

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

Tuesday, August 18, 2020 – 6:15 p.m.

Council Chambers – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Members: Chairman Crawford, Vice Chairman Dougherty, Alderman Witte, Alderman Gonzalez, and Alderman Robinson. Others: Alderman Panus; Alderman Anastasia; Mayor William Aiello; Bob Ring, Director of Public Works; Tim Richardson, Fire Chief, and Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

### 1. Roll Call

Alderman Crawford called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present.

### 2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Committee Meetings (Tuesday, July 21, 2020)

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2020 meeting was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Dougherty. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

### 3. Unfinished Business

None

### 4. New Referrals for Consideration

- a. PL #47-20: (Dougherty) To amend the City of Olean Code of Ordinances Section 5-1, subsection (4) to prohibit roosters and to cap the number of chickens to be kept per premises to twelve (12).

Alderman Dougherty explained that since the other PL was already published and advertised, and has now been passed, he wanted to address some of the concerns that the other Aldermen had. He explained that everyone on the Council received Mr. Jennings' email today, and he would like to get this pushed through as soon as possible. He explained that this change will eliminate roosters and limit the number of chickens that someone can have, which is much of what Mr. Jennings was concerned about.

Alderman Crawford explained that this was spoken about before, and it makes sense. He doesn't really know if there is anything further to discuss. Mr. Robinson asked if we are going to do any more moving forward regarding chickens.

Mayor Aiello explained that he wanted to be up front with everybody, that he has until Friday to veto the chicken ordinance. He explained that he is very seriously considering vetoing it

because he thinks that there is a better model. He explained that the City of Buffalo model takes care of more concerns and safety issues.

Alderman Witte asked if what was previously passed included a waiver, and Alderman Dougherty responded that it does. Alderman Witte explained that she had a resident ask her if a neighbor signs a waiver and someone else moves in, if a new waiver will need to be signed. Alderman Dougherty responded that it would be, according to what the City Attorney has advised him. Alderman Panus asked if the waiver only reduces the setback, and Alderman Dougherty confirmed that it does.

Alderman Dougherty explained that the new law is based on the setbacks that Buffalo has, but that there are a lot more rules in Buffalo. He explained that you have to have licenses and a permit from the City of Buffalo, and this creates a lot of undue paperwork that people want to avoid.

Alderman Gonzalez explained that we have talked about chickens numerous times, and he doesn't understand why it took Mr. Jennings until today to reach out to the Council with his concerns. He doesn't understand why they were just brought forward now, and it should have been done earlier in the discussion process. He explained that the legislation seems reasonable and fine to him, especially with these amendments.

Alderman Crawford explained that whether due to lack of funding or personnel, it seems that we have very few dogs registered in the City of Olean, and it is not enforced.

Alderman Panus explained that he is fine with the legislation the way it is written, and he is okay with adding these changes. He felt it was pretty much there last time with the exception of the limitation to 12. Alderman Robinson explained that he remembers something from New York State law from when he was a landlord that once a pet is in the home for 30 days you can't force someone to get rid of them. Alderman Dougherty explained that he can see that for a landlord but he is unsure if this applies for a municipality.

A motion to approve PL #47-20 was made by Alderman Dougherty, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Referred to City Attorney for Resolution.

#### b. Discussion Items

##### i. Capital Projects Update

Alderman Crawford explained that as we continue in the planning process and have multiple Capital Projects going on, he asks if there are any major things that need to be mentioned at this time.

Mr. Ring explained that Washington Street is going well, as well as Walkable Olean Phase II. He explained that he talked to the Mayor about the projects today. He explained that he has been in close contact with residents on Washington Street, and that there were some outages that were published. He explained that the Fourth Street water line is replaced, and the fluorination is done, and they want to pave before school starts. He explained that they are down past 7<sup>th</sup> and Buffalo Street so there is maybe 1/3 off the water line left to run, and then they will come and put services in.

Alderman Crawford asked if you find out that your service is bad when they come to put the service in. Mr. Ring explained that this happens when the actual hole is dug, and the person will have water right up until the time that it is connected, and then there will only be about 15 minutes that there is no water. He explained that unless the line is oxidized or the service line has a lot of holes in it, that everything should be fine. He noted that the same thing was done on East State Street and that only one out of 100 properties had to have their line replaced. He explained that this is unlikely, but it does happen.

Mr. Ring explained that we do have the wellhouse project coming up, but we haven't sent the notice to proceed as of yet. This is located on the outskirts of town, so it shouldn't affect too many people.

Alderman Dougherty asked about the sewer lining that is being done, and Mr. Ring explained that he actually noticed that they were in the other day. He explained that we asked the DEC to reduce our spending this year from \$250,000 to \$160,000, and that allowed us to do two sections of pipe. He explained that this is pretty noninvasive and out of the way. Alderman Witte asked how long the lining process takes, and Mr. Ring explained that the first thing that they do is camera and clean the area really well. They measure where the laterals are, and then it just takes a day to get the bag in and steam it, so 4,000 to 5,000 feet can be done in a day.

## ii. Oak Hill Park Project

Alderman Crawford explained that he talked last month about addressing from a strategic standpoint one project a month, and he would like to discuss the Oak Hill Park Project. He explained that this is a DRI Project that was awarded to the City, and he asked the Mayor and Bob if an update could be given on that.

Mr. Ring explained that he did print out something that they are working on right now between himself, the Mayor and Ms. Kerper. He explained that the project is slated for construction in 2022 so it is still not as developed as much as some of the other DRI projects. He explained that they have worked on the scope and asks for the DRI from the Department of State.

Mr. Ring explained that Oak Hill Park is on the National Historic Registrar, and this automatically triggers a Type I SEQR, and the State Historic Preservation Office will be involved. He explained that SEQR and SHPO are really Ms. Kerper's expertise, so she will be going through the process with the Council.

Mr. Ring explained that the City had asked for \$500,000 for the project and received \$350,000, so some things have been cut out of the original scope. He explained that there was a public meeting regarding the project and about two dozen property owners attended and filled out surveys regarding the project. Alderman Gonzalez asked if rationale from the survey was used to determine the reduced scope, and Mr. Ring responded that it was. He explained that the same designer from the Lincoln Park Project was involved

Alderman Dougherty explained that he had spoken with some residents about this, and he did not realize that the recreation courts were part of the original DRI. He explained that residents have a lot of complaints about the current condition of the tennis courts, but he sees that they are on the radar, and this is great.

Alderman Crawford asked what has been cut out of the original scope, and provided for the Council the original plan submitted for DRI funding. Mr. Ring explained that with the reduction in the cost of the project, they tried to fit in what they could but at least from the original DRI scope, the dog park is gone, as well as the additional steps at Putnam and Fourth Street.

Alderman Crawford asked who made this decision, and Mr. Ring responded that it was made by himself, Ms. Kerper and Mayor Aiello as the planning team for the project. Alderman Crawford asked if this was based on the survey from the residents, and Mr. Ring responded that it was. Alderman Crawford explained that he cosponsored the project along with the Olean Community Theater, and worked with Jeff Belt and the architect / planner from Lincoln Park on the original scope. He explained that the original DRI request was \$500,000 with a City contribution of \$50,000 cash and in kind work, plus \$50,000 from fundraising efforts. He explained that the total scope is for a big beautiful piece of land in the middle of the community that he is trying to activate. He explained that there were plans for improvements in lighting and walkability, as well as a dog park with play furniture, expanding the basketball court, putting in a restroom, an area for storage for the theater group and a removable outdoor stage. He explained that from the original scope, he sees the bathroom and the outdoor stage kept, and he notices a historic gazebo and asked where that came from.

Mr. Ring explained that the original plan for the theater group was "half a gazebo", as they called it. He explained that what he presented to the Council is a work in progress. Alderman Crawford asked if the theater group was involved in planning, and Mr. Ring responded that they were. He explained that they wanted half of a gazebo, but they were really asking for a pole

barn type of thing. He explained that in order to fit into the character of the neighborhood, they would like to use materials like what are used in the historic district. He explained that this is why there is a picture of this gazebo included in his presentation, as it was the original gazebo that was in the park.

Alderman Crawford asked if someone on the planning team has met with the theater group, and Mr. Ring explained that he did a week and a half ago. He explained that they plan to reconvene and meet with the theater group again. Mayor Aiello noted that they met with Linda Edstrom and Nick Patrone.

Alderman Crawford explained that he is curious, as he is a cosponsor of this project, and he wonders why the Council hasn't been approached. He explained that they reached out to one of the sponsors, and he wonders why he wasn't communicated with. He explained that his name was on the proposal as a member of the Council, and this is the first that he is hearing that the dog park and stairs were removed from the project. Mayor Aiello responded that he doesn't have an answer regarding why he wasn't communicated with, but he does agree that he should have been.

Alderman Crawford explained that he was at the meeting where he, as well as two other Aldermen, met with the residents, and there were about two dozen people there. He explained that the revitalization of Oak Hill Park goes beyond more than just building more facilities. It is about trying to activate the park, deter drug use and fights, and push out unwanted activities in the neighborhood while creating marketability to sell young families homes in the area. He explained that he put together a survey and submitted it online to residents of Olean on his Alderman page. He explained that in all of Olean's parks it is important to have the spaces activated and used. He explained that for far too long, Olean's parks have been too quiet.

Alderman Crawford explained that he asked the people of Olean to respond and rank what they wanted to see in the park. He explained that he didn't think that 20 people should make a decision for a city of 13,000. He explained that he got about 250 results and obtained names and home addresses, to determine that 95 percent of the respondents were from Olean. He explained that the top ranking that the residents would like to see in Oak Hill Park is a modern off leash dog park in the unused south end of the park. He explained that then, in order of importance to those who responded to the survey, they would like to see permanent restrooms, and outdoor theater area, and the stairway was the last on the list.

Alderman Crawford explained that as someone who believes in the reliability of statistics, and as a millennial, when people say that there isn't enough things to do in Olean, having more bathrooms won't help. He explained that it's more things to do in park spaces with young families. He explained that he wanted to share some of this with everyone tonight because as

we found out recently with the project in Alderman Witte's ward, if we don't have transparency and talk early, then bad stuff happens.

Alderman Crawford explained that according to the Charter, the Council gets to vote on parks. He explained that our opinion carries some weight. He asked, as the funding body, what the Council would like to see in Oak Hill Park.

Alderman Witte explained that she feels that people do things more online nowadays, and would prefer to do this than to show up for a meeting. She explained that she is in favor of the dog park, and she has been to one out of town that she really enjoyed. She explained that we have talked about one in Olean for years. Parks are for kids and families.

Alderman Witte explained that she has a real pet peeve about restrooms, because we have them at the Farmers' Market and we spent all that money to put them in and they are only open for so many hours on a Saturday unless the park is rented. She explained that she thinks that Oak Hill Park needs to be more open, and that this historic gazebo is nice, but she questions what it would be used for. She thinks that out of everything, she would like to see the dog park. She thinks that is important.

Alderman Panus explained that looking at the survey, obviously the entrance isn't favorable. He explained that there obviously need to be some big cuts, but the dog park is obviously favorable. He explained that he can see that restrooms are favored as well, but he thinks that they become a blighted thing over time. Alderman Crawford responded that it is a very valid point. He has noticed that we put restrooms in the parks with good intentions, the same way garbage cans are put into parks with good intentions. People abuse them and we end up locking them up or taking them away.,

Alderman Panus explained that he would lean on the side of including the dog park, and feels that we would probably lock the bathrooms unless someone is renting over there or if there is a very big event. He would really worry if they were always open. Alderman Dougherty added that we would then need to increase staffing to maintain the restrooms.

Alderman Crawford explained that we are the funding body, and he asks if it makes sense to fund the whole project. He asked if the bathrooms are an absolute necessity. He explained that some people from the surrounding homes didn't want to see a big, bulky permanent structure built into the middle of the park. He explained that one did say that a dog park would destroy the character of the park, but people take their dogs there anyways.

Alderman Gonzalez explained that he is inclined to agree with the survey. He explained that he thinks that the dog park is one key component of revitalization there, and there is nothing like that elsewhere in the City. He explained that he thinks that people will be surprised, because

yes, the survey indicated that people want it, but he thinks that there will be even more people that use it. He explained that he thinks that we will see potential for more dog parks throughout the City. He agrees with some of the commentary on the bathrooms, and feels that it is a big expense for something that will be locked up most of the time. He explained that it is not like someone playing basketball or using the dog park will be able to use them, they will be locked up. He's not saying that these aren't a priority or that it's a dumb idea, but it's just not the most important thing.

Alderman Gonzalez explained that he does really like the modern-looking stage. He knows that it is a historical district and park, but that doesn't mean that everything needs to look like it was made in 1850.

Alderman Dougherty asked if there is also a bathroom issue at Forness during softball, and asked what a couple of extra porta johns would hurt. Alderman Gonzalez added, for that matter, how many Shakespeare in the Parks there really are. He doesn't think we should have porta johns in the park seven days a week, 24/7, but just for a special event. At the same time though, we are looking at building a stage that will only be used six times a year.

Alderman Crawford explained that this is a great point. He would love to see the Council invest and spend the City's tax money where most people can get use out of it. For example, Bradner Stadium is beautiful, but it is not used besides baseball and football. A stage in the park would be used six times a summer. Like the Farmers' Market, he wants to see this used by as many people as possible, and that is what we want to see done with all of our parks.

Alderman Anastasia explained that he had contact from some young constituents who asked how to petition the City to get a dog park. He explained that Ms. Taylor advised that it was already in the works and referred him to Alderman Crawford. There are people out there looking for dog parks. He explained that he agrees as far as the restrooms. There is one at Marcus Park, and it is an eyesore stone building that is always locked up. He thinks that we should axe the bathrooms and get the dog park done. He questioned if a gazebo would really be used enough to justify the funding that we would spend on it.

Alderman Robinson explained that he is curious. He is all for the dog park and anti-restroom like the other Aldermen, but he doesn't understand how the dog park ended up costing so much. Alderman Crawford agreed that he thinks that the cost is way too high, and there is no way it is \$130,000. Alderman Gonzalez asked if there was a surface prep cost. Alderman Dougherty explained that the cost is higher due to MWBE and prevailing wage requirements. He explained that the costs add 25% to a project easily, and when he first got on the Council, it was eye opening how much these things costed.

Alderman Witte explained that we have a list of trees that need to be taken down or pruned in Oak Hill Park, and she wonders if this is something that can be funded by the DRI. Mr. Ring responded that it is not in the original scope, but he doesn't think that anything is out of the question. This project is slated in 2022 though, so he does not think that the trees should remain in place that long. Alderman Dougherty noted that we do have a discussion about trees at Oak Hill Park at the end of the agenda.

Alderman Crawford explained that we are getting everyone's feedback, and he guesses that he would go back to the Mayor and ask if these things are set in stone, or if he is open to hearing opinions and concerns, and maybe having a Council member on the planning committee for the park. Mayor Aiello responded that there is nothing set in stone and that it is not a problem to open the discussion. He explained that the restrooms can be eliminated, but that there was a lot of talk about these through the DRI process. He explained that the plan was to have them open during the day, and they were looking for timed locks. He noted that as for the restrooms at the Farmers' Market, they were open during the day, but there were cleaning issues with COVID so that is why they are locked now.

Mayor Aiello explained that the dog park can be added back to the project and the restrooms can be removed. Bigger sport courts can be done as well. He explained that as far as the pricing of the dog park, the larger costs are for fencing and play furniture. Mr. Ring explained that fencing is around \$100 per foot, and the number provided gives you a 300 by 300 for square so there is contingency built in, in the event that it is decided to put fencing down the middle to separate big and little dogs. Alderman Gonzalez asked what kind of fencing is planned, and Mr. Ring responded chain link fence.

Alderman Dougherty explained that we have to remember how much we spent on playgrounds, and we are fortunate to have received KaBoom! Grant funding for some of them because they are astronomically expensive. Alderman Witte explained that there are no playthings at the dog park that she visited, and suggested starting at that point and adding on later, if needed financially. Alderman Crawford explained that what is shown is just a concept photo that he found. Alderman Gonzalez explained that the key is off leash, and Alderman Crawford explained that people are doing that now, and they are technically breaking the law.

Mayor Aiello explained that upon listening to this discussion, he does see a value to bathrooms, if there is a reason for people to be in the parks. He explained that if there is no dog park and people aren't using the park, then there is no point to have the restrooms and they will just stay locked up. He explained that it is possible down the line to have multiple dog parks, and to work together on planning for improvements on this project.



Alderman Crawford asked if Mayor Aiello is open to working together, and Mayor Aiello responded that he is. Mayor Aiello explained that two other locations in the City that they are taking a look at for possible dog parks are at Boardman Park near the hotel and at the Homer Street Park, which is underutilized.

Alderman Crawford explained that he is very passionate about dog parks. He explained that it also makes him sad to see parks under-utilized while kids are playing video games. He feels that dog parks will be used, and people will be surprised by how many people will show up. We need to recognize what residents want.

Alderman Anastasia asked if there is any way to come up with a timetable to get this started. He asked if the money is already approved, and Alderman Crawford asked how this works. Mr. Ring explained that Ms. Kerper does quarterly and monthly reporting for the DRI projects. We have two set to be done in 2021, and this is set for 2022. He explained that with Capital Project Management, we have four projects in construction for this year and four for next year. He explained that he has 20 Capital Projects right now and Ms. Kerper has her own, and that is why they are spaced out the way they are. He explained that they are doing the design and planning behind the scenes on projects, and they do about as much as they can handle.

### iii. Funding for Dangerous Trees in City Parks

Alderman Crawford explained that this is something that he recalls hearing when he met with residents in the Oak Hill Park area. Alderman Dougherty explained that he forwarded the Council an email from Ms. Cooper to Mr. Ring. He explained that on the way to the Stardust Pump Project site last week, a large limb came down in Oak Hill Park. He explained that residents have voiced their concerns, and that they have all along through the DRI project. He explained that Ms. Cooper has done her fair share of trimming these trees through the years, but there is a list of these trees that actually need to be removed from the park. He explained that the plan is to potentially replace them, as they would like to see the Oak Hill Trees replanted.

Alderman Dougherty explained that the email in question requests \$23,300 from Contingency to the tree budget to have Ms. Cooper utilize to maintain 7 trees at Boardman Park as well as 5 trees at Oak Hill Park. He explained that this will essentially take care of all problems in those two parks, and it should handle all of the nature concerns in those two parks.

Mr. Ring explained that he is a fan of Ms. Cooper's judgment, and he believes her if she says that this needs to be done. He doesn't know if we need to throw all of the money at this at once or if it can be broken into a couple of phases. He noted that we also need to think of a replanting plan to fill the area back in.

Alderman Anastasia asked if the cost is for the removal and replacement, or just the removal. Alderman Dougherty explained that the cost is for the removal with the City's contractor.

Alderman Crawford asked if all of the City's tree funding has been used, and Mr. Ring explained that it is hard to track but tree funding is pretty low. He explained that \$10,000 was used just to take two trees down. He noted that this funding will go back into the general fund if she doesn't use it.

Alderman Anastasia asked what the balance is in contingency, and Mayor Aiello explained that he thinks that we began with \$200,000, and that the Council has transferred \$20,000 or less out of contingency this fiscal year.

Alderman Witte explained that huge trees hang over where people park their cars, and people won't park there. Alderman Dougherty added that this will be the case especially if the park gets reactivated. Alderman Crawford explained that trees are important to him, but with dangerous trees, he would rather err on the side of caution. He asked if we are removing or trimming the trees, and Mr. Ring responded that there are four full removals. Alderman Crawford explained that there are some huge trees in Oak Hill Park, so he is in favor of allotting this money. Alderman Witte agreed.

Alderman Panus explained that he is in favor of allotting the funding, but he would like to see a plan for replacement. HE explained that he can see that we need to cut down trees because they are a problem but soon the problem will be, that there are no trees left in Olean. He explained that a lot of streets don't have trees now, and they have no character. Something needs to be done, but we need to be smart about it.

Alderman Dougherty explained that a lot of times, Alderman Smith would vote in favor of getting rid of trees, but he thinks that Ms. Cooper has done an amazing job to actually pick the trees that belong where they are. He explained that before Ms. Cooper was there, people would just pick random trees to plant and the trees that some chose would cause issues to utility lines. He explained that in the last twenty years, he's sure that she worked on the beautification of Irving Street, because the trees located there have low root bases and don't get too tall.

Alderman Anastasia explained that when he was on the Council in the 80's, the City was designated Tree City USA. Mayor Aiello explained that we still are, and that we actually applied for funding due to this designation for the planting of trees in the City.

Alderman Anastasia explained that if the Mayor doesn't have issues with this, he would not be opposed to a resolution being on the agenda next week.

#### 5. Executive Session

A motion to enter into executive session to discuss personnel issues was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Executive session began at approximately 7:25 p.m.

A motion to adjourn from Executive Session was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Anastasia. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Executive Session adjourned at approximately 7:37 p.m.

#### 6. Approval of Committee Reports

A motion to approve committee reports was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

#### 7. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Witte, seconded by Alderman Dougherty. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:40 p.m.