

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

March 26, 2007

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Mayor Nelson called the meeting to order and asked the Clerk to call the roll:

PRESENT: Mayor Nelson, Councillors Ericksen, Flynn, Hannan,
LaMacchia, LaRose and Morley

ABSENT: None

PUBLIC HEARING

1. A public hearing for the purpose of obtaining public input into the matter of the on-going community development program was held.

Bryan Felitto stated that there is a slum area in the 400 block of Morris Street and questioned if this apartment building can be part of the mission of the grant.

No one else being present to speak, the hearing was declared closed.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

1. Eileen Jarrett, 112 Caroline Street, addressed Council and read from a letter she sent to the Governor's Regional Representative, Steve Hunt. Mrs. Jarrett stated that Mr. Hunt met with the CBO (Citizens for a Better Ogdensburg) last Monday at her home and the CBO suggested an alternate use for Bridgeview. Mrs. Jarrett stated this is an opportunity for City Council to pursue an alternate use, such as a veteran's hospital, for this building and urged them to direct staff to look into it. (Following these minutes is a copy of Mrs. Jarrett's letter to Mr. Hunt.)

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2. Barbara Ward, 521 New York Avenue, stated that Ogdensburg has cared for the mentally ill for many years previous to the SVP Facility and now that facility is receiving Cadillac services and the mentally-ill are being short changed and deprived. Mrs. Ward stated that OMH (Office of Mental Health) promised this wouldn't happen to the mentally-ill but we've been lied to. Mrs. Ward asked City Council to demand answers from OMH.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Nelson moved that the claims as enumerated in Warrant #6-2007 in the amount of \$471,316.51, and Library Warrant #6-2007 in the amount of \$21,709.93 and CD Block Grant Warrant #6-2007 in the amount of \$8,356.17 and Capital Projects Warrant #6-2007 in the amount of \$197,199.45 as audited, be and the same are ordered paid and Councillor Flynn seconded the motion.

The vote was:

CARRIED, AYES ALL

ITEMS FOR COUNCIL ACTION

1. Mayor Nelson moved a resolution to change the regularly scheduled City Council meeting of April 9, 2007 to Monday, April 2, 2007 at 7:00 p.m., and Councillor Hannan seconded to wit:

RESOLUTION TO CHANGE THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED COUNCIL MEETING OF APRIL 9, 2007

BE IT RESOLVED, that the regularly scheduled City Council Meeting of Monday, April 9, 2007 be changed to Monday, April 2, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at City Hall

The vote was:

CARRIED, AYES ALL

2. Councillor LaMacchia moved a resolution to approve the 2007 City/County Tax Warrant, and allow for the collection of the same, and Councillor Morley seconded to wit:

Resolution

WHEREAS, the Tax Roll of the City of Ogdensburg, for the fiscal year January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007, has been completed, and,

WHEREAS, Section C70 of the City Charter directs that when the tax rolls have thus been completed, a warrant signed by the City Manager and the City Clerk shall be attached hereto directing the Comptroller to collect from the persons named in the rolls the sum specified as levied against the parcels as owned by them, and

WHEREAS, the tax was computed on the assessed valuation of \$231,734,713 and the tax rate is \$16.087581 per thousand for the General City Tax and the assessed valuation of \$231,964,318 and the tax rate is \$4.802072 per thousand for the General County Tax and the assessed valuation of \$231,964,318 and the tax rate is \$4.936300 for Local Medicaid Cost for the fiscal year January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007 and the tax roll will produce the following:

CITY AND COUNTY TAX	\$	5,987,005.72
DUE WATER ACCOUNT		95,621.56
DUE SEWER ACCOUNT		112,160.23
DUE MISCELLANEOUS ACCOUNT		7,842.79
OMITTED TAXES		<u>33,719.33</u>
TOTAL	\$	<u>6,236,349.63</u>

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NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to Section C70 of the City Charter, the Tax Roll of the fiscal year 2007 is confirmed and the warrant in the sum of \$6,236,349.63 annexed thereto and be signed for the collections of all taxes in two installments; the first installment commencing April 15, 2007 and the second installment commencing July 15, 2007, and that all taxes shall be liens on the real property against which the sum levied is superior to all other liens and encumbrances from the date of signing of said warrant.

The vote was:

CARRIED, AYES ALL

3. Councillor LaMacchia moved a resolution urging State representatives and the NYS Legislature to adequately fund all zones at the original grant level of \$50,000 per zone to ensure the continued success of the program, and Councillor Morley seconded to wit:

A RESOLUTION
URGING THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE TO FULLY FUND
LOCAL ADMINISTRATION OF EMPIRE ZONES

WHEREAS, state funding for the local administration of Empire Zones was not included in the Governor's proposed 2007-08 New York State budget, and

WHEREAS, Ogdensburg administers a very successful Empire Zone program that has attracted numerous new investments to the City over the past five years and helped to create over 421 new jobs at these businesses, as summarized on the attached sheet, and

WHEREAS, when New York State created the Empire Zone program, it recognized the need to have professionals administer the program at the local level, and

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WHEREAS, Zone administrators provide technical assistance to small businesses; market the program to local businesses and businesses outside the state; manage the process of amending Empire Zone boundaries and creating development plans; report to the State; and serve as a liaison with local elected officials, and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the responsibilities the State gave to Empire Zone administrators, it also agreed to pay for part of the administrative costs for running a professional office to fulfill these responsibilities, and

WHEREAS, the success of the program to date and the future success of the program is a direct result of local administration of the program which cannot be provided without adequate State assistance,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in light of the outstanding success of this program the Ogdensburg City Council hereby urges its state representatives and the New York State Legislature to adequately fund all Zones at the original grant level of \$50,000 per Zone to ensure the continued success of the program, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Governor Eliot Spitzer; Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver; New York State Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno; Senator James W. Wright; Assemblyman Darrel Aubertine; Assemblyman Robin Schimminger, Chairman, New York State Assembly Economic Development, Job Creation, Commerce and Industry Committee; and Senator James S. Alesi, Chairman New York State Senate Commerce Committee.

The vote was:

CARRIED, AYES ALL

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OLD BUSINESS

1. Councillor Morley stated that he noticed that we have begun demolishing the house on New York Avenue and questioned how we are coming on the other houses scheduled to be demolished. Martin Murphy, Director of Planning and Development, stated that the last structure to be demolished should be done this week, and we'll be done with that portion of the demo project.

Councillor LaMacchia questioned the status of the Montgomery/Clickner Building demolition. Mr. Murphy stated that we have not received our state assistance contract so we've held off bringing a resolution to Council to award that contract.

Councillor Hannan questioned the status of the funding and timeframe for the Lake Street bridge removal.

Mr. Murphy explained we have two grants, one for \$400,000., which we have received from Governor Pataki; and \$212,000. which is Restore New York monies that we are waiting for the assistance contract money, which is specific to the Montgomery Building. Mr. Murphy added that any surplus monies from either of those funds can be applied to the removal of the bridge. Councillor Morley questioned if he read somewhere that we had to demolish the Montgomery Building in order to make space to remove the bridge. City Manager Arthur Sciorra said yes that is to make room for large machinery.

Mr. Sciorra stated that we are presently looking at three or four options. They are:

1. Remove the present bridge;
2. Build a new walkway;
3. Remove and relocate the utility lines, water and sewer, from under bridge;
4. Refurbish the existing bridge as a walk bridge by shoring up existing pier and continue to locate the water and sewer as they are presently located on the bridge structure.

Mr. Sciorra stated that staff will prepare an estimate for each of the options and see which Council would like to pursue.

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NEW BUSINESS

1. Mayor Nelson passed out a letter from William Hosmer, requesting that the property, 54 East River Street, be included in the Business/Residential Zone that surrounds the property to enable him to reside on premise. (A copy of this letter follows these minutes.) Mayor Nelson turned this letter over to Mr. Sciorra and City staff.

Councillor Morley questioned what Business/Residential means. Martin Murphy, Director of Planning and Development, stated that Business/Residential Zoning allows residential uses that are compatible with business uses, intended ideally to have residential on the second floor, and street level commercial activity on the first floor. Mr. Murphy added that this is the broadest zoning district we have within the City and the property Mr. Hosmer owns is located in the Business District and borders a Residential/Business District.

2. Councillor Ericksen stated that he liked Mrs. Jarrett's idea for other uses of Bridgeview if the predators are moved out. Councillor Ericksen said he would like to see Council contact OMH. Councillor LaMacchia stated that he is not sure how the state can sell the facility to the Federal Government. Councillor Hannan stated if there's a consensus of Council, we should get our foot in the door early and have staff pursue this. Councillor LaRose stated that if Council sends correspondence, we should indicate that we're interested in locating a Veteran's hospital in any of the vacant SLPC buildings, not just Bridgeview. Councillor LaMacchia said Mrs. Jarrett has made contacts who want to know if Council is interested and he thinks Council should find out what the Office of Mental Health's long term plan is for Bridgeview. After much discussion, there was a consensus of Council to contact our Federal representatives and Fort Drum for information.

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3. Councillor Flynn stated that there are five days left to not park overnight on City streets and resident's yards are too muddy to park. Police Chief Andrew Wells stated that the Parking Ban will only be enforced if there is a snow storm.

4. Councillor Flynn stated that last year in August, the Veterans Affairs and the New York State Assembly generated a bill that would provide an option for municipalities to allow their veterans to transfer any tax exemptions on their property if they move to another residence within that city. Councillor Flynn stated that he asked the City Manager to get information on that the following September and it's his understanding that Mr. Sciorra is ready to review that with Council. City Manager Arthur Sciorra stated he is still working on the figures. Councillor Flynn stated that the municipalities can decide if they want to participate in this program or not. Mr. Sciorra said he will get this information Council.

5. Councillor Hannan questioned if City staff have identification cards. Mr. Sciorra stated that he is working with County Clerk Patty Ritchie regarding this.

6. Councillor Hannan stated that he would like Council to follow up on Mrs. Ward's concerns that the mentally ill psychiatric patients are getting less care than the sexual predators. Councillor Hannan questioned our next step and requested a meeting with the Commissioner of the Office of Mental Health. Mayor Nelson stated that the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center Community Advisory Board's next meeting is Thursday, March 29 and they have raised these questions. Mayor Nelson also stated that he has contacted OMH Commissioner himself and invited him to a meeting. Mayor Nelson said a meeting will be scheduled in the near future.

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ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. 2006 Year-End report

City Comptroller Philip Cosmo reviewed the 2006 year end report (a copy of the report follows these minutes).

2. Dobisky Community Center re-uses

City Manager Arthur Sciorra stated that we are close to vacating the Dobisky Community Center and need to confirm Council's wishes to renovate or demolish this building. Councillor LaMacchia said if there is interest, Council should look at making the building compatible with the new building. Councillor Morley stated that he originally wanted to renovate this building and was against a new building, now that it's built believes the old building will detract from the new building and should be demolished. Councillor LaRose stated that he also was not in favor of a new building and is not in favor of keeping the old building. Councillor LaMacchia urged Council to wait a year after opening the new building before deciding to demolish the old building to see if there are any other use possibilities. Mayor Nelson stated that the cost to renovate this building was determined to be too costly and Council wanted to push business coming by boat to the marina up into the mall area. There was a consensus of Council to direct the City Manager to do an in-house assessment and cost study to repair this building.

3. 622 Lake Street

City Manager Arthur Sciorra stated that he received a letter from a Mr. Giles, 622 Lake Street, who would like to donate this property to the City for a park. After much discussion amongst Council, there was a consensus of Council to thank Mr. Giles for his offer to donate 622 Lake Street to the City, but to refuse his offer.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.