

January 14, 2020 – Riverfront Management Council

CITY RIVERFRONT MANAGEMENT COUNCIL Meeting held Tuesday, January 14, 2020

The meeting of the Riverfront Management Council of the City of Jamestown, New York, was held on Tuesday, January 14, 2020, at 5:30 p.m.

Those present representing the Council were:

John Bauer
Russ Diethrick
Luke Fodor
Terry Horner
Jennifer Lumia
Brent Sheldon
Bill Stevenson

Absent Members:

Dave Anderson
Twan Leenders
Olivia Ruiz
Aubrey Russell
Vanessa Weinert

Others Present:

Julia Ciesla-Hanley, Recreation Coordinator
Crystal Surdyk, City of Jamestown Principal Planner
Hannah Hornyak, Citizen

The meeting was called to order by Julia Ciesla-Hanley.

Election of Officers

Chairman: John Bauer motioned to nominate Billy Stevenson as Chairman. Jennifer Lumia seconded the motion. Carried.

Vice-Chairman: Russ Diethrick motioned to nominate John Bauer as Vice-Chairman. Jennifer Lumia seconded the motion. Carried

Secretary: Jennifer Lumia motioned to nominate Terry Horner as Secretary. Luke Fodor seconded. Carried.

Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

A motion was made by John Bauer seconded by Luke Fodor to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2019 meeting. Carried.

Opportunity For Persons to Address Council

None

Reports of Committees and Projects

Riverwalk/Parks Commission Update: Julia said the bank stabilization work has continued into the colder months. She said more large rocks have been placed around Panzarella Island and other places. She says the boxes still need to be installed that will slow down the rate of run-off water. At this point, plantings are still scheduled to happen in the Spring that will include trees and shrubs.

Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Update/Train: Crystal Surdyk said the city has been notified by New York State that the money for the excursion train work has not been spent in a fast enough manner so that \$610,000 may be reallocated to another existing DRI project or to a new project on the submitted list that hadn't been initially funded. Terry Horner asked why the rail project wasn't viable. Crystal said there is a lack of infrastructure for trains to run on to even offer excursion trips at this time. She said the study on excursion trains was finally completed. The city Department of Development will take what they can from that to try to summarize and turn into a marketing piece. She said the study isn't what holds up the bigger picture. The Southern Tier Rail Authority (STRA) and city of Jamestown have to work with the NYPA Railroad to consider the next step to bring passenger rail back to this area. Crystal said NYPA is not too interested but the support for commuter rail is growing across New York State and Governor Andrew Cuomo is behind rapid transit. Crystal said U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer was in Niagara Falls on Monday in a call to Canada to establish pre-clearance on the Canadian side for rail traffic. She said as part of the feasibility project, we're looking at connecting the Southern Tier to Niagara Falls. Terry asked what the news was about the engine house and if that can be made presentable. Crystal said she's not sure if it's in the scope of what was originally submitted to New York State, so that may prevent it from having money allocated to it. Russ Diethrick asked what infrastructure is currently missing. Crystal said we're missing actual rail upgrades for passenger traffic. There are missing connections as well and that's out of our control. She said the city will continue to work with STRA and the Railroad to try to incrementally build out into the region. Bill Stevenson said STRA should be telling the Railroad what to do and not the other way around. Crystal added that they've had some good conversations in the past but there has been personnel changes. Bill said former Mayor Sam Teresi thinks New York State will have to get involved eventually for things to move forward. Crystal thinks the Railroad doesn't understand. A rail tax abatement has been extended beyond the original 20 years it was put in place. We've reached out the State Assemblyman Andrew Goodell and State Senator George Borrello about the Railroad needing to pay the tax because it's having a big impact on the small communities the rail passes through. Crystal said Andy Goodell was part of the original STRA group. Bill said CCIDA's Rich Dixon is

still on the committee too. John Bauer asked if there's a big demand for excursion trains. Crystal said there is and they hoped the feasibility study would show that. She said the study does but it's not clear, which is where she felt Stone Consulting fell short on in doing the study. She added we can still build off the study. Crystal said former City Principal Planner Bill Rice, Bob Daeman out of Gowanda and Bob Whealon are still on the committee. Bill said talks were to originally have trains going from Jamestown to Meadville. Crystal said starting small is part of the goal too. Terry Horner said a baby step could be the refurbishing of the engine house where the trolley could be housed and do runs from the Comedy Center down to McCrea Point Park. Russ Diethrick said if people outside our area knew what we have here they'd want to come visit. Bill said he's glad Crystal is in her job because she knows how to push nicely. John Bauer asked if there's anything the RMC can do to help. Crystal said she will share the study with the RMC since it's good to have more eyes on it to see what might be good to highlight. Bill said a letter writing campaign to the state and federal government might help.

Reallocation (continued): Crystal said if the state decides to reallocate DRI funds, she would like to suggest that it go toward the Riverwalk Illumination Project. We're in the final stages of getting the lighting plan from the consultant who is the sub-contractor for Clark Patterson Lee. Crystal said we're close to having that plan. She said we've talked to Chautauqua Soil & Water about coordinating laying conduit while they're doing the digging for the riverbank stabilization project. She said the current projector on the BPU needs changes to make the visual more impactful. The design currently being projected came with the machine. Crystal said BPU's Kris Sellstrom has looked into why we're not getting the intensity in the projection and it has to do with the ambient light from the BPU. We're going to coordinate with turning off some lights when the projector is on. Crystal added the project will not have flood lights as people might have seen in the lighting demonstration. If the state reallocates the money to lighting, the \$325,000 would really help make the project more impactful. It also would light up the Washington Street and North Main Street bridges while expanding lighting around Panzarella Island and Comedy Park. Crystal said the money will help lay the grid to expand the lighting network for future projects as well.

Riverwalk Kiosks: Julia said new City Historian Ashley Senske worked on a historic interpretation signage project utilizing the kiosks on the Riverwalk. The 6 kiosks will feature historic photographs and interpretive language.

Skatepark: Julia said city staff will begin working on the language for the Request For Proposal for design/construction, which we hope to have out by Wednesday, January 29th. The deadline for those RFPs to be back into the city will be Wednesday, February 19th. She said there will be community meetings held once a contractor has been chosen. Crystal said we were able to get an additional \$50,000 for landscaping which helps with stormwater management. The concrete park also will help act as a cap for the brownfield, saving the city a lot of money in remediation.

Misc: Terry Horner asked how the Chautauqua County Industrial Development Agency's Chadakoin group is associated with the Riverfront Management Council. Crystal said the group is the one focusing on the Chadakoin River from McCrea Point Park to the basin before the Warner Dam. They're using the river soundings that Twan Leenders did to look at where they can install buoys and where boat traffic can be brought down. Terry said the area has a lot of exciting activity going on between boats, skateboarders, walkers and bikers.

Bike Trail Extension: Crystal said the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy (CWC) group has been buying property to extend the bike trail beyond the city boundaries. Lawson Boat Marina has approached the city about purchasing the right-of-way through their property. She said D&S Glass is interested as well. Crystal said the CWC is working to try to make the trail extension possible. Lawson Marina is also bringing water bikes, kayaks, and other equipment for recreational use.

Adjournment

Next meeting is Tuesday, February 11, 2020