

CITY OF BATAVIA – CONFERENCE MINUTES

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2014

Present were Council President Hawley and Councilpersons Canale, Briggs, Pacino, Deleo, Jankowski, and Christian. Councilpersons Cipollone and Deleo were absent.

Call to Order

Council President Hawley called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Councilperson Deleo led the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments

Jim Rosenbeck, 13 Lewis Ave, thanked Council for visiting the property at 35 Swan St and bringing it to the public's attention but wondered if the City should be in the business of giving money to an owner of a city property if they have another city property with code violations. He felt that it didn't reward good business and he discouraged the City from dealing with irresponsible property owners.

Council Response to Public Comments

Councilperson Briggs asked if the City was still expected to receive a business plan from Mr. Mancuso before November 6th and Mr. Molino noted they were. Councilperson Briggs asked for a timeline on the Swan St property to be in the agenda packet. Councilperson Christian noted that it had been over 10 years since the owners had the money to develop that area and she wouldn't give up trying to get it cleaned up. Councilperson Deleo thanked the speaker for his comments and encouraged others to speak up so Council knew their concerns.

Public Hearing

Local Law No. 3 of the Year 2014 – Authorize the Use of Best Value

Councilperson Pacino made a motion to open the public hearing, the motion was seconded by Councilperson Canale and on roll call approved 7-0. There were no speakers. Councilperson Briggs made a motion to close the public hearing, the motion was seconded by Councilperson Christian and on roll call approved 7-0.

Communications

The Harvester submitted their liquor license renewal. There were no objections from the police department. Council approved.

Vibrant Batavia requested to hold a New Year's Eve celebration on 12/31/14 from 8:30pm – 12:30am at City Hall as a kick off to the Centennial Celebration for the City. Council approved.

Julie Pacatte, Ray Chaya, and Gregg Torrey from the Batavia Development Committee along with Council President Hawley presented the Small Business Recognition Awards to Valle Jewelers, Larry's Steakhouse, and Color Salon. Mary Valle accepted the award for Valle Jewelers who have been in business for more than 64 years. Steve Mullen accepted for Larry's Steakhouse on his business that opened in 2008. Susan Francis is the owner of Color Salon on Center St and has been in business for seven years. They all received plaques with a picture of their business on the front.

Presentation on Distressed & Abandoned Properties

Mr. Molino spoke regarding distressed and abandoned properties as part of the strategic plan update and steps moving forward. He noted that there was not just one solution, he spoke with other communities about what they were doing, attended a NYCOM seminar and outlined some of the causes and current status of the properties in question. Mr. Molino talked about some successes to date, tools and recommended actions, and that little issues, if left unattended, would lead to bigger issues. Mr. Molino noted that abandoned homes could be demolished to decrease the supply of homes and bring property values back up but it probably wasn't the best solution. He discussed the supply and demand dynamic and shared data about city properties including the median age of a home in the City versus homes in the Town of Batavia. He noted there were about 53 vacant or abandoned properties in the City and that the biggest problem was the banks continuing to pay the taxes but not taking title to the property. He showed the annual impact abandoned properties had on city taxes, water/sewer revenue and cost of city personnel to maintain the code-violating properties. He noted that homes close to vacant and abandoned properties also lost value and offered next steps and a timeline for getting something done.

Time Warner Cable Public Hearing

Mr. Molino explained that there would have to be a public hearing because of the renewal of the franchise agreement in accordance with federal law. He noted that it was scheduled for Wednesday, November 19th at 5:00pm. Councilperson Christian felt it was too early and wanted it push it back to 7:00pm to be more convenient for people. Council agreed and it was moved to the next business meeting. Councilperson Canale asked where we stood with the other cable company that showed interest in coming to the City. Mr. Molino noted that they were still interested and would start working with them in the next few weeks.

Board of Assessment Review Reappointment

Mr. Molino noted that it was just a reappointment of an existing board member whose term expired in September. Council agreed to move the item to the next business meeting.

6 Month Budget Review and Projections

Mr. Molino noted that based on the six month budget review and projections he had three recommended adjustments that would come out of contingency. He noted that tax foreclosure expense would go up around \$10,000, legal services about \$30,000 and unemployment was expected to increase as well. He explained that after all the adjustments

there would be a balance remaining of approximately \$112,000 in contingency. Council agreed to move the item to the next business meeting.

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Councilperson Jankowski asked to have the South Jackson St bridge property added to the auction list.

Conference Meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

**Heidi J. Parker
Clerk-Treasurer**

10/27/2014