

Special Meeting – March 4, 2013 – Proposed Recreation / Senior Center

PRESENT: Supervisor Reiter; Councilmembers Bax, Marra and Winkley, Deputy Supervisor Catlin; Town Attorney Dowd; WWTP Chief Oper. Ritter; Building Inspector Masters, Highway Superintendent Janese; Town Engineer Smith, Police Chief Salada; Finance Officer Johnson; approximately 171 residents, 2 Press; and Clerk Donna Garfinkel

EXCUSED: Councilman Palmer

Supervisor introduced Gary Rose, Recreation Center Committee to address residents. Rose thanked everyone for taking time to attend the meeting.

Approximately 2 ½ years ago, the Town inquired about forming a committee to conduct a feasibility study for the potential development of a Recreation and Senior Center building in the Town of Lewiston.

A diverse group was formed that consisted of accountants, athletic directors, professional sport coaches, business professionals, doctors, environmentalists, lawyers, politicians. The group was to represent a community and county wide cross section of different interests and idea. After six-months of meetings, assessment and research the group concluded there is a need for a regional multi-purpose recreation and senior center in Lewiston. The climate here offers less than 4-months of good weather for outdoor recreation activities and the senior population continues to grow.

With the completion of the fact finding mission, the Committee was then paired down to six-members. Rose wants everyone to know the time and detail that was spent on virtually every concept of the building was reviewed and re-reviewed to assure every component of the facility was addressed from turf to lighting, to HVAC to the size and configuration of the lockers. A lot of time has been spent on this.

In late August of this past year, the Town sent out a Public Request for Proposals to owners of property that could be used as a site location for the Center. Many factors were looked at in the selection process, to include location, pricing, access to major transportation arteries and environmental impacts associated with each site and a very important factor of trying not to remove another parcel of property off the Lewiston tax rolls. At this time the Town of Lewiston is currently working on a letter of intent for the sale of the property at Lewiston-Porter. The school district site was selected because the school serves as a central location in the community. The building could have the optimum utilization for the children, adults and seniors for the communities of Town of Lewiston, Village of Lewiston, Porter and Youngstown. This particular location offers enough acreage for the building and needed parking with easy access.

We believe this is a great project. Rose doesn't care if you're Democrat, Republican, from Youngstown or Porter, please remember, this is for the community. This is for the children and our seniors. The Committee has no agenda but to bring forward the best interests of the surrounding communities as best as known how. So Rose asks all to park their political nuances at the door.

The project is proposed to be located in front of the Senior High School with Darryl Johnson Drive to the south, on Creek Road.

There will be an entrance to the Senior Center along with an entrance to the main portion of the facility. The main field encompasses roughly 94,000 square foot of artificial Astroturf for multi sports. There will be football, baseball, lacrosse, soccer, and volleyball. This can be divided to accommodate multiple sports at one time.

There is a full hardwood basketball court, with six baskets, behind the concession area. There is a multipurpose facility. It is a boarded field that will accommodate box lacrosse, dry land ice hockey training, volleyball and small size soccer games. This area can be used for youth activities.

The concession stand, locker rooms for men and women, office, management and retail space are located in the center of the facility.

On the second floor there is an open-deck view. Every aspect of the building can be seen from this.

In regards to the Senior Center, 10,000 baby boomers will retire each day for the next 19-years straight. Seniors are the fastest growing segment of our population. Believe it or not the fastest growing age is 85+. Rose believes Lewiston can do better than the Senior Center it currently has. Seniors are more active than ever. Research increasingly suggests today's and tomorrow's senior may have different expectations and needs than those that currently shape the centers that exist today. In the four surrounding communities there are approximately 4,100 seniors that are 65 and older living alone.

The Center portion will have a computer room, library sitting area with a fire place, large kitchen area, first-aid station, exercise room and a café.

Reiter informed residents the money for the Center comes from the NYPA re-licensing Greenway fund. The Greenway mission statement promotes projects for the preservation, enhancement and development of world-renown scenic, natural, historic, cultural and recreational resources of our community. The Greenway funds will allow the same or better recreational opportunities enjoyed by other towns, such as Tonawanda or Amherst and without taxpayers covering the cost.

Other worthy projects being completed in past years are park improvements, seasonal recreational activities such as the ice rink; and monuments being erected honoring Lewiston's rich history.

This Center will provide an ongoing intangible recreational resource for all residents of all ages for years to come.

All of the Greenway fund money will not be used on this one project. The Town will still present other greenway activities to the Committee. "The real question is not how will we take advantage of our funds, but when?" This is why the meeting was called tonight, to give residents an opportunity to speak.

Supervisor opened the meeting to residents.

Ireland, Tim – 410 Kenwood Drive – President of Niagara Pioneer Soccer. Ireland thanked the community and the Town for the hard work in bringing this proposal forward. It is a wonderful addition to the community. Niagara Pioneer Soccer has been in existence in the Town of Porter and Lewiston for approximately 40-years. There are about 800 families that participate in the league. There are 18 leagues currently in a winter league which Niagara Pioneer pays approximately \$18,000 to participate in at a complex out of the area. These resources could be directed to this complex.

Ireland reviewed other local complexes, in regards to soccer in the area. This complex could arbitrarily, in a single quarter of soccer, generate \$136,000 - \$140,000 in revenue. From an economic stand-point this is a great venture for the Town. From a quality of life standpoint this is good for all, young, old, families.

The Board of Directors for the Niagara Pioneer Soccer is currently in conversation to figure out a way to direct some resources for equipment purchases for the Center.

Minicucci, Robert – 453 Woodland Court, Youngstown – Minicucci thanked the Board for allowing him to speak. Minicucci appreciates the work all boards do. Appreciates the building of the Lewiston Recreation / Senior Center. Minicucci has three children, business owner and a proud son of one of the greatest generations, Nichols Minicucci Sr.

Minicucci is in health care. He is honored and blessed to work daily with the maturing population and the disabled. Minicucci truly believes it is the community's obligation to support and uphold our children, who are the future, and to respect and honor those who have come before us.

As a community, people must strive to share with these two groups, the youth and seniors, the best there is to offer. Minicucci fully supports the construction of the Lewiston Recreation Senior Center.

Elder care articles highlight the many positive benefits when these two diverse generations interact with each other. They learn with and from each other, build memorable relationships, and spend time together to become the fabric of our community. Caring for our seniors, giving them the best this new facility has to offer, is the right thing to do. A place to play and to practice adds value to our community and to our quality of life.

Minicucci can see no negative to the building of this complex. Only envisions a place where grandparent and grandchild, maturing neighbor and the new kid on the block will meet.

When potential homebuyers look into moving to Lewiston, they research the schools, they sample the culture activities; they look for places to worship. They look for surround beauty; our escarpment; our river; our lake, they certainly fill that tall order.

Let's add to our walking paths and our parks. Let's build the facility so generations can grow together. Let the Lewiston Recreation Senior Center be another feather in the head-dress which is the Lewiston-Porter community. This is a win, win.

Deal, Thomas – 4645 Perry Court – Deal is the father of three daughters who are actively involved in sports, and continues to coach their teams when possible. Deal works with the Town and Mike Dashineau, for years to try and rebuild the softball program. This is a continues struggle, due to the lack of a year-round facility.

Family's have to travel to practice or play to other communities with these types of facilities. As a real-estate broker, everyday Lewiston is competing against the likes of these towns. As great as Lewiston is, having a facility of this type would only enhance the community, attract families and increase property value.

The proposed location is perfect. Not only does it make the most financial sense, but driving by Lew-Port School on a daily basis, the property sometimes doesn't have that campus feel. With the new building out front, it will give Lew-Port more of a campus feel.

Deal has started an on-line petition in support of the facility, and to date there is over 200 signatures in support of the Center. Deal read four comments. Comments all in support.

DiBernardo, John – 668 Sara Court – Moved to Lewiston about 9-years ago and runs Water Street Landing. In terms of the big picture, this is one of those ideas, with the political climate we are in, were everybody tends to distrust politics and politicians. The fact that all those present are overwhelmingly in support of the Center, means that it is bigger than any political agenda. This is not taking care of infrastructure; this is something that DiBonardo feels will grown and produce a harvest. It will generate excitement and income.

DiBernarado is not here as a business owner, but here because he wants to utilize the Center. When the first forty-eight and over's men's soccer team comes, DiBonardo has \$500 to put the Water Street Landing team in.

Perreault, Dave - 4763 Lower River Road – Perreault is on the Lew-Port Youth Football Board and a member of the Lewiston Recreation Commission. He has three children, and involved with two travel teams. The main reason Perreault is here tonight is because he runs a basketball program at Lew-Port School. Lew-Port lets the program have gym time. Three years ago there were approximately 45 kids, this year there is 105. It is growing and there is a lot of parent involvement, but there is one problem, for 105 kids there's only 6-hours of gym time allotted. There is not enough space. Perreault feels this is a great idea. All the sports programs can grow.

Lombardi, Jason – 4339 Williams Road – Everyone knows the Lombardi name and Jason has been a life-long resident in Lewiston. Lombardi supports the Center. There are only positives that can come out of this by making Lewiston a destination place. The inside facility will be a win - win situation.

Waple, Mark – Varsity Baseball Coach at Lew-Port - Waple congratulated the Town Board for coming together with the School Board to have such a vision. As a baseball coach, Waple is 100% behind the Center. This is a great facility for indoor uses. Sports participants have spent \$1,000's at other places trying to accomplish the same thing.

Waple offers any help the Committee may need.

LaDuca, Mike – 560 Chicora Drive – LaDuca is a life-time residents and a new homeowner with intensions to stay in Lewiston. LaDuca supports the Center. LaDuca and his generation will also enjoy the Center to play intramural sports.

Thank you Town Board members and Committee members for putting this together. It will be a phenomenal addition to the Town.

Bell, Vicki - 5759 West Street - Bell said she lives in Sanborn which actually is part of Lewiston. It is being forgotten that there is another school district in this area, which is Niagara Wheatfield. Those children would have to TRAVEL to get to the facility to use it. The Seniors, who don't like to drive in the winter, down Lewiston Hill or any hill, would have to TRAVEL, and not go in the winter months.

It is a great facility and it would be great for the other residents of Lewiston, great for the residents of Youngstown, but there are 5,000 + residents of Lewiston that live in SANBORN. It has been mentioned that the Center will bring the communities together, but the Committee never even mentions Sanborn. Sanborn is a part of the Town of Lewiston; taxes are paid to the Town of Lewiston. It is a little frustration to hear people say "We have to travel to Wheatfield to go to facilities". Well, Sanborn students will have to travel to get to this facility.

Bell feels it should be centrally located for ALL residents.

Jaruszewski, Kevin -1790 Swann Road – Jaruszewski is the Lewiston-Porter United Teacher President, has worked with just about everyone in the room. Not only does he represent 220+ members, he is also a coach for several sports. The benefits are enormous. It is right in Lew-Port's front yard. It is a win – win situation, there are no negatives. Something can be worked out for transportation.

Glasgow, Paulette – 836 The Circle Drive – Glasgow thanked the Town Board for taking her advice and having this meeting. It is important.

Glasgow looks at this project as being an issue with numerous questions with common sense answers.

1. Do Seniors need a better and improved facility? Of course they do, but Lewiston Seniors love where they are and don't want to move. Would it cost much to improve the present Senior facility? No. The Town has the financial resources right now.
2. Do Lewiston's children need a facility where they can have indoor recreation? Of course they do, but is such a large and costly facility really needed? The children using this facility will be paying off the hefty price tag when they become adults.
3. Do the residents of Lewiston have all the financial information with regards to this project? Has both proposed and future costs of this project been made public to Lewiston residents? No, they have not. There is no financial information relative to this project on the advertised web-sit.

In order for there to be transparency, all financial information relative to this project should be made public. Once the information is available it should not only be put on the recreation centers web-site, it should be put on the Town's website. Once on the site, it should be advertised where the public can go to review that info. It is one thing to say you favor transparency, it is quite another to practice.

4. Do the residents of Lewiston wish their Greenway money to be used for such a purpose? We don't know, that is the whole reason why Glasgow asked about public referendum. 18-years of Greenway funding are being proposed for this project. That is 18-years of Greenway funding that can't be used for any future projects that may come available in the Town. It can't be used for economic development, or job creation.

Glasgow would hope before the Board would think of leveraging such a large sum of money, the Board would give all the public the opportunity, thru a referendum to let you know if they want this project and the money used in this way.

5. Could the Town accomplish all that the project proposes and more, but on a smaller scale without a very large price tag, and without bottoming out 18-years of Greenway funds?

Of course Lewiston can. There is a Field House in Norwich, Conn. It is a 52,000 square-foot indoor facility. They are able to have three sports happening at the same time. There is an added 15,000 square-foot golf simulator and batting cage.

Glasgow is not questioning the need for such a project, but is questioning why it is going to cost such a large hefty cost. Glasgow hopes the Board would scale it down. It should be centrally located.

Angus, William – representing Assemblyman John Ceretto - Read the following.

“I have always felt it was important to support recreation programs in Lewiston. A few years ago when I was Councilman I served as Liaison to both the Senior and Recreation groups for the Town of Lewiston. We supported the first ball diamond owned by Lewiston, and the first skateboard park in Western New York.

This current proposal is particularly positive for Lewiston with the expansion of resident’s services and the inclusion of an indoor walking track for seniors, who will be beneficial during the winter months.

We must always be watchful for taxpayers’ money, and certainly in these difficult times we must be more vigilant. This is an exceptional opportunity to create a valuable community asset without utilizing taxpayers’ dollars. One of the benefits we received with the Power Authority licensing negotiations was the Greenway dollars funded by the Authority as part of their agreement.

I want to publicly state that I support the Towns in order to continue supporting our children, seniors and recreation needs. I appreciate that the Town is having these forums to listen to the public opinions. I know the Town Board will do its best to accommodate the concerns of the residents. I have complete faith that the Supervisor and the Town Board will do what is best for the people in Lewiston and continue to support recreation and seniors.”

Collister, Tom – 554 Greenfield Drive – Collister worked with Boy Scouts, is a coach and is totally in support of the project at any cost. It will provide all an opportunity to interact. Where else can you find a place where seniors, adults and children interact? Collister looks forward to his senior years and having activities/recreation. Does not want to sit for the day and play cards. Plans to live for many years and would like a facility to go.

Magliazo, Diane – 270 North 3rd Street – Is 100% in favor. She has two boys, 25 and 11. Magliazo has been going through the problem of having a sports facility in Lewiston since her older kids were younger. A daily Saturday ritual is approximately 125-miles of driving to gym time. This would solve this problem. The people in Niagara-Wheatfield would drive 10 - 15-miles instead of 40-miles.

Keller, Sharon – 1209 Saunders Settlement Road – Keller is mixed up, thinking this is a referendum on whether or not Lewiston needs a sports place. Yes, Lewiston does. Keller is here in defense of the Senior Center. The Senior Center is where the Seniors like it. Yes it needs a roof and yes another room is needed, but seniors are happy there. It is private, quite, and useful and needs repairs. There is plenty of room for expansion. Keep the seniors where they are. In the last 12-years that Keller has been attending the Center there is less and less people.

The seniors and the kids will not jive. What are the seniors going to feel like when are trying to have their meeting and the kids are bouncing balls next store.

Keller feels it is a bid for the school to get a building that they can’t afford, so let’s combine with seniors, because the State will give you more money for the seniors.

Supervisor Reiter said the Board is not sold on any one idea. It has been discussed to not move the Senior Center.

The Board wants to hear comments and this meeting is a start. All information will come. It is a moveable project with a moveable target. Has the Board made all the decisions yet? Absolutely not. Will there be a referendum? That is up to the public. Does the Board feel the Senior Center has to stay, or make a new Senior Center? This is just a starting point. The Board is absolutely concerned with Sanborn. These are all details that need to be worked out.

This is the time for residents to voice their opinion. Reiter asks for no conflict with each other. Everyone has different ideas and different thoughts. This is just discussion. This is a big endeavour for Lewiston.

The financial data has not all been worked out. Today, approximately \$15,000 has been invested in architects and engineering fees. But a lot of time has been put in by volunteers, committees, boards, groups.

Aversa, Mark - 852 Swann Road – Very involved in sports. Drives from Cleveland to Rochester. Every Sunday to Tonawanda for soccer. Every time they go they say they wish there was something here. The family is excited and in total support.

Soluri, Dick – 250 North 3rd Street – Soluri is here representing New York State Senator George Maziarz and observing. This is very professionally done. Thanks to all the committees for such a great project.

Soluri had an open mind before he arrived, and is very impressed with the homework done. You have to think of the future. If this will help to build and grow the community, it is a great project.

Sarkees, Angelo - 726 Pletcher Road - Sarkees endorses the Recreation Center. Sarkees agrees you can't find a better place for the Senior Center than where it is. It is suggested the seniors encourage the existing Center be repaired and stay there. The parking lot is a good size.

Forney, Skip – 1044 James Drive – Raising three kids in Lewiston. Two of the kids are actively involved in athletics. Forney has been a coach for 25-years, and his primary job is a chauffeur. Days and weekends are designed around which facility the kids have a sport at. If Lewiston could offer a world class facility, Forney would be happier to stay here. There are so many positives and benefits of this project.

Balkinburg, Dan – 851 Oriel Lane – He is one of those 83-year old seniors that everyone has been talking about tonight. He belongs to both Sanborn and Lewiston Seniors. Attends meetings and activities at both.

The Senior Center was originally a church; it is not a Senior Center. There are so many activities constantly happening. The people do not sit there and watch the paint peel off the walls, nor do they go outside and watch the grass grow. There are loads of activities going on, but the space is very limited. On days for the Niagara County nutrition program there could be 72 members.

The Seniors are willing to help design the new building if this is moved forward. They have all kinds of ideas. Balkinburg disagrees with the resident that said the seniors don't want to move.

Seniors are very stubborn, and they like things the way they are. They do not like change. Many of the seniors have been attending activities for 12 – 15-years. It is small and cozy and they know every inch of the building. But when it rains the supply rooms roof leaks.

Skronski, Claire – Plays Niagara Pioneer soccer and it is a long ride to go to the soccer facility in Tonawanda. It would be a lot better at Lew-Port.

Arnold, Francine - 5256 Hewitt Parkway – Moved to Lewiston about 6-years ago from northern Virginia. Has four daughters who play sports. The important thing that is missing is a community center. The Center would have places like computer rooms, socialization, and for the parents to go. Has a mentally retarded daughter, who because of the Community Centers was able to socialize and be part of the community.

Has a 94-year old mother who lives in Erie, Pennsylvania, who goes to a Community Center everyday. Everyone needs to get off the kick that this is just an athletic center. It has its advantages to a lot other people in the community. We need to think of the future not the past.

Dietz, Travis – 510 Pletcher Road – Dietz is in favor of the Recreation Center. In these economic times job creation should be of utmost importance. The last few years have been the slowest years of working in the construction industry in over 20-years. As the Treasurer and Health and Safety Instructor for the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 463, Dietz has witnessed first hand the steady decline of work in this region. Dietz believes the Center would help create jobs for the various tradesmen and women in this area, something that is so desperately needed.

It would create permanent jobs to manage and maintain the Center in the future. The Center would also give people another reason to want to move to Lewiston. The Village, with all the shops, would also benefit from the Center.

The Center will help the local sports teams by having an indoor facility. But the Center will mostly benefit the student athletes. Dietz believe the Recreation Center will help improve the quality of life here in Lewiston.

This should be built for the children. With the society of electronics, social media and childhood obesity at an all time high, a place to exercise instead of being plugged in should be important to all.

Barr, Paul – 877 Ridge Road – Barr thanked all those involved in the creation of the Center. Barr shows his respect to those who have legitimate questions. All the answers are not known yet, but will be addressed. A Center of this magnitude will generate money. This Center will be a place where, no matter your age, you will congregate. This is an investment in our children and seniors.

Sharon Keller suggested any meetings on the Center should be held at the Senior Center. It holds more people and would allow the residents to see the pictures of the Center.

Hasting, Ben – Lew-Port High School student – Supports the Center. An indoor facility would be used greatly.

Brochei, Dennis – 205 North 5th Street – Brochei feels the Center would be an asset just like a library, Fire Dept. or Police Dept. Speaking for himself, not the Village of Lewiston, maybe the Board should consider holding off on the senior portion of the Center and fix up the existing one.

Vicki Bell asked the Board if any member has spoken to the Niagara Wheatfield School Board.

Reiter said some inquiries have been made, but no direct conversations have been held. Reiter said they will be consulted.

Reiter closed public comment.

Reiter notified the Board that the 30-day solicitation period for Lead Agency for the Lewiston Recreation Facility and Senior Center has expired. The Town received responds from Lewiston-Porter School Board and the DEC. Both concur the Town of Lewiston Town Board should be Lead Agency.

Bax MOVED to approve the Town of Lewiston Town Board to be the Lead Agency for the Lewiston Recreation Facility Senior Center, Seconded by Marra and Carried 4 – 0. This commences the 20-day response period.

One-Lot Subdivision – Creek Road – SBL #74.00-1-1

Bax MOVED to accept the recommendation from the Environmental Commission of the Negative Declaration and accepts approval as recommended by the Planning Board for One Lot Subdivision – Creek Road – SBL#74.00-1-1, Seconded by Marra and Carried 4 – 0.

Site Plan – Creek Road – Lewiston Recreation Facility and Senior Center

Bax MOVED to accept the recommendation from the Environmental Commission of the Negative Declaration for the Site Plan for the Lewiston Recreation Facility and Senior Center, Seconded by Marra and Carried 4 – 0.

The Town Board meeting for May has been scheduled for Thursday, May 23, 2013 at 6:00 pm

Marra MOVED to schedule the May meeting for Thursday, May 23, 2013, at 6:00 pm, Seconded by Bax and Carried 4 – 0.

Reiter wants all to know that a lot of work still needs to be done, and a lot of work has already been accomplished. Any and all comments, positive and negative are appreciated. Residents are welcome to speak at any Board meeting.

Marra MOVED to adjourn, Seconded by Bax and Carried 4 – 0. 7:50 pm

Transcribed and Respectfully Submitted By: