

STRATEGIC WORK SESSION of the OLEAN COMMON COUNCIL

Tuesday, Thursday, January 18, 2018 – 5:30 p.m.

Room 119 – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Alderman Crawford, Witte, Andreano, Gonzalez, Dougherty, and Smith. Others: Mayor William Aiello; Fred Saradin, City Auditor; Keri Kerper, Community Development Program Coordinator; Bob Ring, Director of Public Works, and Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

Alderman Crawford called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and asked that the record show that all Aldermen were present except Alderman George, who was excused.

Alderman Crawford stated that he would like to look into the backlogged projects to determine what is funded and what is not. The Council was presented with a spreadsheet and list of projects by Ms. Kerper, which Alderman Crawford stated provided a great summary of what is out there and what the City's responsibility is.

Olean Creek Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing Project

Ms. Kerper stated that this project is for a trail connecting JCC through War Vets Park. The grant was received in 2014, and the City just went out to bid in October 2017. She stated that the City has been dealing with design issues and satisfying the DOT, in addition to some issues with the right of way. She stated that these issues have created an additional cost of \$35,000, which she intends to cover from her current budget. The Council had originally committed the City's match for the project; however, \$23,748.89 still needs to be transferred. She stated that she is unsure where this will come from.

Alderman Crawford asked if the \$23,748.89 is part of the original amount to be committed by the City, and Ms. Kerper confirmed that it is a portion of the \$110,130.11 that the Council had committed to the project in 2014. Alderman Witte questioned where this money would come from, and Ms. Kerper advised that the original Resolution states "various line items", but that only a portion of the \$110,130.11 was transferred. She is unsure why the \$23,748.89 was not transferred as well. The Council needs to determine where this funding will come from.

Alderman Smith questioned if the funding shortage was the only thing holding the project back. Ms. Kerper stated that the City has gone out to bid for the project. Mr. Ring stated that the DEC has required that certain tree work be done within a specific time frame due to an endangered bat that may be in the area, so that has accounted for some of the timing for the project.

Alderman Crawford questioned if we are able to start the project without the \$23,748.89, and Ms. Kerper replied that we are already very far along into the project. WE need to get moving

on this. Alderman Crawford asked if the construction is expected to be complete by next summer, and Mr. Ring stated that it should be done by the end of the construction season. Mr. Saradin added that the funding will need to be transferred soon.

Alderman Gonzalez stated that it seems we can find the funding in the budget somewhere, whether in line items, contingency, or surplus. It doesn't make sense to borrow the money. Mr. Saradin added that we have not touched the \$200,000 contingency.

Alderman Crawford asked, in terms of financing, if you are able to collect several BANS and then combine them at a later date into one Bond. Mr. Saradin stated that this is correct, and it is what the Council had done previously. Down the road, he would like to have Mary Chappell of Municipal Solutions come to discuss with the Council their financing options.

Alderman Crawford questioned if there is a certain criteria for paying these projects. Mr. Saradin stated that it depends on the nature of the project. The recent IT upgrades have a five year repayment period, while the Wastewater Treatment Plant has a thirty year repayment period. Municipal Solutions and John Alessi, our Bond Counsel, notify the City of the repayment period depending on the useful life of the project. Alderman Crawford stated that his concern is that a payment is much higher for a five year term than a thirty year term, so we need to know what we are looking at. As we go through the process, we need to know what a debt payment would be.

The Council agreed to look for the \$23,748.89 in house.

Downtown Olean Farmers' Market

Ms. Kerper stated that the City has received \$220,000 from Empire State Development, \$600,000 from Senator Cathy Young's efforts, and \$200,000 from the County for the Downtown Farmers' Market. The City's match is \$230,000. She stated that the architect is still working on getting final numbers, so the numbers may change.

Alderman Andreano stated that she had seen in the paper that we will be breaking ground in the spring. She questioned if the Council has approved the project. Ms. Kerper stated that the paper was incorrect, as we are not at that stage in the project yet. Alderman Witte stated that the paper made it seem like the City will not be paying anything, and Alderman Dougherty stated that it seems that Mr. Belt is pretty confident that this is moving forward.

Ms. Kerper stated that the City is currently going through the State Environmental Quality Review process, and working with the State Historical Preservation Office to provide information that they have requested. The City is still working with the architect to see what is

proposed and what is feasible. A public input session is still needed before this is brought to the Council.

Alderman Witte stated that the article said there was no commitment from the City. Alderman Crawford questioned if there is always a financial aspect that the City needs to kick in, and Ms. Kerper stated that he is correct. In this case, the City's match is \$230,000. She stated that it is amazing that we have received this level of funding from other agencies. The City had committed to a certain amount of funding when they had originally applied to ESD for funding. We are lucky that the match is lower.

Alderman Smith questioned what the required funding match is, and Ms. Kerper replied that ESD requires a 20% match to its 80% contribution.

Alderman Crawford stated that he knows that this project is in the beginning stages, but he questions if we know when it will be finished. Ms. Kerper stated that we are moving quickly, and could have plans and construction estimates done by this spring. If we go out to bid then, the construction could be done by the end of the season. She stated that the project has been ongoing for some time, as this is the third proposed location.

Alderman Crawford asked if the project could happen in 2018, and Mr. Ring stated that it could. We are still in the preliminary design portion of the project. We would like to see plans and a cost estimate in place prior to approval. There has been a lot of discussion on this location. War Vets Park has been discussed as well, but there are a lot of other events in that area, and the idea was to keep the market close to the walkable downtown.

Alderman Gonzalez added that there are a number of projects being discussed for the DRI that are downtown as well. Alderman Andreano stated that she would like to have a special meeting to discuss the DRI so that the Council can be updated on what is going on. Alderman Crawford stated that he just sent Mr. Belt an email, as public domain projects need to have Council buy in. Alderman Gonzalez stated that it is a great idea to get a rundown of the projects submitted, and go over a list of publically funded projects. We could even touch on the privately funded projects. He reminded the Council that the DRI meetings are always open to the public.

Mayor Aiello stated that the next meeting is proposed for Tuesday, February 6, 2018. It was decided to have a 5:00 p.m. work session on that date to meeting with the DRI consultants.

Alderman Crawford stated that Mr. Saradin should discuss the \$230,000 and potential funding options with Mary Chappell to aid the Council in deciding how to move forward.

Phase II Walkable Olean/BOA Downtown Projects

Alderman Crawford questioned if the City is at risk of losing their funding for this project. Ms. Kerper replied that we are at risk of losing the DOT portion of the funding. The City's portion is \$357,907. Alderman Gonzalez asked if this excludes the demolition of the garage, and Ms. Kerper replied that this is only for the street portion of the project. \$500,000 of Restore NY funds have been kept separate, and that portion of the project is not included as she has no solid numbers for the demolition cost.

Ms. Kerper continued in stating that she believes that the Phase II Walkable Olean Project would be a great way to tie in with the DRI projects. This extension will connect North Union Street to one of the City's largest employers, Olean General Hospital.

Mr. Ring stated that he would like to expand on what we have already done and build on our successes. The general idea is to expand on the downtown, which is our economic driver. He would like streets to become complete streets to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians. He would like to see neighborhoods connected to our downtown with walkable, bikeable projects. Alderman Crawford stated that this is a great vision. We really need to strive to meet long term goals.

Mr. Ring presented a preliminary plan to the Council. He stated that a part of the Clark Patterson Lee contract (for consulting services) includes public input for the plan. Clark Patterson Lee is tasked with presenting a plan with several different alternatives for review. Mr. Clark continued in explaining that he would really want to see facilities where families and children can ride their bikes together. There are a lot of people not comfortable with the bike lanes in the roadway.

Alderman Crawford questioned what is to be done with the bridge, and Mr. Ring replied that not much can be done besides restriping, as it is a very narrow bridge. Alderman Gonzalez mentioned that a roundabout at Front and Main Streets would negate the necessity for a third turn lane over the bridge. This would enable the addition of a bike lane.

Alderman Witte stated that people at Park and Shop on the corner of Main and Front Streets stated that this intersection experiences a lot of backup and congestion, especially when ambulances are coming into the hospital. Alderman Gonzalez stated that this was a concern with the Central Fire Station, but everything has worked out fine. There was some discussion about the roundabout possibilities at the intersection, but it was determined that no decisions need to be made at this time.

Alderman Crawford stated the Clark Patterson Lee agreement was postponed a couple of weeks ago because of financials, and now that we are hearing plans, he questions if the Council will be moving forward. He asked if the Council should consider long term financing as an option.

Alderman Andreano stated that, if the Council approves each of the presented projects, the local match will be over \$1 million. She asked if we can rank priorities for projects. One has an 80% local contribution. Alderman Gonzalez recommended going through the entire list, and going back to prioritize.

Alderman Smith stated that he does not like that the Council has to commit more than \$357,000, but will not know what the design will look like until after it's committed. Mr. Ring stated that he is doing the preliminary plan 100%. Clark Patterson Lee will be doing the 3D designs, storm sewer plans, etc. Alderman Smith questioned who gets to choose the final design. Ms. Kerper replied that DOT requires one plan, plus two alternatives. Public comment is then received, and the Council is responsible for final approval. Mr. Ring stated that when he signs off on a project, he stamps it, and is liable for what is put out there. He wants to do what is in the best interest for the entire City.

Alderman Smith questioned the intent for a roundabout at Main and Front Streets, and Mr. Ring stated that the roundabout is not budgeted for. The only proposed roundabout at this time is for Main and Barry Streets.

Alderman Andreano questioned who is responsible once the design is finalized and needs to be changed, or if project goes over budget. There was back and forth trying to make decision about parking for the North Union Street project. Mr. Ring stated that what has been presented is very close to what it would look like with the roundabout at Barry and Main Streets. A traffic study could also be done, but that work would be substantial, and funding would be needed to do so. To spend the money needed for the Clark Patterson Lee contract, but not do the project, is possible. Grants would be lost, but this does happen with other municipalities on rare occasions.

Alderman Smith questioned when the money would need to be moved before the grants are lost, and Mr. Ring replied that it would need to be done very soon. Alderman Crawford stated that he feels that he supports this project. He would support a discussion down the road if a roundabout makes sense at Barry and Main Streets. Right now we need to lock in the funding. He questioned if there was any desire to discuss the BOA Downtown and the demolition of the City Garage, and at this time there was no desire by the Council.

Mayor Aiello questioned if everyone would like to leave the garage where it is at the time being. Alderman Crawford questioned if we have any potential offers or options. Mayor Aiello replied that one developer was interested in the property. Mayor Aiello questioned if the discussion regarding a joint garage with the County was off the table, and Alderman Dougherty stated that a joint facility would take us several years to figure out, which would allow for

ample time to make plans for the current location. He doesn't think it will hurt to continue discussions at the time being.

Mr. Ring stated that rehab needs to be done at the current garage. He questioned how long we can hang onto the BOA funding. Ms. Kerper replied that she is unsure, and asked if the Council would like her to reach out to the funding source to see if we can hold onto the money longer. The Council agreed that this is the best option at this point in time. Mr. Ring stated that we can have a discussion regarding the City Garage at a later time.

Alderman Smith questioned if the Phase II Project will include reconstruction of the infrastructure, such as water and sewer lines under the street. Mr. Ring replied that it only includes the street portion. Alderman Gonzalez questioned if this means that there is quicker turnaround, and Mr. Ring replied that there is. If we start the design process in February, then he anticipates construction starting and completing in 2019. He stated that there is a lengthy right of way process that needs to be completed prior to breaking ground.

Olean Homeownership Assistance Program, Allegheny River Public Access & Recreation Plan, William O. Smith Recreation Center, LISC (Zombie Grant), Downtown Revitalization Initiative, Microenterprise Grant Program

Ms. Kerper stated that all of these items either require no fund commitment or are covered through previous fund transfers, through Community Development line items, through partners, and through third parties. Financials regarding these projects and grants do not need to be discussed at this time.

Bradner Stadium/Forness Trail

Ms. Kerper stated that we missed out on a \$200,000 grant from the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and were awarded \$59,173.60 from Empire State Development. The City's match would be \$238,854.40.

Alderman Gonzalez stated that if we had received the OPRHP funding, the project would be a lot more consumable. This cost, though, is very hard to justify.

Alderman Crawford questioned if the City's relationship with ESD would be compromised if we chose not to use the funding. He agrees with Alderman Gonzalez, that the cost doesn't make sense at this time. Ms. Kerper responded that we were just awarded the funding, so we are really on the front end at this time. It is best for her to receive guidance from the Council to go back to ESD and decline the funding. Sometimes projects just don't work out, and she feels that advising ESD that the City can't continue with the project because we didn't receive the

\$200,000 will look better than holding onto the money for a long period. The funds can be reallocated to a community with a project that is waiting for funding.

Alderman Crawford questioned if the awarded funding could be transferred to the Olean Creek Crossing Project, and Ms. Kerper stated that she could look into it, but she is unsure if they would allow this.

The Bradner Stadium/Forness Trail project is now off the table.

Allegheny River Canoe & Kayak Launches

Ms. Kerper stated that the Council had decided previously not to use grant funds for this project, as it will be cheaper overall for the City to do the project in house and pay for what's needed without the grant. She stated that the cost is estimated at \$84,755.92, a lot of which can be done in house. Alderman Crawford questioned if this means that there is no timeline to complete this project, and Ms. Kerper replied that he is correct.

Alderman Witte questioned if the proposed Four Mile Brewing location had been brought up to the DEC, and Mr. Ring replied that he had recently met with the DEC. He stated that it is traditionally difficult to work with the DEC and obtain permission to do something such as this. He is going through the process now. Alderman Smith questioned if this meant that only the proposed launch on the south side is the definite possibility at the moment, and Mr. Ring confirmed.

Alderman Smith stated that he is all for this project. Mayor Aiello added that a lot of people use the handicapped launches. Alderman Crawford questioned if this could be kept in house, in our current budget or if funding would be needed. Mr. Ring replied that we could certainly look into the budget to see what can be done. Buying a \$35,000 launch may be difficult without additional funding, but the site work could be done and justified in house.

Restore NY – Olean Gateway

Ms. Kerper stated that there is an error in her memo, that she has looked into her budget and it appears that a \$10,000 commitment (1% of the total funding) was cut from her budget. This will need to come from somewhere. Alderman Witte questioned if we could look into contingency for funding, and Ms. Kerper replied that we could.

Manny Hanny

Ms. Kerper stated that a Consolidated Funding Application was submitted in July, and funding was received in December. There is no funding commitment on the part of the City for this project.

North Third Street

We are awaiting reimbursement from the State at this time.

Allegheny River Public Access & Recreation Plan

Ms. Kerper stated that as soon as the Plan is adopted, the final reimbursement can be requested.

William O. Smith Recreation Center

The reimbursement cannot be requested from Empire State Development until the project is complete.

Mr. Ring stated that pedestrian improvement grants are currently being offered with no match. The City would only need to front the money for the projects. This will be brought forward for Council approval to apply at a later date.

Mr. Saradin suggested a separate meeting down the road to speak with the City's Bond Counsel and representative at Municipal Solutions to aid in figuring out what we can afford to BAN short term and Bond long term.

Alderman Witte confirmed that \$23,000 from the Olean Creek Crossing, \$10,000 for Olean Gateway, and \$35,000 for the kayak launch are all that is needed at this time from the current budget, contingency, or surplus. Alderman Crawford confirmed that these three projects are those that we have decided can be funded without borrowing. Alderman Crawford also recommended speaking with Municipal Solutions to see what borrowing options are available for the Walkable Olean Phase II (\$357,907) and Farmers' Market (\$230,000).

Mayor Aiello stated that he had a meeting recently with the railroad, who was interested in rehabilitating the Queen Street underpass. As everyone knows, the bridge at Front Street is low, and is hit periodically by larger vehicles. They have been doing some engineering to get the Front Street Bridge raised, but they have only been able to do so by 18 inches. It needs to be raised by 30. He discussed with the railroad removing the Queen Street crossing, and making the tunnel under the tracks pedestrian and bicycle only. Then, they could take their funding to fix the Front Street Bridge. He requested the Council's opinion, as he needs speak with the railroad so that they can notify funding sources of the changes.

Alderman Gonzalez questioned how we could not agree with this change. He questions how many accidents have to take place before there is a fatality. Mayor Aiello added that he lives in this area, and he feels that taking out the Queen Street underpass will not be an inconvenience to residents.

Mayor Aiello mentioned that the tunnel will be bicycles and pedestrians only, and vehicles will not be able to pass through.

Alderman Dougherty questioned if there would be issues due to the water table putting pressure on the roadway, like it does the pool at War Vets Park. Mr. Ring responded that a core sample would be taken and looked into.

Alderman Gonzalez stated that the sooner that the bridge is taken care of, the sooner the City can open itself up to development on Front Street. Mr. Ring stated that this is a multimillion dollar project, which could be done in phases. Alderman Witte stated that if you look at traffic studies, Front Street is one of the most travelled streets in the City.

Alderman Crawford stated that this seems like a unique concept, and he likes it. Alderman Witte stated that changes to the railroad overpass would really aid that side of town.

Alderman Smith mentioned the idea of a "road diet" on West State Street, reducing four lanes of traffic to one in each direction with a center turn lane. The Council generally agreed that this is a good idea, and the City Attorney will be consulted with to see how to proceed.

A motion to enter into executive session to discuss collective negotiations pursuant to Article 14 of the Civil Service Law was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Andreano. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Executive session began at approximately 7:05 p.m.

A motion to adjourn from executive session was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Andreano. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Executive session adjourned at approximately 7:10 p.m.

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Andreano, seconded, by Alderman Dougherty. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:15 p.m.