

TOWN OF AURORA
TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION
November 9, 2020

The following members of the Aurora Town Board met on Monday, November 9, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the Aurora Municipal Center, 575 Oakwood Avenue, East Aurora, NY, for the purpose of holding a work session.

Although this meeting was held “in-person”, due to the coronavirus/Covid19 pandemic, it was also live-streamed via Zoom and YouTube in accordance with NYS Executive Order 202.1 – *Suspension of law allowing the attendance of meetings telephonically or similar service: Article 7 of the Public Officers Law, to the extent necessary to permit any public body to meet and take such action authorized by the law without permitting public in-person access to meetings and authorizing such meetings to be held remotely by conference call or similar service, provided that the public has the ability to view or listen to such proceeding and that such meetings are recorded and later transcribed.*

Present:	Jolene M. Jeffe	Councilwoman
	Charles D. Snyder	Councilman
	Luke Wochensky	Councilman
	James J. Bach	Supervisor
Absent/Excused:	Susan A. Friess	Councilwoman
Others Present:	Ronald Bennett	Town Attorney
	Elizabeth Cassidy	Asst. Code Enforcement Officer
	Donna Bodekor	Senior Center Director
	Tony Rosati	Zoning Board Member
	Joseph Wetzel	Engineer/GHD
	Shane Krieger	Chief of Police

Supervisor Bach opened the session at 6:00 p.m. with the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and noted that this is the first meeting of the Town Board at the new Aurora Municipal Center. Mr. Bach reminded everyone that face masks and social distancing are still required.

1) Center Street/Emery Road residents – re: Conditions at 1651 Center:

John and Pam Miliotto, 1652 Center Street, and John Caldarella and Kathy Hall-Zientek, 1641 Center Street, spoke to the Board about the junkyard-like conditions at 1651 Center Street. They had previously passed a letter/petition that was signed by twenty property owners on Emery and Center in the immediate area. The petition requested assistance from the Board for the clean-up of the property.

At this work session, they presented photos of the property. Mr. Miliotto stated the photos were fairly recent. He noted that the former owner of the vehicle repair shop died in 2017 and that no business has been conducted there for some time. Mrs. Miliotto stated there are feral cats and rodents on the property.

Kathy Hall-Zientek, 1641 Center, which is next door to 1651 Center, stated she has lived there 18 years and was a friend of the former owner. Ms. Hall-Zientek noted that the estate went unsettled for several years. The new owner moved vehicles around on the property, but did not get rid of any of them. Ms. Hall-Zientek stated there is no running water or working bathroom on the property. She also stated that a neighboring property owner said that the former owner used to dump chemicals at the rear of the property.

Councilman Wochensky asked if the property was used as a repair shop after the former owner’s death. Ms. Hall-Zientek responded, no, it is not and has not been open for business. Councilwoman Jeffe stated she can vouch for that. Ms. Hall-Zientek stated she spoke with the new owner many times and she does not think he is going to run a business there. She noted that everyone who signed the letter/petition is very frustrated.

Mr. Miliotto stated that due to the conditions at 1651 Center, he and his wife were going to sell their house, which is directly across the street, but realtors told them they would have trouble selling it due to the conditions at 1651 Center.

Donna Bodekor, 1726 Center Street, stated she lives five houses away from the property and it is a junkyard. She has seen no movement there.

Supervisor Bach asked Liz Cassidy, Assistant Code Enforcement Officer, to comment.

Mrs. Cassidy reported that the owner does have an active license and is registered with the DMV. The new owner, who is the grandson of the former owner, has owned it since July 2019. Bill Kramer has been talking to him. She noted that the owner agreed to continue cleaning up the property and that some vehicles/trailers are licensed and registered and some are not. Mrs. Cassidy went on to explain the process to cite a property owner for different code violations.

Councilman Wochensky asked if the use has been continuous. Councilwoman Jeffe stated that a cease of operations would mean the special use permit process would kick in.

Supervisor Bach stated the Board will continue to work with the Building Department to sort this out.

2) Rails to Trails and Go Bike:

Deb Fenn from Erie Cattaraugus Rails to Trails and Ashely Smith, Deputy Director of Go Bike Buffalo, joined the meeting via Zoom. Ms. Fenn spoke about the progress being made with the Erie Cattaraugus Rails to Trails pathway that extends from Buffalo into Cattaraugus County. She noted that she has been in talks with Jack Bouquin of the West Falls Conservation Society and they are working on a trail design that works for both the trail and the Conservation Society. Ms. Fenn stated that 3.5 miles of trail is open in the Springville area and 2 miles in Orchard Park. She noted that this trail is 27 miles long.

Ashley Smith stated that Go Bike Buffalo is working with the Erie Cattaraugus group to form a trail that would hook up with the Genesee trail, forming 80 miles of trail. Ms. Smith spoke in detail about the West Falls section of the trail and how they are working to bypass the West Falls Conservation Society without disrupting the Conservation Society operations.

Councilwoman Jeffe stated she is very familiar with the trail, having walked the entire length in the Town of Aurora. Mrs. Jeffe stated she supports the trail in concept and principal, but her priority is with the West Falls Conservation Society and property owners/residents along the trail.

Ms. Smith stated that initial and preliminary designs should be available from the engineers within the next 3 to 4 weeks.

Supervisor Bach asked if they had reached out to residents who will be affected by the trail in the West Falls area. Ms. Smith stated they have spoken with business owners, but she was not sure how many residents were contacted.

Councilwoman Jeffe suggested that Ms. Smith and Ms. Fenn let residents along the West Falls portion of the trail know the status of the project.

Councilman Wochensky stated he likes the project, provided the concerns of the West Falls Conservation Society and residents are addressed.

3) 30-day liquor license waiver – American Grille 2/Jay Macaluso:

Jay Macaluso, owner of 7901 Seneca Street/American Grille, asked the Town for a 30-day waiver for his liquor license application. Mr. Macaluso stated he opened in 2012 and later sold the business, but retained ownership of the property. He now owns the business again and is applying for a liquor license from the NYS Liquor Authority. The Town has the authority to waive the 30-day advance notice in order for him to apply for his liquor license right away.

4) 2021 Health Insurance Plans:

The Town currently offers two health insurance plans through Blue Cross Blue Shield to eligible employees. The plans under Silver POS 8100 each increase by around \$1.00 (0.08%) and the plans under Platinum POS Plus decrease between \$7 and \$20 (-1.17%) depending on the type. Single has a \$7 decrease, while Family has a \$21 decrease.

5) Senior Center phone cabling:

The Senior Center, in addition to the Court office, Aurora Municipal Center, and Highway office, is getting new phones. Much of the current cabling is at least 20 years old and will not support the new phones. There are five areas at the Senior Center that need to be cabled. Kiercom Communications, Inc. has presented a quote to run the cables for \$800 (\$160.00 per cable).

6) Workers Compensation Renewal:

The Town is currently in a two-year term agreement (2020-2021) with Comp Alliance for workers compensation insurance. Comp Alliance has informed the Town that if the Town agrees to extend into a new 2-year term (2021-2022) the 2021 rate will decrease from \$78,292 to \$74,378 and will remain at \$74,378 for 2022.

Martha L. Librock
Town Clerk