

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Tuesday, February 20, 2018 – 5:30 p.m.

Police Training Room – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Members: Chairman Gonzalez, Alderman Witte, and Alderman Crawford. Others: Alderman Dougherty; Alderman George; Mayor William Aiello; Nicholas DiCerbo, Jr., City Attorney; Fred Saradin, City Auditor; Bob Ring, Director of Public Works; Jeff Rowley, Police Chief, and Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

1. Roll Call

Alderman Gonzalez called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present except Aldermen Andreano and Smith, who were excused.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Committee Meeting (Tuesday, February 6, 2018)

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2018 meeting was made by Alderman Gonzalez, seconded by Alderman Crawford. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

None

4. New Referrals for Consideration

a. Railroad Presentation – Front Street and Queen Street Overpass Alterations

Alderman Gonzalez introduced Carl Belke, the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Engineer for the Western New York and Pennsylvania Railroad (WNYPRR).

Mr. Belke stated that for over two years, he has been working on a grant package from the New York State Department of Transportation, and WNYPRR was awarded funding for concrete restoration for five bridges along the New York Railroad. This includes the Queen Street bridge near its intersection with Seneca Avenue.

He explained that he had met with the city several weeks ago regarding several issues and potential work to be done as a result of the grant funding. Mayor Aiello mentioned the issues with the Front Street bridge, as it has been hit by several trucks. He agrees that raising the bridge in order to prevent further “hits” would be beneficial, because although there is little possible way for a truck to damage the bridge, Federal Law requires reinspection of the bridge each time it is hit. This is costly and time consuming.

Mr. Belke continued that he suggested using the DOT funding for the Queen Street bridge on Front Street, and then closing the Queen Street bridge. The Mayor recommended leaving a pedestrian underpass at Queen Street, which can certainly be done.

Mr. Belke stated that he has looked into the Front Street bridge to see, from a railroad engineering standpoint, if it can be raised. He found that it could be raised eighteen inches from its current position (anything more than eighteen inches could create issues with the grade). He stated that if more is needed, the highway would need to be lowered at the cost of the City.

He explained that the Railroad's portion of the work could be done with little traffic interference, as most of the work will be done from above the highway.

Mr. Belke continued that the Queen Street closing would eliminate a dangerous intersection. Also, any time that a bridge can be eliminated, another major article is off the list of things that needs to be inspected and repaired.

Mr. Belke presented an agreement to the Council that covers all of the issues that need to be covered. He noted that the Southern Tier Rail Authority is included in the agreement, as the contract with the DOT for funding is through them, and the WNYPRR is the subcontractor in the funding agreement. He stated that, basically, the Railroad would like in writing that they have the authority to close the Queen Street underpass to vehicles in order to cause issues down the road.

Alderman Witte questioned what the plans are for the Queen Street bridge. Mr. Belke stated that the Railroad is working with C&S Engineers from Syracuse, who would engineer a pedestrian underpass and fill in remaining portions of the underpass. They would ensure that the walkway will blend with the sidewalk so as not to drop pedestrians onto the street. The ugly, chipped concrete that is currently there will no longer be seen.

Alderman Crawford questioned who would own the new pedestrian underpass. Mr. Belke responded that it would continue to be the property of the Railroad, and they would continue to be responsible for maintenance.

Mr. Belke stated that the pedestrian underpass will need to stay under 10 feet wide at the opening, as anything over ten feet wide is considered a bridge. An opening of less than 10 feet would be considered a "culvert" by the Railroad and would be held to different standards. He stated that the underpass will be ADA compliant. In response to a question by Alderman Gonzalez, he stated that they would need to figure out how to get electrical services into the underpass, but that it should be illuminated.

Alderman Witte questioned what would be done with the street itself leading up to this area. Mayor Aiello stated that Mr. Ring will need to figure out something down the road, but that this work would be on the City's end, not the Railroad's.

Alderman Gonzalez questioned how far down the street would need to go if the Railroad raises the Front Street bridge up by 18 inches. Mr. Ring replied that it is safe to say that it will need to be lowered a foot, which will not be difficult. Mr. Belke added that lowering the roadway by a foot would not affect the footers on the bridge. Mr. Ring stated that the Railroad would do their portion of the work in 2018, and the City could follow up in the next year. He suggests waiting on planning until the Railroad's portion of the work is completed.

Mr. Belke explained that after the Council approves the agreement, he will need to approach the DOT with the changes. He stated that if the City and the Railroad go to the DOT with a far better plan than what was originally proposed, he would be amazed if the DOT would not agree to the changes.

Alderman Crawford asked how many accidents occur per year at this bridge, and Chief Rowley responded that there are six or so a year. Mayor Aiello added that this does not necessarily include all of the motor homes that drive under the bridge and lose their air conditioning units on the way.

Mr. Belke questioned if there are issues with fire trucks driving under the bridge, and Mayor Aiello responded that the ladder truck does not fit under the bridge. Alderman Gonzalez asked if the changes proposed would allow the truck to fit, and Mayor Aiello stated that they would.

Alderman Crawford questioned if lowering the roadway could be done in house or if an outside contractor would need to be hired. Mr. Ring replied that he hasn't really thought about it, but it wouldn't be very costly to work only on this section of roadway. It could also be done as a part of a bigger project involving more or all of Front Street.

Mr. Belke stated that the Railroad proposal requires no expenses of the City, except that of traffic control. Lowering the roadway is to be done on the City's own dime, but nothing additional has to be done by the City in order for the bridge to be raised. Their completion of the project does not require the City to complete theirs. Nothing binds the City to their part of the project.

A PL and Resolution will be introduced at the February 27, 2018 meeting for a vote.

b. Discussion – Pedestrian Safety Action Plan Grant Application

Mr. Ring stated that he would like to apply for this grant, and he needs the Council's permission to do so. This is a no match grant for which he intends to apply for between \$400,000 and

\$500,000. The grant allows a recipient to spend \$65,000 on a signalized intersection, \$25,000 on a beacon controlled intersection, and \$6,000 on a non signaled intersection. He will need to look at proposed intersection improvements closer to determine the amount of funding he will be requesting.

Alderman George questioned if part of this grant is to pay for bump outs as previously discussed, and Mr. Ring stated that it is. The focus is more, however, on signaled intersections. Also, he could request \$500,000, and be awarded a lesser amount.

Alderman Witte questioned if there is a problem in individual wards, should the Aldermen bring them to Mr. Ring's attention. Mr. Ring responded that they could. He stated that there are only a couple of things that the grant will not allow the City to do if the funding is awarded. The most important is that it will only apply to existing crossings, and new crossings cannot be added.

Alderman Crawford questioned if this is a reimbursement grant, and Mr. Ring stated that it is. The Department of Transportation is good about reimbursements. Generally, reimbursements can be applied for after phases of the project are completed. All phases of the project are covered by the grant.

Mr. Ring stated that the grant application is due March 9, 2018. He feels that it is likely that the City will be awarded some funding, but it is not a guarantee.

Alderman Crawford reminded the Council to notify Mr. Ring of problem intersections. Mr. Ring stated that it is beneficial to focus on school and park areas.

A motion to temporarily adjourn the meeting was made by Alderman Gonzalez, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:00 p.m.

Meeting reconvened at 6:35 p.m.

- c. PL #12-18: (Aiello) That the City of Olean adopts the Policy Guidelines and Operating Plan for the Microenterprise Assistance Program implementing New York State Office of Community Renewal Grant #841ME90-17.

A motion to refer PL #12-18 to the Committee of the Whole was made by Alderman Gonzalez, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

- d. PL #13-18: (Aiello) To authorize the Mayor to execute a sub-recipient agreement with Olean Business Development for the City of Olean Microenterprise Assistance Program.

A motion to refer PL #13-18 to the Committee of the Whole was made by Alderman Gonzalez, seconded by Alderman Crawford. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

5. Approval of Committee Reports

A motion to approve committee reports was made by Alderman Gonzalez, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Gonzalez, seconded by Alderman Witte. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:40 p.m.