

DECEMBER 7, 2013 - SPECIALLY CALLED VILLAGE BOARD MEETING
REGARDING YOUNGSTOWN COLD STORAGE SITE

Mayor Reynolds called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Also present were Deputy Mayor Lockhart, Trustees Adamson, Suitor and VanDeusen, Attorney Caserta, Building Inspector Stevens, several interested residents, one business owner and a reporter from the Sentinel.

The Mayor asked for public comment. Peter Bacola of Campbell St stated he is opposed to a proposed 30 unit rental building for the Youngstown Cold Storage site as Campbell St. cannot be widened and the traffic situation would be unpleasant. He also stated the neighborhood could become unstable if rental units are built and it would be better to build fewer saleable units such as six to eight single family residences. He also stated he would rather see the site stay as it is than to put in thirty rental units.

Bruce Oliphant of Elliott St. asked how today's meeting was different than the meeting earlier this week held on Wednesday. Mayor Reynolds explained the meeting on Wednesday, December 4th was a Public Hearing conducted by the Niagara County IDA (Industrial Development Agency) in order to hear public comment regarding the Cold Storage site. The next IDA meeting is scheduled for December 11th, the day prior to the Village meeting and a letter of opinion is needed from the Village Board. Thus a specially called meeting was necessary. Mr. Oliphant told the Board he moved to Youngstown to get out of the hustle and bustle and to know his neighbors. He stated renters aren't permanent, they are transient and he would rather see the site stay as it is than to have the rental units. A brief discussion took place regarding the lack of impact such renters would have on the local businesses. Mr. Oliphant stated there are lots of children in the area and went on to say many drivers blow through the stop sign at Elliott and Second Streets with traffic issues also on Campbell St. He then referenced "The Woods at Blairville" which were originally intended to be rental units but became subsidized housing when units went unrented. He stated he would rather see single family housing built at the site.

Dick Lucas of Second St. stated he lives next door to the Cold Storage site and addressed the issue of added traffic to the current streets near the site noting Campbell St. was only a lane years ago. Mr. Lucas questioned the wear on the streets, the fact that Campbell St. is not wide enough to have two vehicles going down it at the same time and questioned the water and sewer service in the area. He suggested tearing the Cold Storage building down and creating two buildable lots.

A discussion took place regarding the PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) program. Attorney Caserta explained the IDA talks to the host community for opinion on offering the stated percentage tax break which after 10-15 years, would return to 100%. Mayor Reynolds explained the agreement is between the builder and the IDA and involves financing only. The IDA does not get involved in zoning or Village codes. Mr. Bacola had concerns of his taxes going up if the PILOT is offered. Mayor Reynolds stated that kept as is, the site would not be generating tax revenue and the property would become a liability to the Village and a burden to taxpayers.

A discussion took place regarding the Village owning the Cold Storage site, how that came to be and why the Village did not find grant funds to tear the storage site down. Mayor Reynolds explained efforts continue find grants to cover the cost of demolition but to no avail. Judy Hannah of Campbell St. discussed concerns of the property being polluted and also does not want subsidized housing to be built. She asked what the current zoning is. Attorney Caserta stated it is zoned commercial and would have to be re-zoned if the project was to be built. Mrs. Hannah stated she has a feeling that no matter what those in attendance say, the Village Board will do what they want.

Norman Swann of Brampton Rd. referred to apartments and a doctor's office which once stood at Church and Third Sts. until a fire destroyed the building. He stated the Cold Storage site is on the backs of Village taxpayers and he would hate to see a developer chased out of town. Mr. Swann stated that even if the IDA approves the PILOT, the developer still must come before the Zoning, Planning and Village Boards. He asked that those in attendance look at the full picture and if a developer doesn't do the demolition and build, the cost of demolition then falls on the taxpayer's backs.

Stephanie Oliphant of Elliott St. stated she wasn't opposed to the project but was opposed to the size stating 30 units was too many suggesting 12 units instead. She also discussed the problem of drivers not stopping at the corner stop sign.

Trustee VanDeusen stated that unfortunately we are not getting developers who want to do such projects and that this is the first one willing to tear down the Cold Storage building. She also stated the Village is not in the real estate as some residents had eluded. Trustee VanDeusen also referred to the danger posed with the building still standing. Mr. Bacola suggested the site be divided into buildable lots for single family houses.

Trustee Adamson gave a brief history stating the developers interested in the site which included Burke Homes first, then Mancuso and both backed out. Now, Mr. Burke is back again but Trustee Adamson stated it is not economically feasible to do smaller projects. He also agreed that if the site is not developed, it will fall financially on the backs on the residents. Trustee Adamson stated Mr. Burke would not invest in a bad project, hence he did a need study first.

A discussion took place regarding senior housing, handicapped accessibility to housing, subsidized housing, foreclosures in the Village and need for apartments.

Mr. Lucas reported a developer; Mr. Chamberlin came through the Cold Storage neighborhood and discussed plans for an 18 unit housing project several years ago. Mayor Reynolds asked why Mr. Chamberlin didn't come back if he were interested in building such units in Youngstown. Trustee Suitor questioned why residents would want to chase a developer out of town before hearing about the plans referring to the "not in my back yard" attitude.

Mr. Swann stated there are no plans yet so let Mr. Burke go the IDA for funding, let him have a chance to show his plans and referred back to Mr. Lucas who has sat on the Zoning Board for many years and that he would see Mr. Burke's plans in that capacity.

Trustee Adamson reported the Village has put ads in the newspaper asking for RFP's (requests for proposals) for the Cold Storage site and no one responds. Trustee Suitor stated that a letter from the Village to the IDA would only show the Village's support regarding PILOT. Mr. Bacola asked the Board again if the support would be only for tax relief and the Board responded affirmatively.

Mr. Oliphant discussed maintaining the standard of living at these resident's side of the Village. Trustee Adamson stated there are still lots on Carrollwood Dr. which have not sold in the past 20 years and it is a nice neighborhood. Trustee Adamson asked Mr. Oliphant what the zoning was for the Cold Storage site when he purchased his home. Mr. Oliphant replied it was zoned commercial.

Mrs. Hannah expressed concerns of subsidized housing affecting the salability of their property. Trustee Suitor again stated concerns of chasing a developer out of town before even starting to work with the developer. Mayor Reynolds stated there would be a public hearing in the future. Trustee VanDeusen asked that the Village have the opportunity to talk to the developer.

A discussion took place regarding zoning. Attorney Caserta stated the site would have to be re-zoned. Also, some of the trustees stated the developer may not back down on the number of units he would want to build.

The question arose of why and how did the Cold Storage owners leave the property in the Village's lap. Attorney Caserta stated the multiple owners of the co-op could not be determined. He then explained that after an emergency ammonia leak, the Village ended up with the property. He added that once the co-op stopped paying their taxes, the principles of the group could not be tracked down. Previous Village Boards realized it was an environmental hot spot and tried to make it environmentally sound.

A question arose as to why the Village doesn't save money from taxes to tear the structure down. Attorney Caserta stated the Village has continued to search for grants for the demolition to no avail. Trustee Sutor stated it is very difficult to even find an extra \$10,000. in the budget. Deputy Mayor Lockhart stated that with inflation and the State's 2% tax cap, it would be impossible to nest egg that kind of money.

Mayor Reynolds asked if anyone else wished to speak. Hearing no one, he recommended a resolution be sent to the IDA. Trustee VanDeusen motioned to approve a resolution supporting Mr. Burke's request for IDA PILOT incentives, seconded by Deputy Mayor Lockhart and carried unanimously.

Mayor Reynolds reported he has received a request from the Youngstown Volunteer Fire Co. to place an ambulance fund drive sign in front of the Village Hall. Trustee Adamson motioned to approve the request for sign placement, seconded by Trustee Sutor and carried.

In light of Mr. and Mrs. Oliphant's concerns of speeding and running the stop signs, Trustee Adamson suggested something be done for resolving these problems. Mayor Reynolds stated he will contact the Village Police with the concerns. Trustee VanDeusen will contact the Lew-Port school district regarding complaints of school buses making wide turns on the street and to possibly get the bus route changed. Mayor Reynolds will call the school Superintendent if necessary.

Mark Butera of Anchor Spirits displayed a brochure of area businesses and stated that almost all of them are not just seasonal businesses as was mentioned earlier in the meeting by one of the residents. He reported that the Youngstown Business Association has a very viable business district in the Village.

With no further business, Mayor Reynolds stated the Board would enter into Executive Session at the close of the regular meeting to discuss personnel and contractual matters. Trustee Adamson motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Trustee VanDeusen and carried. The meeting ended at 3:15 p.m. and the Board went into Executive Session.

At 3:55 p.m. Trustee Sutor motioned to return to regular session, seconded by Deputy Mayor Lockhart and carried. In regular session, Deputy Mayor Lockhart motioned to authorize a newspaper help wanted ad to be placed to hire a part time Deputy Clerk, seconded by Trustee Adamson and carried. At 3:56 p.m. Trustee Sutor motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Trustee Adamson and carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara J. Castilon
Clerk Treasurer

