

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 9, 2020 WORK SESSION OF THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF POUND RIDGE HELD VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, COMMENCING AT 7:00 PM

PRESENT: SUPERVISOR KEVIN HANSAN, COUNCILPERSON ALISON BOAK, COUNCILPERSON CARLA BRAND, COUNCILPERSON DIANE BRIGGS, COUNCILPERSON DANIEL PASCHKES

**ALSO PRESENT: TOWN ATTORNEY WILLIAM P. HARRINGTON
TOWN CLERK ERIN TROSTLE**

NOT PRESENT: DEPUTY SUPERVISOR LES MARON

Re: Economic Development Committee Update on the Future Use of 77 Westchester Avenue

The Economic Development Committee (EDC) has spent the last year exploring various ideas for future uses of 77 Westchester Avenue. Councilwoman Briggs described this process. In October 2018, the Town took possession of the property, and the EDC was charged with evaluating possible uses. In April 2019, the EDC presented site details and a brief history to the Town Board and the community for feedback, and there was an opportunity for public comment. In November 2019, the EDC presented an update to the community. In May 2019, the EDC brought the Village Green proposal to the Town Board and recommended it as the best and most appropriate use for 77 Westchester Avenue.

Dr. Eduard Kleiner, working with Gina Federico and Louis Fusco, brought the Village Green proposal to the EDC. The proposal, which embodies the vision of Dr. Kleiner's late wife, Rayanne, entails demolishing the former gas station, remediating the site, and installing lighting and plantings to create a public outdoor space. Dr. Kleiner has generously offered to fund the project with a \$500,000 donation to the town, and has pledged an additional ongoing annual donation of \$20,000 to fund related maintenance.

Councilwoman Briggs shared conceptual illustrations for the project, Louis Fusco discussed the design, and Gina Federico described uses for the space. The Kleiner family envisions the Village Green as a place for Pound Ridgers to engage in a variety of social activities in an inviting outdoor space in the center of town. Pedestrian access from Westchester Avenue to the rear parking lot will be an additional benefit.

The EDC hopes to gain Town Board approval for the project so that work on demolition, remediation, and ultimately beautification can begin. The initial effort will be led by Dr. Kleiner, Ms. Federico, and Mr. Fusco initially, but eventually the EDC envisions creating a committee of residents and local organizations to oversee use of the space.

EDC member Rebecca Wing thanked Mr. Kleiner for his gift to the town. She noted that we shouldn't underestimate the value of a space that encourages people to linger in town and noted that the plan is likely to have great economic benefit.

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Resident Jody Sullivan asked whether the \$500,000 donation would be sufficient to fund the project and also asked whether the annual donation of \$20,000 was pledged in perpetuity. Councilwoman Briggs responded that the annual contribution was pledged for as long as the Dynax Corporation continues to be located in its current location. Mr. Fusco noted that estimates of remediation expenses have been lower than anticipated, which tends to indicate that the estimated cost is realistic. He also noted that if necessary, some items, like the kiosk, could be added at a later date to keep costs manageable.

New residents Andrew and Jackie Kleber expressed enthusiasm about the project and stated that they hoped the kiosk would be digital.

Resident Harold Mendelson asked about the size and extent of the property. Councilwoman Briggs responded that the property is one third of an acre and explained that the project will not interfere with the rear parking lot. Mr. Mendelson suggested that the property that has been used for Food Truck Friday might be a more appropriate location for a Village Green, but Councilwoman Briggs pointed out that that property is privately owned, unlike 77 Westchester. Supervisor Hansan noted that because the town continues to maintain ownership, future boards will have the flexibility to make decisions about future uses.

Residents Stacy and Eric Campbell expressed gratitude to Mr. Kleiner and excitement about the Village Green plan.

Resident Phil Sears expressed concern about the many grade changes in the proposed design and about the possibility of introducing a public drinking water supply. Mr. Fusco clarified that water would likely be for irrigation and assured Mr. Sears that drainage issues would be addressed.

Mr. Kleiner spoke about his eagerness to move forward with the project. Councilwoman Briggs noted that doing so will realize the vision of Mr. Kleiner's late wife, Rayanne. She thanked Mr. Kleiner for his patience and noted that the board would vote on the proposal later in the evening.

Supervisor Hansan also thanked Mr. Kleiner and expressed his belief that the community will find many ways to use the space. Councilperson Paschkes thanked Councilwoman Briggs and the EDC for their work. Councilperson Brand thanked the Kleiner family for their generous donation and Ms. Federico and Mr. Fusco for their efforts in realizing the Kleiners' vision. She also noted that the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of outdoor spaces and their ability to bring the community together. Councilperson Boak also thanked the Kleiner family and the EDC.

The work session was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Erin Trostle, Town Clerk
Dated at Pound Ridge, New York
July 6, 2020