

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

Tuesday, December 21, 2021 – 6:25 p.m.

via Zoom

Present: Members: Chairman Crawford, Vice Chairman Gonzalez, Alderman Witte, Alderman Barnard and Alderman Robinson. Others: Alderman Panus; Alderman Anastasia; Mayor William Aiello; Jack Hart, City Attorney; Lens Martial, City Auditor; Bob Ring, Director of Public Works; Ron Richardson, Police Chief; Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary, and John Policastro, Olean Area Farmers' Market.

### 1. Roll Call

Alderman Crawford called the meeting to order at 6:25 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present.

### 2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Committee Meeting (Tuesday, December 7, 2021)

A motion to approve minutes of the December 7, 2021 meeting was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

### 3. Unfinished Business

None

### 4. New Referrals for Consideration

#### a. Presentation – Farmers Market 2021 Season

Alderman Crawford explained that he went to the Farmers' Market a number of times last summer. And he had a great conversation with the Farmers' Market Manager. He explained that he invited them to come before the Council and report on the 2021 season. Mr. Policastro explained that they just wrapped up their second full season. He explained that while they don't keep attendance records, they can look at how SNAP and debit sales go through the managers' booth and explained that there was a 92% increase in SNAP sales and almost a 400% increase in debit and credit sales from 2018 to 2021. He explained that there is a great New York program that gives people who use SNAP benefits extra funds specifically for fresh fruits and vegetables.

Mr. Policastro explained that if you were to ask any single vendor in the market they would all say that this venue has been an absolute wonderful thing to have. He explained that they thought originally that it would be nice to not have to set up tents, but it really has been all about the customers and the people coming in that have been talking about it. He explained

that the space really adds a sense of legitimacy to it, and this is a unique market. He explained that there are a lot of visitors from out of town and they always talk about how they wish that they had this in their community. He explained that people across the country are referring to this particular venue.

Mr. Policastro explained that he cannot stress enough how amazing this has been for recruiting vendors and getting more and more people to come. He explained that every week from 2019 onward has been nothing but growth. He explained that his own sales have increased dramatically, and they have gained part time farmers, vendors, artisans, and craftsmen. He explained that this is something that we think is really important. They had 10 new vendors join them just for the holiday market, and they showed interest in joining the market for the full year. He explained that the incorporations of the bathrooms and electrical PA system have all added to the environment there. Musicians have come in and played, and it is great to have this gathering place for people to take advantage of.

Alderman Crawford asked how we continue the momentum. He explained that he would like to continue growing the popularity of this facility. He explained that he knows that there is a separate farmers' market across town and he asked if there is a way to invite them to the facility. He explained that the group has done a fantastic job, and he wants to continue to push the envelope. He explained that the Council wants to know how they can support them and the facility.

Alderman Witte asked how the market is doing with the food truck, and the bistro building being an addition. Mr. Policastro explained that they actually got more use of those earlier on in the season, and the food trucks showed up most Saturdays. He explained that they consider those an added value, so to speak. He explained that they try to ensure that everything in the market is grown locally and produced locally. He explained that there has definitely been usage but he cannot speak for how well they did.

Alderman Witte explained that there were a few times when people were playing music during the market, and it was definitely a pleasant feel. She thanked all of the growers and craftsmen that came there. Mr. Policastro explained that over the course of this season some groups started coming Sundays, and he explained that there has been some preliminary conversation with the other market. He explained that one thing when you have part time farmers and growers is that availability is a challenge. He explained that this is where they appreciate how much growth there has been. He explained that across the entire state, maybe country, farmers' markets have been growing over the past decade. He explained that this has been phenomenal and he appreciates the opportunity.

Alderman Crawford explained that the more, the merrier. He explained that when he drives by and sees the facility being used, that is tax money well spent, and there are transactions occurring in our community. Mr. Policastro explained that he believes that there is more business to be had, and he would love to see the market grow.

b. Oak Hill Park Project

Alderman Crawford explained that this was brought forth by Alderman Barnard, who wanted to get this on the agenda before he steps down. He explained that himself, Mayor Aiello, Ms. Kerper, and Mr. Ring have been working together very closely on this project. He explained that there are currently a number of required documents that have been turned into SHPO and the DEC and they actually will be going out to bid very soon, but in the meantime he wanted to give everyone a general overview on what the project will look like.

Alderman Crawford explained that the main features of the project are the theater for the theater group, the modern off-leash dog park, and renovated and new athletic courts. Mr. Ring explained that during the Washington Street waterline project they decided that the northeast section of the park is probably the best place for the bathrooms. He explained that there will be two like there are at the farmers' market with a storage area in between and lighting on the outside. He explained that this location is close to the road and well-lit, and entrances will be facing Washington Street. He explained that there will also be some ADA accessibility and three handicapped spaces. He explained that the theater area will be west of this down the hill, and that Pilot Studios is designing the theater, who also designed the farmers' market. He explained that the same company that supplied materials for the farmers' market will supply materials for this structure. He explained that there will be ADA access for the theater and that there will be picnic tables on the west side that are wheelchair accessible.

Mr. Ring explained that they want to do some rehab on the tennis courts and fix the fencing. He explained that there are areas where trees will need to be cleaned up and the basketball court needs to be repaved and restriped. He explained that the tennis court will have movable nets as well. In the southern area of the park where there is a small blacktop pad, there will be a picnic area with charcoal grills. He explained that the picnic tables will be across from the dog park with the small dog park on the left and the large dog park on the right. He explained that around the park will be arborvities that are 5-7 feet tall with six foot spacing to fill in the area. He explained that there will be equipment inside of the dog park for the use of the dogs.

Alderman Barnard asked how big the dog park will be, and Mr. Ring explained that it will be 275 wide and 175 feet north to south. Alderman Barnard expressed concern about putting the dogs together off leash, and Alderman Crawford explained that this is why there are two different parks and that you typically don't mix big dogs and small dogs. He explained that there is a

fence between the two parks. The idea is to take a dog for a walk, and stop here to let them run around for 15 minutes or so. He explained that there are areas for the dogs to enter and be taken off leashes before entering the dog park. He explained that there will be obstacle course-type equipment for the dogs. He explained that there are also benches, dog waste stations, and water fountains within the dog parks. He explained that Mr. Ring and Ms. Kerper came up with a way to provide the natural arborvities around the parks.

Alderman Barnard explained that 90 percent of people are against the dog park. Alderman Crawford explained that a survey was done for the project and out of 234 responses in the survey, the number one interest is a modern off-leash dog park. He explained that he understands peoples' concerns, and no one likes change. Alderman Barnard explained that people like change but they don't think that a dog park belongs there. Alderman Crawford explained that he feels that this is not necessarily true.

Alderman Witte asked if this project is fully funded by the DRI with no City match. Mr. Ring explained that his understanding is that we have \$350,000 in DRI funding and that it is his understanding that the project is fully funded at \$500,000. Alderman Witte asked if the balance is coming from the City, and Alderman Crawford explained that it is. Alderman Witte asked if anything will be done with the tree problems in the park. She explained that this is one of the things that she hears from residents in the area that there are old trees that people think are dangerous. Mr. Ring explained that the trees aren't included in this particular plan, but they do intend to address the trees. He explained that there are going to be several removals and replantings. He explained that they are trying to come up with a plan City-wide.

Alderman Witte asked if the bathrooms will be closed when there are not events at the park, because of the issues with the bathrooms at Lincoln Park. Mr. Ring explained that he does not think that there is a finalized plan as far as that goes. Alderman Witte explained that she thinks that it is great that the basketball court and tennis courts will also be able to be used for pickleball. She asked if the playground equipment is going to be changed, and Mr. Ring explained that it will not under this plan.

Alderman Anastasia explained that he thought that the bathrooms were removed because of potential vandalism, and he did not know that they were back in. Alderman Panus explained that there was discussion a while ago about surveillance of our parks, and he thinks that in today's age that technology is where we need it to be to be able to install camers and try to deter people from damaging things. Alderman Crawford explained that she will send Alderman Anastasia previous meeting minutes. He explained that she feels that there is a benefit to the plan as it currently stands. It is tough to have nice things but that doesn't mean that we shouldn't, and if this means we need video surveillance then so be it. He explained that lighting

could also help prevent vandalism. He noted that we should look into automatic locking and unlocking devices for the doors.

Alderman Witte explained that when it comes to the bathrooms at different parks, they are rented for revenue for the City or portajohns are rented. She explained that there are bathrooms at Forness but they are locked during games. She explained that we need to look at this in the upcoming year. She explained that she has no problems with the bathrooms, but she doesn't want them to get vandalized. She explained that in the original discussion about the park it was stated that they aren't needed but she guesses that they are part of the plan now.

Alderman Gonzalez explained that just because there is vandalism in the park, does not mean that we should stop having bathrooms. He explained that we are splitting hairs and it should not always be about dollars in and dollars out. He explained that he feels that we should keep the bathrooms in the plan, especially if the theater group is using the park. He explained that the game changer for this park will be the dog park, and that has to be in the plans. It is unique to the City and he knows that people will say it should be somewhere else but this is a centralized location. In 2 or 3 years we will be looking back at the finished project saying that we can't believe we almost didn't do it. Alderman Crawford asked how many people did that to Lincoln Park. They called it the park we wrecked. Alderman Gonzalez explained that it is now twice the park that it was before.

Alderman Crawford explained that as we continue this we have to believe that people are going to but downtown properties and all of this money is going to be going to downtown living spaces. He explained that 60% of households in the U.S. have at least one dog, and just because someone lives downtown does not mean that they won't have dogs. He explained that he does not think that this should be the only dog park, and we should have other off-leash places in the City so that we don't have 100% of interested people all in one space. He explained that the Homer Street Park already has three sides fenced, and it is not really used.

Alderman Gonzalez explained that he does not understand the hesitation. He asked if people are worried about parking, or noise. He explained that most people will walk, and people can already bring their dogs to the park. He explained that it doesn't make sense to him besides that people don't like change that that's it.

Mr. Ring explained that the plan is to go into construction in the spring or summer. He explained that Ms. Kerper is currently working on the SEQR, which is a Type I because the park is in a historic district. He explained that some comments have been received from SHPO and the DEC. He explained that he hopes to bid in February or March.

c. Request for Cell Tower – North Olean

Mr. Hart explained that the City has received notice of interest from AT&T about installing a 175 foot tower to allow for 5G utilization in the City at the City-owned Polo Park by the Water Plant. He explained that the area is a 100x100 space that is currently fenced in, and there has been an offer to the City of some money down and some eventual monthly payments. He explained that they did make it clear that this is negotiable. He explained that the 175 foot tower is like a 17 story building and AT&T has asked if this location is a location that would be considered by the City. He explained that other options have been presented to them and they have indicated that they would not work or they are already covered so the space is not needed. He explained that the purpose of presenting this to the Council is to see if this is something that would be worth pursuing. He explained that if it is, we could possibly negotiate something more worthwhile that would be better than the initial offer.

Mayor Aiello explained that this would give the City an opportunity as well to remove the antenna that is currently on the Community Bank building, because putting the antenna on top of this tower would allow the City access to all of our buildings. Alderman Witte asked if the neighbors have been informed, and Mayor Aiello explained that first they wanted to get the feel of the Council but that it would be put out to the neighbors so that they have the ability to comment before anything is decided. Alderman Anastasia explained that next year, there should be a public hearing and neighbors should be notified via letter so that if anyone has concerns they can come ask questions and voice concerns.

Alderman Anastasia asked where the tower would be, and Mr. Hart explained that it would be in a fenced in area that is currently on the site. He explained that this area is not a part of the park. He explained that the fencing goes all the way around all of the buildings that used to be the water plant. Alderman Anastasia asked if the tower is noisy or just ugly to look at, and Mr. Hart explained that it is not noisy at all. Alderman Witte asked if the tower will be the same height as the one on Front Street, and Mayor Aiello explained that it would be taller. He noted that it would be located behind the cold storage building by the Park on River Street.

Alderman Anastasia explained that he would appreciate a public hearing. Mayor Aiello explained that we are still in the early stages and he wanted to get this out to the Council. Alderman Crawford explained that he would like to hear what they are offering and what the proposal is. He explained that it would have to be pretty significant to put up a 17 foot tower in a residential neighborhood. Alderman Panus explained that he is interested to see what kind of revenue possibilities there are. He explained that he would like to see a preliminary site plan to see where the tower is going and what the design is before it's actually built. Alderman Crawford explained that the antenna on top of the Community Bank Building can't be seen, but tower would be very noticeable. He asked if the City would see any cost savings moving our antenna. Mayor Aiello explained that it would be convenient to have our antennas on a

permanent site that has accessibility and line of site to all of the City's facilities. Alderman Anastasia explained that he would like to see the site plans since this is a residential area. He explained that there is a bunch of vacant land across the river by the Times Herald building, and wonders if they can use this site instead. Mayor Aiello noted that we don't own this property.

d. Repairs to Vac-Con

Mr. Ring explained that we have had a breakdown in our Vac-Con vehicle which is used to flush out sanitary and storm lines, and which is often used for digging out and cleaning catch basins. He explained that the fan has failed, and this is the second time that it has failed. He explained that in speaking with our head mechanic, this is somewhat of a weakness in the design of the machine. He explained that the fan creates suction for the actual suction tank and eventually seals break down and they permit dust and dirt inside the fan. The fan is constantly moving, so eventually it breaks down. He explained that we need to replace the part, and he had forwarded the quote for the cost to the Council.

Mr. Ring explained that when we choose to purchase these types of machines, we choose the company that we work with and we have to work solely with them to replace parts. He explained that the replacement part is \$30,000 and we have already exhausted our replacement funds in the sewer fund up to this point. He explained that there are other factors that come into play. We have a plan to replace the truck, and we have already funded the replacement but it will be about 18 months before we take ownership. He explained that there is someone who would like to purchase the current Vac-Con, but that this is dependent on it operating properly. He explained that he feels that we need to replace the park, as this piece of equipment needs to be operating. He suggests that we take funds from the sewer contingency to do so.

Alderman Crawford asked what the rough estimate of the salvage value and resale values are, and Mr. Ring explained that he does not have that number off of the top of his head. Alderman Crawford asked if we can try to get the new machine sooner, and Mr. Ring explained that we can try but there is a real holdup with the chassis manufacturer. He explained that the truck is 12 years old and he doesn't believe it is under warranty. The part lasts 5-6 years.

Alderman Panus asked if there is anyone else that would supply a replacement part. Mr. Ring explained that he does not believe that there is anyone that makes off market parts. He explained that when we choose a brand of this kind of truck, it has specialized equipment that is only provided by that manufacturer. Mayor Aiello explained that they have already asked all of these questions, which is why they are bringing this to the Council. Alderman Witte asked if we are at least going to get the \$30,000 cost back if we sell the vehicle. Mr. Ring explained that

he believes so, and that he believes that the trade in value is \$80,000. He explained that he can verify this, and that the new value of the equipment is \$330,000.

Alderman Robinson asked if COVID relief money could be used for something like this. Mayor Aiello explained that he looked into it, but he was told that this money was not for equipment. Alderman Robinson asked about using water and sewer contingency for the East State Street bridge waterline repair, and Mr. Ring explained that it was only from water fund, not sewer. He explained that generally we don't spend the water or sewer fund contingency but there have been some issues with the age of our fleet. He explained that this is an unfortunate situation and is a tough pill to swallow.

Alderman Witte explained that she knows that we really need this vehicle, and she supports the fund transfer. Alderman Crawford explained that we should move forward and get a resolution drafted to be voted on next week.

#### 5. Approval of Committee Reports

None

#### 6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Crawford, seconded by Alderman Robinson. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:25 p.m.