

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 December 8, 2020

Meeting commenced at 6:05 P.M.

Present:	John Murray	Dave Kaczor - Zoom
	Matt Grubka - Zoom	Joann Litwin
	Don Lorentz	Joe Wales- Zoom
	Gene Majchrzak	Guest:
	Molly Barniak - Zoom	Visitor:

WEBINAR EVENT: Don Lorentz advised he had 18 participants for the Zoom meeting regarding the Covid repayment loan with Orchard Park businesses. Presenters included two bank advisors, SBA director and an accountant from Freed Maxik. They reviewed the options to receive forgiveness and the fact that the self-employed and general contractors lost out on funding and those owners fell thru the cracks; nothing from Federal or State. Don has been hearing from these members with fear that they will have to close their doors. Don has sent letters to members and as many of the elected officials he could. He does not, however have any officials' email addresses. Chris Jacobs' office has contacted Don regarding a new stimulus package but those packages will not help the self-employed or contractors. Each business should be looked at individually. It doesn't seem fair to close a small shop like Arthurs and leave big business open such as Walmart and Lowes. They cannot be safer than a small store like Arthurs.

Gene indicated that the 10:00 curfew was not adhered to by all. From Albany to Erie County cannot get stats for clarity. Our school district (teachers and staff) the high point was in the 30s. With 5,000 kids in school, .57% kids were safest in school. Safety is second to money.

Dave asked how the united Chamber of Commerce or the educational program is offering any assistance in partnerships. Nothing political partnership, seminar from US Chamber re the new norm. There are 16 chambers to participate but only 4 signed the document stating we cannot allow cluster closings and businesses being shut down. Small business retirements are losing hundreds of thousands and losing money to live on. Older business owners have problems with lower values to live on.

Don contacted channel 2 to do an expose on small businesses. Channel 7 wants names and phone numbers of gyms in OP, they only want to know who will protest the law re gyms. Don advised Ch 7 that we would rather focus on struggling small businesses. The gym was not a protest – it was a meeting that was labeled incorrectly. There are no stats and if they are, they must be good because they are not being released. Gyms and hair salons have not shown any increase. Each industry should be addressed individually. Gene said not every industry as a group, but individually based on stats. One bar – not all; one salon – not all.

The webinar was appreciated; each presenter talked 15 minutes – the webinar was one hour.

CHAIRMAN POSITION: John stated that we usually do not meet in December due to the holidays, but we have missed so many meetings this year due to Covid. Tonight, will be John's last meeting as Chairman of the committee. Discussion needs to be on replacing him on the committee and appointing a new Chairman. John is more than willing to help in any way he can. He has served 14 good years on this committee and half of that as the Chairman. It has been a good group and good experience but feels it is time for him to move on and get new people and ideas involved. This is a diverse group with skill sets, work experiences, etc.

Don thanked John for his dedication and work toward the rezoning – a three-year project and his efforts to attract new industry.

Dave worked with John for 20 plus years and thanked John for his leadership, experiences with the Town Board and community. There are members not present who may be interested in the position.

Gene indicated that the committee should be 6 people. John told him we did new bylaws that were to be signed by Pat Keem and filed in the clerk's office. It was never signed. The way it stands right now there are 6 members; 4 chosen by the board members, 1 by the village and 1 by the board itself. There will be a reorganization meeting January 6. John Bailey is crafting a resolution to address and fix this issue. There is no mention who chooses the chairperson. Gene suggested that anyone interested should send a 25 word or less paragraph. A decision can be made electronically.

John said there is a huge disconnect – in January we put together new by-laws and agreement.

Don is appointment – he appointed himself (Chamber);

2 appointed by committee: Joe Cox and Molly Barniak

Joe would have been a village appointee but a clause waiving appointment and given back to the committee was put in place to appoint Joe by the committee due to his position at Arthurs. He was not appointed by the town or the village.

Chamber, village and town are liaisons to the committee.

No other town or village group has bylaws. This is the only committee. The chamber was the start of this committee. They looked at the old records which indicated it was started by the town, village and chamber were liaisons to the committee. With all committees and boards in the town, this is the only with bylaws.

Dave advised this committee was never meant to be run by the town or village. The town always gave a stipend of \$10,000 a year as it was an independent committee representing the town, village and chamber. It was to be an ad hoc committee outside of the government. Gene has information from 1997. Chamber was always a voting member of the committee. The Town Board will vote on the resolution that John Bailey is putting together. Pat never discussed the bylaws submitted by this committee. The copy Gene has been signed by John, Don and JoAnn. Pat did not. This was February of 2017. John advised that we submitted it last year. We produced the bylaws of January 2020. We worked off of the 2017 bylaws to produce the new one. Every bit was submitted. It was critical to get the Chamber involved again and it was to be a non-political, non-partisan group with no officials voting. Gene and JoAnn do not vote.

Dave hopes that the Board will look at the work we have done and consider the time and effort this committee has put together to benefit this committee. John Bailey used to be the Chairman and Dave was a liaison for many years.

Gene advised the most recent Financial Statement of was from 2009. A Key Bank money market in the amount of \$46,550.56 and there is no report where money was spent. The 2008 balance was \$52,912.30 and there has been no bank statement or financial report since 2009. John advised that John Bailey was the chair at that time and there was an offsite meeting for strategic meeting at the country club and \$541.00 (Elizabeth and Betty Chettney). There was a refresh plan after that with another strategic offsite plan in October of 2015 or 2016 for the second meeting.

John was not aware that a financial report was required. The only thing coming out is the withdrawal of Kathleen's stipend. Monthly minutes are also to be provided.

Dave advised that this committee was outside the town. The Chamber used to hold account for the committee. The Town has to be able to produce information on where the money from the Town has been spent. Gene is not saying anything wrong was done; just that this unique situation has to be figured out.

The signage for the scenic byway was given by the committee and Gene also recently approved money for that group. Also, money was given for store fronts and awnings in the village.

The KeyBank account is a separate account with John as the signatory on the account. It was structured as such so that the committee could apply for grants (Fabiniak and then Michnick) This is not town government, but a separate entity and goes back to the 1980s when the remodel to the streets was done. The Town could not apply for certain grants so this account and committee was set up so it could apply for the grants. This committee was the administrator of the grant (under the Chamber) for the plan. Originally, this committee was set up to represent the Town, Village and Chamber. The majority of the money was used in the strategic planning. Don will check with Nancy regarding the Chamber's role in the grant writing. Jack Birch, Jack Mills and Ronnie _____ may have some information regarding the inception of the committee.

Dave remembers when the Town stopped giving money because there were no projects going on. When more projects ensue and money is needed, the committee should apply to the Town Board. This board/committee is unique to any other in the Town. At this time, we should get the financial statements, bylaws and minutes to the Town for review and clarification. Minutes will be provided to the Town monthly.

John will craft the next resolution with our draft that was never signed. The interested parties and the chair should get information together as there may be things that will be amended. There should be a committee of 5 or 7.

CHAIRMAN REPLACEMENT: John will turn over the bank statements and checking account tonight and asked for a replacement. He is willing to assist in the transition to new Chairman. After a discussion, Don and Dave declined the Chairman position. Molly agreed to take the position. Joe was not interested, nor was Matt.
CONGRATULATIONS TO MOLLY - CHAIRPERSON

CURRENT BUSINESSES: Home Grown Bistro is leaving. We really need to help these businesses. Molly suggested a punch card for small businesses to enter drawing. Joe advised that Arthur's would be on board with that new incentive.

New Business:

Don is putting together an "amazon" type search that will direct people to WNY, as well as a "grub Hub" type delivery for items they want from Blush, Arthurs, Village Togs, etc.

Buffalo Niagara partnership usually benefits Buffalo Niagara, not our own businesses.

The Chamber Alliance still exists, but only 4 of 16 participate. Don is trying to get that resurrected.

Public Comments: None

Executive Session: None

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 @ 6:00 pm. Community Activity Center

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Dave Kaczor and 2nd by Joe Wales at 7:21 pm.