENNYSON, SUPERINTENDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF TOURISM
DANIEL G. STEC, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR MERLINO

SUPERVISORS BENTLEY
CONOVER
FRASIER
LOEB
MASON
MCDEVITT
STRAINER
TAYLOR
WESTCOTT
MICHAEL SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER
TANYA BRAND, GROUP TOUR PROMOTER
WALT LENDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LAKE GEORGE ASSOCIATION
DAVID HARRINGTON, SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, VILLAGE OF LAKE
GEORGE
CHRISTINA CURLEY, SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR, LAKE GEORGE REGIONAL
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CVB (CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU)
FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY RESORT
JON ALEXANDER, *THE POST STAR*
CHARLENE DIRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Monroe called the meeting of the Gaslight Village Ad Hoc Committee to order at 10:19 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting; subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Jeffery Tennyson, Superintendent of the Department of Public Works (DPW), who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Tennyson stated the second page of the agenda contained a map detailing the reconfigured boundary lines of the Festival Space and he noted the boundaries would need to be revised in the existing Conservation Easement. He advised a survey of the reconfiguration would need to be performed and he was awaiting an estimate from David Barass, a surveyor currently under contract with the DPW. He anticipated the cost of the survey would be between \$2,500 and \$3,000 and he said he had requested the survey include the setting of two iron pins on the corners where the boundary lines met Route 9. Mr. Dickinson asked the scope of the survey work and Mr. Tennyson responded there would be a survey map and meets and bounds description completed. Mr. Tennyson stated he was requesting authorization to proceed with the survey utilizing parking revenues in order to allow adjustments to the Conservation Easement. He said that once the total

cost of the survey was known he would submit a request for a transfer of funds; however, he added, he would utilize existing funds in the DPW budget to cover the cost of the survey until the transfer of funds was approved. Mr. Dickinson asked if any other surveyors had been contacted for an estimate and Mr. Tennyson replied in the negative and added there was a term contract in place with Mr. Barass which had been initiated following a Request for Proposals (RFP). Mr. Dickinson requested to be apprised of the estimate prior to proceeding. Mr. Monroe asked if the survey was necessary as part of the Land Swap and Mr. Tennyson replied that the Land Swap required a separate survey and Walt Lender, Executive Director of the Lake George Association (LGA), had indicated the LGA would cover the cost of that survey.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously to approve the request to utilize parking revenues from the former Gaslight Village property to cover the cost of a survey of the reconfigured Festival Space and to forward same to the Finance Committee.

Mr. Monroe asked Mr. Lender for a status report on the Land Swap survey and Mr. Lender replied the survey had been completed. Mr. Lender explained that survey only included the parcels to be swapped and a survey of the reconfigured Festival Space was still necessary.

Mr. Tennyson requested authorization to award the bid for Final Engineering and/or Landscape Architectural Design Services for the West Brook Conservation Initiative Festival Space and Environmental Park (WC 38-12) to the lowest responsible bidder to be determined subsequent to the May 15, 2012 bid opening. He noted the selected contractor would be determined prior to the May 18, 2012 Board meeting. He explained that the contractor's experience and knowledge of the project would be taken into consideration when awarding the bid. Mr. Monroe asked if Elan Planning, Design and Landscape Architecture PLLC was eligible to bid on the project since the RFP detailed the need to coordinate with Elan. Mr. Tennyson responded that Elan was eligible; however, he added, they recognized that if Warren County selected a different consultant, it would be necessary for them to coordinate with Elan Planning, Design and Landscape Architecture PLLC. He noted that Elan continued to work in connection with the TEP (Transportation Enhancement Program) Grant Project which included the foundation, rough grading, etc. Pertaining to the source of funding for the contract, Mr. Tennyson advised there were pending grant documents relative to funding awarded for the final design of the park. Mr. Thomas inquired if the contract was fully covered by grant funding and Mr. Tennyson replied affirmatively adding that local match requirements for the grants were completed through municipal labor and the initial land purchase.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to award the bid for Final Engineering and/or Landscape Architectural Design Services for the West Brook Conservation Initiative Festival Space and Environmental Park (WC 38-12) to the lowest responsible bidder, subsequent to the May 15, 2012 bid opening. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 18, 2012 Board meeting.*

Mr. Monroe apprised the next item on the agenda was to discuss the proposal from the Town of Lake George to purchase ownership in the former Gaslight Village property. Mr. Dickinson stated he had spoken to Mr. Lender and Peter Bauer, Executive Director of the Fund for Lake George pertaining to this issue. He added that the LGA and the Fund for Lake George had participated in the buy-out of the Town of Lake George's ownership in the park. Mr. Dickinson stated the Town of Lake George had initially invested \$350,000 towards the original purchase of the former Gaslight Village property and had recovered \$210,000 when they sold their portion last year. Of the \$210,000, he continued, \$105,000 was paid by the LGA and the Fund for Lake George and \$105,000 was paid by the Village of Lake George. He continued by saying that since the two environmental groups were not-for-profit organizations, the 19% interest previously owned by the Town of Lake George was allocated to the

Village of Lake George, who now had 38% ownership of the park. He noted that Warren County's ownership of the park was 62%.

Mr. Dickinson apprised of a letter addressed to him from Robert Blais, Mayor of the Village of Lake George, expressing reluctance on the part of the Village to sell any portion of their current ownership rights; *a copy of the letter is on file with the minutes*. Mr. Dickinson stated the Town of Lake George was interested in obtaining a percentage of ownership in the park. He said he had discussed the possibility of the Town purchasing a portion of the County's 62% ownership with several Supervisors. He added some Supervisors had expressed an interest in the County retaining at least 51% interest in the park in order to retain majority ownership and he encouraged discussion on the possibility of the Town purchasing 11% ownership in the park from the County.

Mr. Kenny advised he would not be adverse to the County selling 11% ownership to the Town; however, he added, he would be opposed to selling more as that would result the County relinquishing majority ownership. Mr. Thomas said he was in favor of selling 11% ownership to the Town and pointed out another option would be to allow the Town and the Village to buy-out the County entirely. Mr. Bentley agreed with Mr. Thomas and added he did not feel the County should have any involvement with the park. Mr. Dickinson stated the possibility of the Village and the Town purchasing the County's ownership was an option. He commented that Mayor Blais would return on Tuesday, May 1, 2012 and it would be necessary to discuss the matter further. Mr. Dickinson mentioned the Town would definitely be interested in purchasing 11% ownership once a value had been determined. Mr. Monroe stated that the value would most likely be decided based on the original purchase of 19% at \$350,000.

Mr. Westcott questioned the pros and cons of the County having ownership of the park. Mr. Monroe opined the former Gaslight Village property was a major asset for the County, the Town and the Village of Lake George which would generate substantial occupancy and sales tax revenues. He expressed the County should retain ownership in the park, preferably with majority interest.

Mr. Dickinson suggested the County, Town and Village negotiate a scenario whereby each entity would have one-third ownership of the property. He noted that once construction of the park was completed, the majority of the decisions would pertain to events, fees and operations. Mr. Geraghty agreed with Mr. Bentley and stated it might be time for the County to allow the two local entities to control and operate the park. He said the County would not lose any occupancy or sales tax revenues by selling their ownership in the property. He pointed out the Town and the Village of Lake George had a larger vested interest in the property than the County. He added the County had agreed to participate in the original purchase in order to protect the Lake and that goal had been accomplished.

In answer to Mr. Westcott's question pertaining to the pros and cons of County ownership in the park, Mr. Tennyson listed the following as resultant of the County selling all of their ownership of the park:

- ▶ the County would lose input on the types of events held in the park;
- ▶ the County would lose their portion of the event revenue;
- ▶ the County would lose their portion of the parking revenue;
- ▶ the County would lose further input on development of the park;
- ▶ the County would no longer be responsible for future operations and maintenance costs for the park; and
- ▶ the County would no longer have any future local match requirements pertaining to grants awarded for the park.

Mr. McDevitt opined there was strength and stability in the County retaining ownership rights to the park. He stated that when the Town had decided to sell their original share of ownership last year, he had not understood the reasoning. He said the park was a cultural and economic attraction which was anticipated to draw people from all over the Country and generate occupancy and sales tax revenues. He stated he was in favor of selling 11% ownership to the Town but he wanted the County to retain majority ownership.

Mr. Dickinson said he could not speak as to the actions of the previous Town Supervisor; however, he added, the present administration of the Town of Lake George had a firm grasp on the situation and was in favor of re-obtaining ownership in the former Gaslight Village property. He advised the Town wanted to rejoin the project in order to participate and not to disrupt the current momentum. He suggested the discussion be tabled until the next Committee meeting in order to allow all interested parties to be present. He stated the Town was interested in purchasing the 11% ownership from the County and also in pursuing the possibility of buying back their original 19% ownership. Mr. Dickinson stated he would not want the County to sell all of their ownership rights to the park and he reiterated the possibility of one third ownership for all entities.

Mr. Monroe pointed out that the options which had been discussed included: the County retaining all of their current ownership; the County selling 11% ownership to the Town of Lake George; the County selling 19% ownership to the Town; the County selling their current 62% ownership to the Town and the Village of Lake George; and the possibility of negotiating a one third ownership for each of the three entities.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously to table the discussion on selling partial ownership rights of the former Gaslight Village property to the Town of Lake George.

Mr. Tennyson apprised he would present some out-of-Committee resolution requests in order to establish the new grant for which a notice of award had been received. He added he would also establish a new Capital Project for construction of certain park features. A brief discussion ensued.

As there was no further business to come before the Gaslight Village Ad Hoc Committee, on motion made by Mr. Dickinson and seconded by Mr. Thomas, Mr. Monroe adjourned the meeting at 10:46 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Senior Legislative Office Specialist