

## **WORK SESSION of the OLEAN COMMON COUNCIL**

Tuesday, October 10, 2017 – 5:30 p.m.  
Council Chambers – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Aldermen Gonzalez, Witte, Andreano, Dougherty, Crawford, Smith, and George.  
Others: Mayor William Aiello; Nicholas DiCerbo, Jr., City Attorney; Keri Kerper, Community Development Program Coordinator; Bob Ring, Director of Public Works; Jeff Rowley, Police Chief; Jeff Belt, SolEpoxy, Inc., and Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

Alderman Gonzalez began by introducing Mr. Belt, who brought a presentation regarding the proposed Olean Farmers' Market. He stated that a permanent farmers' market in the downtown could be a very good thing for the community.

Mr. Belt stated that the idea for a permanent downtown farmers' market first came from the Mayor about two years ago. He stated that at SolEpoxy, Inc., he spoke with the college interns that were there over the summer, and the general consensus was that a permanent farmers' market, with additional features such as those proposed, is what they would most like to see added to Olean's downtown.

He continued in stating that he had a feasibility study done for the previous proposed location on Whitney Avenue, and it just wasn't a feasible option. He stated that the market would serve more than just Olean, but also the surrounding area. Most markets serve those from a 10 to 15 mile radius, but we are looking to serve those from a larger area. The corner of State and Union is the busiest intersection in the County, so from a planner's lens, the placement of the market in Lincoln Park seemed quite desirable.

He stated that although the park is well maintained by the City, it has been sliced into and neglected for users. It would be an ideal place to repurpose not only as a park, but also as the permanent market. In addition, the Municipal Building is a beautiful midcentury modern piece of architecture that would be desirable to view from the market. The mall is not interested in a permanent structure, and the considerations on Delaware, Whitney, and on railroad property did not work out, so this seemed like the ideal option.

He stated that he looked at structure for a permanent farmers' market in Northern California, and the thought was that a similar structure could be put into the park. The current five foot sidewalk on the side of the park that borders South Street would need to be widened to fifteen feet. Trucks could back up to the sidewalk to unload under the structure and set up tables, and one of the current REAP farmers tested the idea, ensuring that a large truck could be backed up on the roadway to position correctly.

He presented to the Council a PowerPoint that included a concept from a local architect. A permanent kiosk would cover the sidewalk portion at the rear of the park along South Street, and a child play area would be located under the large oak tree in the park. The play area would consist of passive play spaces with rubberized surfaces. In addition, there is a possible area for lawn games, or the area could be used for pop up tents for overflow vendors. He stated that there is a great gazebo in the park that could be used for performances. It could be improved to allow for a larger area for live music and small orchestras.

The architect who worked on the design has three small children, and to give a sense of space and protection, she recommends an iron fence and shrubbery, with benches set into the shrubbery, to provide a barrier from the busy roadway. Also, there was a suggestion of restrooms to be built in the parking bays.

Another portion of the park would be used as an outdoor bistro. There would not be a full outdoor kitchen, but rather a small area for food preparation, with most of the prep to be done by the restaurant at their location prior to coming to the park. The bistro would be rented by the week to local restaurants, with a marquis to announce the restaurant and limited menu that is being offered.

In speaking with the farmers, he stated that there was a consensus to make the sidewalk area wider for the safety of those who are shopping their products.

He stated that the fencing idea includes a knee wall and fence, which is a great way to approach the protection concerns. He stated that there is an idea that the fence could be made out of materials that are tied to our area, such as drill bits, or logging implements. The design could reflect local taste and history.

He stated that the winter season is very beautiful and very well handled in the City. In New York City's Bryant Park, they hold a winter market. The Olean market could adopt smaller, portable glassed in kiosks, which will give artisanal retailers an opportunity to sell during the holiday shopping season.

He stated that we already have a lot of strong assets in downtown Olean, and a permanent farmers' market could become a signature attraction for the City. It will rebuild the value of the location, and incentivize surrounding owners to reinvest.

He stated that the next step is to develop an RFP for an architecture firm, and solicit for architectures to do the development. He questioned if our funding stack is pretty solid, and Mayor Aiello replied that it is.

Alderman Andreano stated that she likes the idea of the lawn games and children's play area. She knows, as a parent, that you would not want your small children to get far away from you. She isn't sure if she likes the idea of using pop up tents for overflow, which could create a negative contrast with the beautiful permanent structure. Mr. Belt stated that this has really been talked about back and forth, and he wants to illicit conversation. The RFP for the architect will include a public input period prior to final plans being created.

Alderman Witte questioned if there have been conversations with the Rotary Club. They had built the gazebo in the park, and they have expressed interest in doing updates to the structure. Mr. Belt replied that there has been very minor conversation with the group, but that there will be more discussion in the future. Mayor Aiello stated that he had spoken with the Rotary Club about the gazebo, and they are interested in aiding in its updating and expanding.

Alderman Crawford stated that this has been a beautiful presentation and a great concept. There are beautiful parks throughout the City, and he would like to see them utilized more. This is a great idea. He also likes the idea of utilizing the park in the winter. It is a great idea that is not far from the walkable downtown. He questioned, however, where patrons would park if the farmers utilized the spaces on South Street.

Mr. Belt replied that there is an idea in the works to calm the State Street and Barry Street intersection. Perhaps a mini roundabout would reduce the crossing distance, and would allow the use of spaces on both sides of State Street and Barry Street. He stated that with the walkability enhancement and traffic calming, more spaces will be created, and there will be access to parking spaces that people will now find to be more convenient.

Alderman Crawford questioned how many spaces are available, compared to those who currently partake in the market. Mr. Belt replied that the farmers currently believe that there are 12 to 14 regular vendors, and they feel that there will be more when this idea takes off.

Alderman Gonzalez stated that he really likes the stall design. He wonders if there is a way to engineer the structure so that it can be fit for enclosed spaces in the winter months. Mr. Belt stated that it is an idea that they can challenge the architects in the RFP to conceptualize. They envision having power and plug in points, as well as infrared heaters for the winter months.

Alderman Gonzalez stated that he would like the structure to look like the picture, and not like an extra large bus stop. Mr. Belt stated that, as shown in the slideshow, the smaller outdoor kiosks do seem to be like "attractive" bus shelters. He believes that they will be in the park only for the winter months, and then they will be stored. An interesting idea would be to have panels that would install onto permanent kiosks during the winter months only. He stated that architects will be much better at this than he is, and that public input will certainly be considered during the planning process.

Mr. Ring questioned if the RFP will be for just the structure, or for the whole park. Mr. Belt suggested doing the entire project in one RFP.

Alderman Andreano questioned the audience how they felt about the project, and the general consensus was that it is a great idea.

In response to a question regarding the impact on City of Olean employee parking, Mr. Belt replied that the only anticipated change is that they will have partial cover of their vehicles, making them easier to clean during winter months.

Alderman Gonzalez questioned where we go from here. Mr. Belt replied that the architect that had aided him with the current drawings will work with Ms. Kerper and Mr. Ring to prepare an RFP. Ms. Kerper advised the Council that a SEQR would have to be done, and paperwork will need to be updated with DASNY and other funding agencies in the meantime.

Mr. Belt stated that he just need the go ahead from the Council, and the general consensus was to begin the RFP process.

Alderman Smith stated that he is glad that they have already broached the ideas for overflow. He feels if this really takes off, people should be able to bring in their own tents, rather than the City having to build another million dollar structure.

Mayor Aiello stated that a waiting list is a good thing. If we do end up opening the market up more days during the week, we can look into alternative ideas for employee parking.

Alderman George questioned if we have anyone in place to manage the market, and Mr. Belt stated that the Chamber of Commerce may be taking the role. Mr. Sorokes of the Chamber of Commerce confirmed that they had expressed interest in aiding with the project. He is interested in making this successful. He would also like to see the overflow lead consumers into the downtown area. He does get nervous, though, with random pop up tents all over the park distracting and changing the look of what we have worked towards.

Alderman Gonzalez questioned how this project works with the newly awarded DRI. Mr. Belt stated that this project already has a \$1 million funding stack, although Lincoln Park was included in the Park Master Plan with the DRI application. He stated that well maintained parks that are activated are worth more, and hold their value. A number of park improvements were included in the Master Plan.

He continued in stating that he believes that we should be able to get most of or all of the project paid for with the monies already allocated. Money was also asked for in other funding requested for traffic calming at the State Street and Barry Street intersection. Alderman

Gonzalez stated that he just wants to make sure that this market is done in conjunction with the plan of a bigger project, and Mr. Belt replied that it is part of the bigger vision for Olean.

Alderman Crawford stated that the placement of the market is a wonderful idea, with the busy intersection and the potential to increase traffic flow to the downtown. He stated that this is a fabulous concept.

The work session closed at approximately 6:20 p.m.