

**Minutes for the August 3rd 2011 meetings of
The Village of Lancaster Community Development Corporation**

At 7:42 a.m. on the morning of August 3rd 2011, President Jeffrey Stribing convened a meeting of the Executive Committee of the VLCDC in the second floor board room of the Municipal Building at 5423 Broadway, Lancaster, New York. Also present were Vice President Richard Young, Secretary Craigg McRae and Directors John Evoy and Matt Walter. Consultants Mark Aquino and Stanley Keysa were also present, as was Erie County Director of Business Assistance Kenneth Swanekamp and Director of Industrial Assistance Chris Pawenski. John Mikoley, Linda Mallia and Mayor Cansdale had asked to be excused due to work requirements. Several citizens were also in the audience.

Jeff Stribing noted several corrections to the minutes of the July 6th meeting, including: page two, fifth paragraph, should be "Mike," not "Ron;" page three, first paragraph should be "sold" not "leased;" page three, second paragraph should be "\$375,000" not "\$300,000." Dick Young moved approval of the minutes as amended; his motion was seconded by Matt Walter and unanimously approved. The vote was as follows:

John Evoy	aye	Craigg McRae	aye
Jeffrey Stribing	aye	Matt Walter	aye
Richard Young	aye		

Mark Aquino presented the Treasurer's report, noting that all items were as usual except for the bill of Trost Fire Equipment for fire extinguisher inspection and of Kevin Dunbar for repairs. Craigg McRae then moved approval of issuance of checks 1828 thru 1839 and 1849 thru 1850 in the amount of \$19,592.31; his motion was seconded by John Evoy and unanimously approved. The vote was as follows:

John Evoy	aye	Craigg McRae	aye
Jeffrey Stribing	aye	Matt Walter	aye
Richard Young	aye		

Mark then reported that both LifeForms had vacated and that Orfeo will be out by August 15th in preparation for the asbestos abatement project. Other items have been pushed to the back, and all should be out by mid-month but InLighten and Save-A-Lot.

Mark said the VLCDC had been cited by the Town of Lancaster Building Inspector's Office for a number of violations, and that 75 to 85% had already been corrected. Asked about the type of violations, Mark noted that a number of switches lacked cover plates, some lights were out. He said George Pease and the fire company went thru yesterday and were pleased with the progress. Minor items in the areas to be vacated and remediated have not been corrected.

Jeff reported interest from two new tenants. A skateboard business was directed to a vacant store in the central business district, to create a critical mass with the toy store that

replaced the Secret Garden on the northwest corner of Central and West Main. Mark said another is a church, looking for 1900sf in the old Building Inspector's office. The Town had been paying \$1500 per month, but that amount would be difficult to obtain in its present condition. He asked the board to consider leasing on a month to month basis. Discussion followed as to whether the Church constituted a place of assembly and thus subject to different building codes.

Jeff added that the Knights of Columbus were selling their building on Broadway and looking for meeting space. He expects to talk to them this week Friday, and said they are looking for 700 to 1000sf. The consignment shop is being bought out and moved next door to John Stendahl's building. The "Y" has moved to Central Avenue.

Matt Walter moved to authorize Mark Aquino to negotiate with the skateboard store at a price to be determined, limited to a month-to-month basis. His motion was seconded by Dick Young and unanimously approved. The vote was as follows:

John Evoy	aye	Craig McRae	aye
Jeffrey Stribing	aye	Matt Walter	aye
Richard Young	aye		

John Evoy moved to authorize Mark Aquino to negotiate with the Knights of Columbus at a price to be determined, limited to a month-to-month basis. His motion was seconded by Matt Walter and unanimously approved. The vote was as follows:

John Evoy	aye	Craig McRae	aye
Jeffrey Stribing	aye	Matt Walter	aye
Richard Young	aye		

Mark said he would follow up with the church and communicate with the board by email, and that he had delivered the financials to the auditors; he expected a report in September.

At 7:55, Supervisor Robert Giza joined the meeting. By this time, a number of citizens had also gathered. Those signing a sheet circulated by board prospect John Dennee were:

Minnie Kelly, of 1 Pleasant Ave West (Lancaster Towers)

Pat Olme, of 1 Pleasant Avenue West (683-5862)

Mary Shilling, of 1 Pleasant Avenue West

Doug Everts, of 1 Pleasant Avenue West

Lee Ann DiCesare, of 42 Lee Street, Depew

Diane Bolso, of 46 Central Avenue, Lancaster

Paul Eichinger, of 10 Aurora Street, Lancaster

Jamie Mondo, of 105 Main Street #2, Depew

Chris Irwin, of 105 Main Street #2, Depew

Christopher Tew, of 64 St. James Street, Depew

Justen Clark, of 105 Main Street #2, Depew

Nadia Irwin, of 59 Burlington Avenue, Depew
Chris Franz, of 23 Laverack Avenue, Depew
Crystal Gullo, of 188 Laverack Avenue, Depew

President Stribing then announced that the Executive Committee meeting was over, and the regular meeting would begin. Acknowledging the many citizens in the audience and that they were there because of rumors that Save-A-Lot was being evicted, he explained that no eviction papers had been served, but that the VLCDC was attempting to clear the LVP Complex of asbestos. Jeff then reviewed the history of the building and noted the move of BOCES in the mid-1990's, the participation of hundreds of citizens in the "charette" of 1996, the development and adoption of a master plan for the central business district (CBD), the creation of the Village of Lancaster Community Development Corporation, the purchase of the LVP Complex by the VLCDC, that businesses had been leased space with an understanding that the leases were temporary in order to pay down the mortgage. Lack of funding was an impediment to redevelopment.

Jeff said that Erie County had offered a grant of federal Community Development Block Grant funds to assist, that an engineering firm had been hired and found asbestos in the LVP Complex which needs to be abated. Jeff said the engineers estimated that it would cost \$260,000 to remove the asbestos, and another \$350,000 or more for demolition in expectation that a portion would be demolished so as to restore West Main Street as contemplated in the master plan. Several tenants on the lower level have been asked to move to facilitate abatement.

Jeff noted the presence of Ken Swanekamp and Chris Pawenski from the County staff. Jeff said that Mayor Cansdale and he had met with County Executive Collins, EC DEP Commissioner Kathy Konst and Ken Swanekamp last week, and that the County Executive favors seeking more CDBG funds if the Village Board agrees to put in the street. He said that Broadway had been improved six years ago by the NYS DOT and Central Avenue had been improved by the Village pursuant to the master plan. The Town of Lancaster Industrial Development Agency (LIDA) had furnished funds to improve the plaza in front of the Town Hall. Last year, the VLCDC had obtained a grant from New York State to improve the facades on Central Avenue with matching or greater investment by the property owners.

Stribing said that, despite impressions of many, the CBD had never been empty, but that the many offices gave that impression due to low walking traffic. The goal is to establish more retail activities on the ground floor with offices or residences above. The New York State Main Street grant brought in \$200,000 of funding, which resulted in total reinvestment of more than \$430,000. When that was completed, the Lancaster Area Chamber of Commerce threw a celebratory party, and a number of prospects called immediately after. Jeff said another façade grant was being sought, and that he expected a decision in late August.

Stribing went on to say that the attention has now turned to the LVP Complex, and to

redeveloping West Main Street. He said about 150 citizens had voiced their views in the charettes of 1996 and 1997, which resulted in several plans. The VLCDC bought the former BOCES building to control the space. M&T Bank bought the mortgage several years later and reduced the interest rate. Since then, the building has served as an incubator for many small businesses, drawn by low rents, as the building does not have top class space. Jeff said structural damage to the roof was discovered in 2006 and that the VLCDC had to borrow an additional \$300,000 to make emergency repairs.

Jeff noted that a second mortgage was held jointly by the Regional Development Corporation and the Town of Lancaster IDA. He noted that the earlier plans had been delayed by a lack of funding, that the Village assisted by having the VLCDC manage sales in the Village Industrial Park, with net proceeds of those sales being redirected to aid the CBD.

Jeff said an offer had been received from community members to buy out the M&T and other mortgages for 50 cents on the dollar, and that the bank and other mortgage holders have verbally responded favorably. Jeff went on to say that he had met with many developers who won't come in with the building and indebtedness in place. The VLCD found it needed the clear at least a portion of the building in order to redevelop the area, that the goal was to establish more retail activities on the ground floor with offices or residences above, and cited the toy store, clothing store, drug store and restaurant.

Jeff reiterated that the VLCD^S had been aided by the New York State Main Street grant and had applied for more aid, with the hope of continuing the work next year. He said that he had informal talks with Save-A-Lot, and hoped to keep them in the area. He said he understood most were at the meeting to speak to keeping Save-A-Lot (SAL). He invited members of the audience to speak, but asked that they not be repetitious.

Helen Neal of the Lancaster Towers, Room 908, said that SAL was a blessing, and suggested that it be torn down and rebuilt. Jeff responded that he had not yet formally with SAL, that the VLCDC was not kicking them out, and that he recognized that the village still needed a grocery-store.

Donna Stutzman of 1061 Ransom Road asked if SAL had agreed to a new wall, and how long they would be shut down. Jeff responded that there was no "sit-down" with SAL yet, and that much more was likely to be involved than simply building a wall.

Bette O Marr of the Towers suggested that if SAL doesn't want to go back in, that there should be other stores in line. "We need a store."

Betty Kelly of the Towers said the paper had reported that SAL had been offered two sites and asked if they were the Elks and the former Tops at Broadway and Penora. Jeff reiterated those had been suggested, but that there had been no sit-down with SAL.

Grace Miller of 5636 Broadway asked what time line was being followed. Jeff responded

that much more information is needed as to funding the project before he can talk to SAL, and thought that to be weeks or months away. He hoped to have more information from a meeting in a week or two.

Sally Mueller of the Towers said she found she couldn't discuss the subject with others at the Towers without drawing tears.

Krista Gullo asked how much new building could be expected in the area. Jeff said the Village was a strong proponent of "smart growth" based on growth around an urban core, that Lancaster had such a core and didn't want to waste it. He said the CBD will get more retail as we get a critical mass, a policy successful elsewhere.

Stan Keysa identified himself as both a consultant to the board and chair of the Town Planning Board. He reviewed recent demographics in Erie County, noting the significant decline in birth rates, and said that residential building in the Town had declined about 80% from its peak in 1992, with most of the recent growth being senior housing.

Jeff then reviewed Stan's background and that of board members to show the breadth of community involvement by members of the board. Jeff asked the audience to trust the board to make a good decision.

Stan Keysa read from a portion of Article 12-A of the SAL lease to show that the grocer was aware from the start of plans to demolish or reconfigure the LVP Complex.

Supervisor Giza said that, if SAL were to move, the Town provides a van service which is available to take seniors shopping. He added that the LIDA had agreed to accept 50 cents on the dollar to permit the project to go forward. He said "we are not trying to dump SAL, but to make a better community."

Shirley Connors of the Towers said "many at the Towers depend on this store. It is convenient, and much cheaper."

Dick Young reminded the audience that Lancaster had experienced a series of fires in the 1960's and that "the whole area was shut down." He said there was no choice back then, that when the LVP Complex was built 40 years ago, it was with a limited life expectancy. "We are trying to come up with a plan to replace it."

At 8:42 a.m., Craig McRae moved to adjourn; his motion was seconded by Bob Giza and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Craig McRae, Secretary