

City of Dunkirk

Meeting Minutes

Economic Development Committee

June 26, 2012

Attendees: Board Member Andy Gonzalez, Councilman
Board Member Bill Rivera, Councilman
Board Member Stephanie Kiyak, Council Member-At-Large
Steve Neratko, Director of Planning and Development
Tim Gornikiewicz, CDBG Administrator, Planning and Development Department
Nichole Waite, Planning and Development Department (DLDC)
Mayor A.J. Dolce
Councilwoman Stacy Szukala
City Attorney Ron Szot
Tony Gugino, Director of Public Works
Gib Snyder, Observer
Arlene Langendorfer – Resident
Helen Britt - Resident

Call to Order: 11:00 am

Approval of Last Meeting Minutes:

A motion to approve the meeting minutes of April 24, 2012, was made by Councilman Rivera and seconded by Councilman Gonzalez.

Issues Discussed:

Summer Help Program

Roger Hayden, Director of Personnel, explained the summer help program. Typically, help is hired for Public Works and Parks and Recreation, and encompasses summer youth programs and camp. The process involves submitting an application to the Personnel office, where they are sorted and reviewed by department heads and the mayor. All positions are generally for 14 weeks, with a maximum of a 32-hour pay week. Civil Service is involved in the hiring process, and the mayor assured council that all employment is conditional on passing a drug test and a physical, and it was pointed out that every application would be signed off by Roger that the

applicant passed both tests. It was questioned whether we advertise for these positions and it was answered that no, we do not. It was then suggested that in the future a press release be given to the Observer, in addition to posting positions on the City website. This year, 12 people were hired for the Public Works department, 15 for the Recreation department, 3 for the boat launch and 10-11 lifeguards. The difficulty in hiring lifeguards is due to the certification involved, and it was stated that if there is ever a shortage the park would be closed to swimmers. Resident Arlene Langendorfer commented that she has seen city vehicles being abused – City Attorney Ron Szot and Mayor Dolce both stated that the police should be contacted immediately, as well as placing a call to either or both of them if it should ever be witnessed in the future. Councilman Gonzalez also inquired about the hiring process being skewed in that most applicants are family and friends of people already working for the City. There was no official response made to his inquiry if this is true or not.

Update on Music on the Pier and Festivals

Tim Gornikiewicz provided handouts regarding income and expenses so far for the summer programs (attached). Highlights discussed: Not all sponsorship money has been collected to date. Beer sales and vendor fees are below estimates. Councilwoman Szukala suggested that ice be purchased from local vendors rather than the local grocery store. The report indicates roughly \$9,000 shortage thus far but Tim assured us that it will be made up by the end of the season. The Wreck and Roll has a smaller turnout than expected, probably due to the inclement weather that morning and early afternoon. Beer sales helped income for the City, and the banners were a one-time investment that can be used in the future. It was discussed what might be changed next year – advertising and marketing were brought up. Beer permits are \$36.00 per week per location. Music on the Pier vendors are charged \$25.00, and Wreck and Roll vendors are charged a percentage. It appears that starting Music on the Pier at 5:00 is bringing more traffic so that's working out well. Concerns were brought up about the physical collection of money and how to improve that for next year's Wreck and Roll. Walkie talkies were also suggested to improve communication. It was also suggested that the fire truck (ladder) be used to take aerial pictures of the crowd for the website.

Grant Monies

Steve started with CDBG monies and the fact that HUD has told us that they plan on taking a look perhaps 20 years ago regarding the City handling the projects. It's possible that we will have to reallocate funds that were misappropriated. Steve said that we cannot move forward until we correct the past issues and also come up with a policies and procedures manual. All CDBG funds will be on hold indefinitely (\$480,000+). He went on to discuss some of the HUD concerns, and the fact that the Council's Action Plan is not considered invalid, and that we will need to put together another one for year 2012. In essence, we are "starting over". Steve said that he and the mayor will be meeting with HUD officials at the end of the week, and it was inquired by Councilman Rivera if council could attend – Steve mentioned that Stephanie Kiyak would be attending and that HUD would prefer a small meeting at this time. HUD plans on going back to 1990 in its investigation. It was asked if HUD provides yearly guidelines and Steve said no, it's the City's responsibility to be well versed on their policies and procedures and to seek out information. Steve stressed that we need to do things properly in the future and that

things have been done wrong in the past and also pointed out that the Council's Action Plan is also incorrect (current year). Steve mentioned that Johnson and Mackowiak have given the City a "Clean Bill of Health" in past years, even though that has not been the case. Councilwoman Szukala inquired if there was presently enough help in the Development office and Steve said that no, there is not, but that there is potential funding in the future to help that situation.

Boardwalk

Steve said that everything is going well at the Boardwalk but that there are currently two tenants are behind in their rent. The City has issued 15-day past due notices to both tenants. Tony Gugino mentioned that all the tenants are cooperative and there are no problems to report. It was questioned whether tenants set their own hours and the answer was yes.

Collaborating with Neighborhood Communities

The trolley in Fredonia was talked about. At this point, there are no businesses or non-profits interested in borrowing the trolley because of the fees incurred for insurance and fuel, in addition to the proper licensing needed to drive a vehicle like this (equivalent to a truck or bus).

Steve mentioned that the newest member to join the Chadwick Bay Regional Development Community is Councilman Rivera. He went on to say that there have been talks between the Town of Dunkirk, Portland, Silver Creek and Sheridan regarding sharing water and sewer and coauthoring grants in the future such as CDBG and Competitive grants. Normally we wouldn't be able to apply for Competitive grants alone but together we'd be eligible. A main goal would be "serving neighborhood communities". Steve pointed out that this is probably the first time that communities desire to reach out to join the city.

Steve went on to ask Council to consider what we would like the Development office to focus on in the future. Some examples would be Point Gratiot, an ice-skating rink, a casino, a playground, etc. An ice-skating rink could accommodate skaters as well as ice hockey and street hockey, and the logistics were discussed for a bit. Paddle boats, kayaks and canoe rentals were also mentioned as a possibility. Tony G. also pointed out some needed repairs such as the pavilion roof at Point Gratiot and the boat launch. Steve said that there are decent grants available through CFA application for repairs in a park but they (HUD) want large projects so a roof repair alone wouldn't qualify. Steve then went on to point out that the City has to seriously consider hiring a qualified grant writer if we would like to go after some of the available grants because grant writing is very time-consuming and we do not currently have someone to fill the slot. If we would like to pursue these opportunities, then we would have to actively seek someone for the position. Councilman Rivera suggested that we reduce the amount of summer help next year and use some of that funding to hire a grant writer, if only on a part-time basis.

Other Items

Steve announced a Planning Board meeting coming up. He also said that SUNY Fredonia is interested in forming a partnership with the City of Dunkirk, which would benefit by providing professional grant writing assistance and would also allow the City to access funds not currently

available alone. He also talked about future development like an arts incubator and perhaps even a third incubator. In turn, we would provide them with service learning and allow them to conduct classes and research within the City. It was asked if there were any downsides to forming this relationship with the college and it is believed it is a win-win for everyone involved. The mayor will be forwarding a letter to SUNY Fredonia President Horvath expressing formal interest. Resident Arlene Langendorfer inquired about how to turn Pangolin Park into a “city” park. Steve promised to look into it. She also expressed an interest in planting more trees at the park, and also requested that the City draft a formal promise that no future development would occur at the park.

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn at 12:59 P.M. was made by Councilman Rivera, and seconded by Councilman Gonzalez.