

City of Tonawanda Local Development Corporation (LDC) Meeting Minutes

Date / Time: Tuesday, October 24, 2017 - 5PM

Location: 37 Main Street (Above the Tonawanda Senior Center)
Tonawanda, NY 14150

Board Members Attending: Jason Knight, Alice Roth, John Guido, George Ferber, Fred Foels, Charlie Rech, Jackie Smilinich.

Others in Attendance: Allison Harrington, Roxanne Kise.

1. Call to Order at 5:03

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from September 26, 2017 and Special Meeting on September 19, 2017.

Motion by John, Second by Alice, Jackie and Charlie abstain, 3 in favor.

3. Old Business

- Update on Agreement and 501(c)(3) application by Harrison Studio – Jason, Charlie and Allison met with Chuck Bell and Diane Church from Harrison Studio regarding an agreement between the Community Development Agency (CDA) and the Local Development Corporation (LDC) for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds available (through one year, 2018) and a staffing agreement between the City and the LDC. It was determined that Harrison Studio should move forward with the CDA/LDC funding agreement, focusing on the ‘ask’ rather than getting caught up in a staffing discussion with the City at this time considering that the LDC/Main Street Program has Allison as staff for the duration of the Main Street grant (June 2018). Charlie clarified that the funding agreement for CDBG funding is with the CDA, not the City. Harrison Studio has requested documentation from the CDA and the CDC. Regarding CDC, while the information is available, it is not involved in the agreement in any way. **The CDA documentation has not been located to date, Charlie has made a request to the City Clerk and the City Attorney research the information. During the meeting, it was determined that the LDC would make one request the entire amount available rather than a reoccurring amount.**
- Charlie made a call to Paul D’Orlando to determine if CDBG annual funding can be distributed directly to the LDC. Each year the City submits applications for CDBG funding and typically gets \$100,000. The City Engineer, Jason LaMonaco, submits the application. This year Jason LaMonaco submitted an application for two projects, each at \$100,000.
 - The City of Tonawanda is part of the CDBG Consortia Communities. Money from this usually is used for sidewalks/roads, etc.

- CDBG funding has three components: project-based money, low to moderate income household money, and economic development money. Ken Swanekamp has control of the economic development money, which typically goes to a project. So, if there was a project that was underway, a transformational project, that needed gap funding, that might be an appropriate use for economic development funding.
- **Would like a matrix of where the money comes from and what can be used for (project funding, organizational funding, operational funding).**
- Status of the 501(c)3 is that Harrison Studios needed to develop a budget for the organization to include in the 501(c)3 package, but that the budget would look significantly different whether or not an agreement could be made between the LDC and the CDA. **Discussed requesting Harrison Studio move forward with a straightforward budget in the 501(c)3 package that listed funding as in-kind from the City rather than waiting for the agreement between the LDC and CDA to be completed.** Harrison Studio was also waiting for the official adoption of the Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Conflict of Interest Policy: Motion to adopt the City of Tonawanda Local Development Corporation Conflict of Interest Policy (Prepared and submitted by Harrison Studio on 7/27/17). **Motion by Alice, Second by Fred, All in Favor.**
- Terms for Existing Board Members determine: 2-year term for Alice Roth, 3-year term for John Guido and 4-year term for Jason Knight. **Motion by Alice, Second by George, All in Favor.**
- Determination of Officers: Jason Knight as Chair, Alice Roth as Vice Chair, Jackie Smilinich as Secretary and John Guido as Treasurer. **Motion by Charlie, Second by Fred, All in Favor.**
- Discussion of the relationship between the LDC and Tonawanda Main Street. Currently Tonawanda Main Street is a committee of the LDC. On the existing organizational chart, the people listed as members are the original board members. Committee membership will be changed to all Board members and the LDC's primary focus is Tonawanda Main Street. At each Board meeting, we will have an agenda item that is the Tonawanda Main Street Committee, ensuring a focus on the downtown and the completion of the Main Street grant. As the LDC evolves, this may shift and Tonawanda Main Street would be one of several focus areas, potentially having the Historic Preservation, Economic Development and Marketing Committees as subcommittees to the Tonawanda Main Street Committees. Currently, the Board does not want to lose the work that has been put into developing the momentum of Tonawanda Main Street. The main street program is also where our funding is, so it makes sense to maintain this focus. In addition, downtown is important to the development of the community, so even as the LDC expands its role, downtown will still need to be a focus.
- Currently Tonawanda Main Street has a mission and vision, but the LDC does not. **Allison will draft a broad mission/vision statement for review at the next Board meeting.**
- Charlie to be added to Historic Preservation Committee, Economic Development Committee and Marketing Committee.

- Regarding the Auction at Automotive Plus (74 Main Street) on Saturday, October 28th at 10 am. Charlie spoke with Erik Lindhurst, the City’s Building Inspector, and currently the building has a variance for its current use. If someone else buys the property and maintains this use within a year, the variance remains. If the new owner changes to another use, the variance is removed. The property was a gas station prior to the current use, oil tanks were removed in 2004. Concern that even if the tanks were removed, new owner is still liable for any other potential environmental cleanup not yet found (though the site is listed on the auction website as inactive). There is no Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) within the City of Tonawanda. **The auction is onsite, Charlie will leave the Training Session on Saturday to go to the auction.**
- Tonawanda Main Street Training Session – Roxanne spoke with Bill from the Pennsylvania Downtown Center who will be conducting the session. The program will include interaction with the Board and Committees. We will discuss goals of the Board/Committees (a good precursor to the review of the Tonawanda Main Street work plans). The session will focus on the Committees first, in case business owners need to leave early to open stores. The session has been advertised publicly, inviting anyone interested in joining our efforts. Roxanne suggested that it is important to keep track of educational opportunities that have been provided as it may help with the designation as a 501(c)3. Charlie has a key for the Senior Center (where we will be having the event) and the City will be providing coffee and donuts for the event. Estimate of people is about 20. Mayor will attend the event and kick off the session by giving an overview of how the program fits into the various other planning and development efforts of the City (Comprehensive Plan, LWRP, etc.).
- Tactical Event is set for November 2nd from 5 to 7:30 and has received some good press. Business owners were very agreeable to the event. Charlie is coordinating with a planning group to have their meeting downtown Tonawanda on November 2nd. **Requested the lights on the trees along Main Street be refreshed for the event as it will be getting dark during the event, but the City is unable to get to it until around Thanksgiving. Charlie to follow up on the request.**
- Entrepreneurial Training Program to be completed as part of the Main Street grant will potentially include two elements, one for existing business owners in the main street area and one for prospective business owners in the main street area. Roxanne talked to Pathstone, a non-profit group that was initially engaged during the development of the grant to conduct training sessions. **They are interested in meeting in-person in Rochester, potentially the week of November 6th, specific meeting date to be determined.** Pathstone has worked with the Small Business Association (SBA) before and could partner with them. George, who participated in the SBA/Small Business Development Center (SBDC)/Tonawandas Chamber of Commerce program that was held in the City of Tonawanda this past Spring, would like to attend the meeting with Pathstone. Allison has contacted the Director of the Tonawandas Chamber of Commerce to coordinate with their efforts. Roxanne discussed the significance of having a program in the City of Tonawanda, rather than directing people out of the City to

complete training sessions as well as the importance of offering business development programs.

- The City is not submitting for an Erie Canalway grant, but will look to submit next year.
- **Tonawanda Main Street Work Plan Review will be conducted on Monday, November 13th at 10 am in the Tonawanda Main Street office (37 Main Street).** All Board members available are welcome/encouraged to attend. The results of the meeting will be presented to the Board.

4. New Business

- Small Business Saturday – Determined that we would not be hosting an event, but would promote any event/specials that businesses in Tonawanda are running on that day (including efforts by Cats Like Us, who are Small Business Saturday ambassadors).
- Winter Walk – Downtown Merchants Association of North Tonawanda is moving forward with Winter Walk, teaming with the Oliver Street Merchants Association and calling the event Lumber City Winter Walk. The event is for Saturday only (typically it spans the weekend, including Friday). Suggestion of planning something on Main Street in the City of Tonawanda for Friday night, considering that the City has the tree lighting in Clinton Park on Friday beginning at 6:30 pm. When suggested to the City, concern raised regarding people attending both events and difficulty moving between the two. Board suggested starting at Clinton Park and ending at the Senior Center for cookies and hot chocolate. Marketing Committee to discuss at the meeting tomorrow night (October 25th). Historic Preservation Committee had suggested focusing on seasonal smells (e.g. roasted chestnuts). Suggest to North Tonawanda cross-promotion of events, potentially having coupons on Friday for activities on Saturday, promoting the spirit of the season.
- Senior Center Building – roof is leaking, discussed at Council meeting replacing the roof at \$50,000 cost, City Treasurer to put it in the budget.
- Joe Hogenkamp interested in either becoming a Board member or a financial advisor, whatever is allowable given that he is the City's Treasurer. Board didn't necessarily see a conflict of interest in him being a Board member. Joe doesn't make financial decisions of the City; the Council makes the decisions. **He is welcome to be a financial advisor (non-voting member) and will look to obtain a legal recommendation regarding conflict of interest either from Harrison Studio or DOS contact regarding LDCs provided by Roxanne.**
- City would like to do another Community Development Workshop inviting all Board/Committee member to present to the City the existing planning efforts including the Comprehensive Plan, LWRP, Main Street Program, LDC, Housing Program, etc. Workshop will be conducted in January.

Next Meeting Date: November 28, 2017 at 5:00 pm. Motion to close the meeting by Alice, Second by John, all in favor. Meeting closed at 6:22.