

# **TOWN OF ORCHARD PARK BOARD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

***John Murray, Chairman***

***Joseph Wales***

***Matt Grubka***

***Don Lorentz***

***Dave Kaczor***

***Molly Barniak***

***Joseph Cox***

***Gene Majchrzak, Town Liaison***

***Joann Litwin, Village Liaison***

***Kathleen Creagan, Secretary***

## **REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES**

**October 13, 2020**

Meeting commenced at 6:00 P.M.

|                 |                |              |
|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| <b>Present:</b> | John Murray    | Dave Kaczor  |
|                 | Matt Grubka    | Joann Litwin |
|                 | Don Lorentz    | Joe Wales    |
|                 | Gene Majchrzak |              |
|                 | Joe Cox        | No Visitors  |

REZONING PROPERTIES: John advised that there are 13 properties to rezone and maybe most could get done quickly and 2 or 3 may take longer if they are a problem. John Bailey thought that would work well and Remy would be available for this after the tax season. Gene stated that he has an interest in this project. He advised that there is a committee consisting of himself, Remy, Joann and Hal. Gene agreed that most properties would get passed thru quickly. John asked if the Stadium was one that would be considered to pass easily but Gene did not recall. The Stadium is really where this whole project started. The strategic planning started three years ago and this has been ongoing since then.

Remy is the head of the committee and he will begin focusing on it. It has been a difficult time with the departure of the Supervisor but Remy will be calling another meeting to discuss this situation. John asked if anyone from this committee needs to appear but Gene indicated that the committee will be kept small until they move into an area that needs additional comments, they will call on the appropriate group such as engineering, etc. Dave added that it will be important to have public input as well as opposed to government decisions because they will not be received well from the public. Joann indicated that there will definitely be public hearings. This committee was put together quickly due to the county funding that was available and the fact that there was a deadline.

EMAIL RE VETERINARY HOSPITAL: Mike Taylor from pursuit lending sent an email thru the Erie County IDA to John a few weeks ago looking for support from this committee regarding the veterinary hospital on North Buffalo Street. Doctors there are buying the building and remodeling it – thus applying for an SBA loan. Two requirements for them to get the loan are women/minority ownership or creating new jobs – neither of which it will do. Therefore they have asked the committee to make a recommendation supporting their initiative. They actually supplied the letter to be submitted. John asked the committee for feedback and opinions regarding the support. Joann questioned if the same group that originally bought the building and practice still own it or if it is a new group. John's understanding was that the doctors rented the building originally and now have purchased the building and are now looking for the SBA funding to advance the building. This is the building next to Buffalo Medical Group. Dave indicated that you should be careful getting involved. As a committee we could write a generic letter stating that we always support economic development in Orchard Park and that they consider this as part of the decision making process. We are merely an advisory group. There are too many legal

ramifications and we are not making an endorsement. John will respond via email.

EMAIL FROM THE CHAMBER RE LOAN and FORGIVENES:

Don indicated that the replies to the survey email he sent out asked for information on Corona Virus Aid and Economic Relief, PPE loans, CARES Act and the Health care enhancement. People would like to hear explanations from experts on those subjects. Some of the bigger companies wanted to know about industry grants and how to go about getting those. Dave indicated that if they are looking for job training grants, they are available with certain criteria. His office covers some of these areas such as on the job training. He could have someone speak at one of the meetings. There are many grants available, not just due to Covid, but in general, with regard to innovative projects that many people don't know about. 90% preferred virtual meetings. Don thought that the two topics should be separate seminars as the industry will attract the bigger companies and the other will be for the small businesses and loans. Don asked for suggestions as to who could be invited to speak regarding these topics. Joann pointed out that the PPE is due at the end of December so that should be done sooner than later. The grants also are time sensitive as they are obtained at the beginning of the year. Don said he would be able to set up the ZOOM meetings.

Don advised the group of someone who wanted to start a business in OP and could not get in to speak with anyone and due to the frustration, went to Hamburg. He asked if there was a town check list of how to proceed when starting up a business in OP. The two main offices are the building inspector and the planning coordinator. The problem is that no one is allowed down the hall right now; they need to make an appointment to speak to anyone in the town. Don would like to have a check list to provide to anyone who may contact him for information on how to proceed. Gene will check with Remy to see if the old check list is still available.

Gene has heard that the planning board causes projects to be delayed by piece mealing the requirements to the applicant. Time is money in the private sector and that has to be considered. It was also advised that the building inspectors office delays builders with their projects as well, however, many builders wait until the last minute to call for an inspection. (This problem was before Covid) Dave would like the steps listed on the website with contact information with phone numbers and email addresses regarding procedures for sheds, pools, building a house, starting new business, etc. Again, the suggestion was raised to invite Remy to a meeting to ask questions. Dave stated that most of the time it is the same builders coming in to complain. They should know the plan and their plans need to be complete when they come in. Proper processes and channels need to be followed. The health department is also a delay in signing off on work. Don is concerned that these people leave Orchard Park to go to Hamburg or East Aurora. John will see if Remy can come to our next meeting. When Remy comes to the meeting, he may be able to answer these concerns.

Paul Peppero is the IT person for the town and we could ask him to create this checklist with the understanding that there are exceptions and possibly more than one department will be involved.

A recap of the survey from Don...he asked for experts to speak – Joe said that he would invite Josh Obrochta from M&T (and of course it will be virtual). Don would also like someone to speak regarding the forgiveness program. Maybe 2 or 3 concrete people to speak including someone from the SBA and a few bank people. At that point, Don could set up the webinar for sometime in the beginning or middle of December during the morning hours for approximately one hour. Don will get someone from the SBA. The Buffalo Niagara Partnership had a strong program already.

Don stated that 5 or 6 new businesses have opened up – 2 breweries, sandwich shop, real estate company, American Legion Post has sold - - possibly a new brewery going in. Beer Project is going in Sterling Park.

**New Business:** None

**Public Comments:** None

**Executive Session:** None

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, November 10, 2020 @ 6:00 pm.

**Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn by Dave Kazor, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Joe Wales at 6:45 pm.