

PRESENT Mayor Welch, Deputy Mayor Eydt, Trustee Coppins, Trustee Gibson, Law Counsel Leone, Superintendent Wills, Engineer Marino, Police Captain Salada, Clerk Fundis, Treasurer Longwell, Deputy Clerk Vazquez, Historian Piper

EXCUSED Trustee Conde

CALL TO ORDER Mayor Welch called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:03pm

RESIDENTS **Chuck Barber of 475 Ridge Street** said he is here to speak on behalf of Queen B's Cottage, who is currently unable to have an A-frame/vertical sign on Center Street to direct traffic. I was under the impression that this was incorporated in the law. I understand that the property is not on Center Street, but it is very close. I would like to ask the board to take into consideration to allow a sign on Center Street. The property was previously occupied by the Lewiston Council on the Arts, but that was not retail. This property is a unique place that has a clear walk through, and we need people to be able to see where we are.

Mayor Welch said that we created the A-frame/vertical sign law to help the businesses. Queen B's cottage is on Ridge Street and not fronting Center Street. Our code has a law that does not permit signs off premises. Everyone is always welcome to apply for a variance with the Zoning Board of Appeals.

OLD BUSINESS **Public Art Project - Mural/Art Frame Proposal**

Lee Simonson of the De-Sign Committee said we want to protect the character of the Village of Lewiston; we want less on Center Street rather than more. The proposed art tower frames can have significant consequences on the character of the village and its history. I am asking the Village Board to table this discussion, and refer to the Historic Preservation and Planning Commissions, as well as NYS DOT. I am prepared to debate the pros and cons tonight, but feel this should go to the appropriate committees and give people the opportunity to speak.

Artist Dan Buttery, clarified that these are not art towers; they are a living art gallery through Lewiston funded by Greenway. This project will inspire local artists, including middle school and high school students. These display cases are to help promote and sell the artists' work and to host art galleries; this ties in everything with the sculptures and benches for the public art project. What on Center Street is from 1820; not Tops, not CVS, not Key Bank. Center Street is a conglomerate of artists. This is a good thing to help artists showcase their work. The original design was for nine foot poles, I have changed the design to eight feet, which is the same height of the light posts. The proposal is for ten double sided frames; twenty pieces of artwork can be displayed in portrait or landscape. The versatile frames are designed to turn ninety degrees and lock in place.

Mayor Welch said we initially started an art committee to work on bringing more art into the village, and to tie it into the bike path. As a hub for the bike path, we want Academy Park to display the artwork along the walkway on Center Street. Lewiston Porter students have art shows on display that normally only their family gets to see. This would be a nice opportunity for residents to see the students work as well. Welch suggested that the art frames be placed in Academy Park, and not along Center Street.

Lee Simonson said we are doing something that should be discussed. I am asking you to take a step back, take a breather. We need to have the opportunity to work through this.

A discussion ensued on the art frames and the historic character of the village, as well as concerns about the art frames not being permitted on Center Street by NYS Department of Transportation.

Trustee Coppins suggested the art frames to be placed outside of Artpark or on the bike path, and possibly the park next to the library; they are not for Center Street.

Dan Buttery suggested the art frames be placed at Academy Park along Center Street, flanking the Spirit of Victory Monument that will be relocated here.

Resident Doreen Albee of 320 South 7th Street who is also a member of the Planning Commission addressed concerns regarding sign regulations that may apply to the art frames, as well as concerns of the art frames being placed in the NYS DOT right of way.

Mayor Welch clarified; these are not signs, they are art pieces.

Lewiston Council on the Arts Director, Maria Fortuna-Dean said placement for the signs has not been determined. We have the opportunity for \$90,000 in funding to make this unique destination that would draw people in even during the off season. These art frames would allow for at least four art openings a year. This project is to help provide support for our businesses and community. I would hate to lose the momentum on this project. Greenway's idea is to draw people in and experience all that Lewiston has to offer; history, beautiful landscape, art, diversity, etc. I hope that the positioning of the art frames will not stall the project.

Fortuna-Dean read a support letter written by Lewiston Porter Superintendent, Paul Casseri:

Dear Members of the Village of Lewiston Trustees,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Lewiston-Porter Central Schools to express our strong support for the Lewiston Public Art Project being championed by the Lewiston Council for the Arts. Our educational institution recognizes the intrinsic value of the arts in shaping the character and identity of a community, and we believe that the proposed project will enhance our town's reputation as a hub for culture, history, and artistic expression.

The Lewiston Council for the Arts, through its ongoing commitment to nurturing an environment ripe for art and cultural activities, has consistently demonstrated how the arts can be a catalyst for positive change, enrichment, and community building. Lewiston's identity as an artistic and historic community is a testament to this, and the proximity of our beautiful Shoreline Trail further emphasizes the potential of integrating nature and art to create memorable experiences for both residents and visitors.

The Lewiston Public Art Project promises to weave art into the fabric of daily life. By initiating casual encounters with beauty, imagination, and creativity, it seeks to foster inspiration, connection, and a renewed appreciation for the world around us. The three-tiered approach-comprising the Mural at Academy Park, the Lewiston Living Art Gallery, and the Artistic benches for the Niagara Shuttle Stops-is a thoughtful strategy to usher in a seamless blend of art and functionality.

As educators, we believe in the transformative power of art. Exposing our students to such projects not only enriches their aesthetic appreciation but also encourages critical thinking, imagination, and a deeper connection to their community. The proposed artworks along Academy Park, Center Street, and the shuttle stops will become focal points for discussions, school trips, and community activities. It will provide students with tangible examples of how art can reshape spaces, drive tourism, and become landmarks of pride. The Lewiston Council for the Arts has reached out to the school for direct involvement of students in the development of this project. I am excited about the development of this partnership.

The goal of leading participants along a trail that encompasses various parks and significant landmarks serves as an invitation to explore and enjoy the diverse facets of our town. It not only promotes Lewiston's rich heritage and natural beauty but also extends the stay of visitors, enhancing local businesses and community interaction.

The Lewiston-Porter Central Schools wholeheartedly endorses the Lewiston Public Art Project. We believe that this initiative will significantly augment the town's cultural landscape, foster community pride, and further solidify Lewiston's position as a destination for art and culture enthusiasts. We look forward to seeing the

project come to fruition and are excited about the possibilities it holds for our students and their involvement in the larger community.

Thank you for considering our perspective and for your continued efforts to enhance the vibrancy of our beloved town.

Warm regards,

Paul J. Casseri

Fortuna-Dean explained the process for the curation of art projects, and gave examples of some of the themes and highlighted ideas for the art displays.

Artist Maureen Kellick said the Public Art Project package was presented and voted on. That package is a five-year development for local artist groups. We have many organizations here, from historical groups to garden clubs; there needs to be flexibility and respect. Sixty years before Art Park, the Art Festival drew in a lot of people. The Village of Lewiston has an artistic reputation. I don't think you should feel threatened by a group of artists presenting this idea; there needs to be trust. I would like to see the art groups recognized. I hope we all continue to work together.

Greenway representative, Greg Stevens, said they asked public opinion in 2021-2022 on what they would like to see in the Village of Lewiston; the general consensus was less signs, but want more gardens and art. We had a whole sign package designed for the village but we tapped the breaks and began exploring other ideas with the Village of Lewiston and the Lewiston Council on the Arts. Pendleton uses gardens to define the bike path trail. The Village of Lewiston needs to decide how they want to define the village along the trail. If the Village does not make a decision, Greenway could redirect the trail to go around the village in Artpark instead of going through the village. The village has to come up with an idea on how to represent you.

Simonson said these are eight feet tall art deco towers, this plan runs contrary to the efforts to declutter and remove signs. Art Deco does not promote our heritage; it is 1920 not 1820. We believe Center Street needs fewer objects, rather than more, to preserve and protect our historic streetscape. The images of the proposed design displays modern art in the renderings, but Center Street streetscape is traditional. Lewiston has a reputation for being one of the most historical square miles. It is known for its charm and quaintness. The blue benches should be black; Lewiston should not be a bright colored village. I would like the Historic Preservation and Planning Commission to be given the opportunity to comment on this plan and to see if NYS DOT would even allow this to take place. Simonson said the art frames do not conform with our local historical standards and we ask that you take a second look and allow for more public input.

Mayor Welch said we appreciate your love for history, but the Village of Lewiston is so much more – it is art and culture, not just history.

Trustee Coppins said this proposal should have went through the proper channels.

Resident Eva Nicklas suggested that the art project be expanded; make it bigger, place the art frames in different locations throughout Lewiston.

Brett Coppins and Cindy Sanchez from Lewiston Porter Central School District said that our goal is to have a link between the schools and the community. It would be great for students, even a third grader, to see their artwork on display on Center Street.

Orange Cat Coffee owner, Michael Broderick, submitted the following letter:
'Dear Trustees,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support of the Lewiston Public Art Project.

My excitement for this project is twofold, viewing it from the perspective of a resident and as a business owner.

As many of you may know, Lewiston is not where I was born or raised, but was where I chose to live 21 years ago. My decision came out of my love for what I saw while visiting Lewiston - a blend of art & history, diverse outdoor activity spaces, and the high level of engagement by area residents. The Lewiston Art Project offers a clear path to strengthen our links between all of these wonderful assets.

From my personal experiences, it's obvious that towns and neighborhoods that have accessible public art tend to be more socially energetic, economically viable, and house stronger community bonds. I purposely search out those communities when selecting where to go, where to stay and what do while I'm there. I believe this project would give potential Lewiston visitors one more reason to see all that we have to showcase.

Clearly, Artpark and the LAC already offer so much to enrich our lives, and HAL & our local historians provide opportunities to learn, understand, and respect our past. This project would provide an additional intersection between past, present and future. It would allow us another way to express & build on our individuality, highlight our values & ideas, all while enriching our cultural identity.

I believe the benefits to our tax base, community psyche, and physical world will be immeasurable. A vote in favor of this project is a vote for the future viability of the village we all love.

Respectfully,

Michael Broderick

A motion was made by Trustee Coppins seconded by Trustee Gibson and passed unanimously to table the proposal for eight-foot art frames until the Historic Preservation and Planning Commissions do a proper review.

DISCUSSION

Proposed Law Changes Presented By the Historic Preservation Commission

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor Eydt seconded by Trustee Gibson and passed unanimously to schedule a joint commission meeting with the Village Board of Trustees and Historic Preservation Commission to discuss the proposed law changes.

Historic Tax Credit

A discussion ensued on potential tax credits for historic homeowners. Law Counsel Leone explained that the village could enact a local law for credits to be issued on work done on a historical property that is of a historical nature, but the village is not permitted to grant a tax credit just for owning a historically designated home. The property has to be designated as a landmark and/or a contribution to the character of the neighborhood.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor Eydt seconded by Trustee Gibson and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:16pm.

Shannon Fundis, Clerk