

**Jefferson County Local Development Corporation  
Zoom Video Call – Board Meeting Minutes  
June 4, 2020**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Jefferson County Local Development Corporation held their board meeting via zoom video call. The meeting was recorded for posting to the website.

**I. Call to Order:** Chairman Converse called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

**II. Roll call for attendance**

**Board Members** – Chairman David Converse, John Jennings, Paul Warneck, Robert E. Aliasso, Jr., W. Edward Walldroff, Lisa LøHuillier, William Johnson, Christine Powers, Kent Burto, Gregory Gardner

**Counsel** – Joseph Russell, Esq.

**Staff** – Donald Alexander, David Zembiec, Lyle Eaton, Peggy Sampson, Marshall Weir, Jay Matteson

**Others** – Ed Valentine, Daniel Samann, Robert Ferris

**Media** ó Craig Fox from Watertown Daily Times

**III. Public Comment:**

(JCIDA)

**1. Ed Valentine (Opal Development)** – Mr. Valentine said that he sent an email to IDA board members and Mr. Alexander last evening of history detailing the park covenants. He said that he has had regular communications with Mr. Alexander for the last year about having better communication for any projects in the park and providing as much information as possible in advance and said now the same thing happened again with two new projects. He said that what he hears is that everyone was shocked by these projects and he just found out about them last Friday. It is his understanding that the Town of Watertown Supervisor was not aware, nor the IDA; which he said sounds unbelievable, so he said he did some online research trying to figure out what was going on. He said the Town of Watertown website indicates that they are closed until further notice and noted that agendas are not updated and there is no mention of meetings. He said a meeting was held on May 4<sup>th</sup>, but nothing was posted. He said the County Planning Board website shows nothing and has no agenda listed since January 2020. He said that he received a bootlegged site plan that he was working from and said that it didn't make sense because the parking was located in front of the building, which doesn't meet town code because it's supposed to be on the side or the rear. He said he eventually saw the County comments for the two projects, and he agreed about their parking comments. He said he discussed his issues during a public hearing held on Monday. He said he sent an email around asking for an IDA representative at the meeting, but noted there wasn't one. He said he has no problem with the proposed businesses from what he knows of them because he has not seen the application. He said there is a minor issue with a subdivision of 2A and 2B for a parking issue that has been going on for a few years. He said that Penske doesn't have enough room for parking and some of their trucks park in front of the building all the way out to the road line. He said that he sent a friendly email to Pam

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Desormo about tweaking the sub-division line for Penske trucks to continue parking on the side. Otherwise, if the lot is going to sub-divided, they are going to be forced to park out of compliance in front of the building and they are going to be over 50% coverage, and not be compliant with the town code. He said they completely dismissed his concerns and said it's an enforcement issue. He said the other issue is with Lot 10, but not with the warehouse. He said it violates town code and park covenants because parking should be in the rear or side. He said when they closed the public hearing and opened up the site plan review, they didn't even acknowledge his concerns nor the County's comments. He said they didn't even address the parking. He said Monday's public hearing by the Town Planning Board demonstrated why the park covenants are needed. He said the current board failed to address his concerns and the County's comments and disregarded their own town codes. He said that he still hasn't seen final plans and they haven't been shared with the public and according to the covenants there is a 90-day review period. He asked the IDA to talk with the park tenants and the town about their codes.

- IV. **Minutes:** Minutes of the zoom video call on May 7, 2020 were presented. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Mr. Warneck, seconded by Mr. Gardner. All in favor. Carried.
- V. **Treasurer's Reports:** Mr. Aliasso reviewed the financials for the period ending May 31, 2020. A motion was made by Ms. Powers to accept the financial report as presented, seconded by Mr. Jennings. Roll call vote was taken. Mr. Converse ó Yea, Mr. Walldroff ó Yea, Mr. Aliasso ó Yea, Mr. Burto ó Yea, Mr. Jennings ó Yea, Mr. Gardner ó Yea, Mr. Warneck ó Yea, Mr. Johnson ó Yea, Ms. LeHuillier ó Yea, and Ms. Powers ó Yea. Carried.

VI. **Committee Reports:**

- a. **Alternative Energy Committee** – Mr. Johnson said the committee met via zoom with OYA to discuss their two new projects. He said that they have agreed to the same terms as their previous projects. Mr. Alexander said that he talked with the General Brown School District and they are supportive for the IDA to proceed. He said that he has been trying to reach the Town of LeRay. Mr. Johnson said that Mr. Alexander set up a meeting this Friday with Nexamp to discuss their projects.

**Building and Grounds Committee** – Mr. Burto said that the committee held a zoom meeting on Tuesday. He said that the committee asked Mr. Alexander to have Attorney Russell finalize the Purchase Agreement with the YMCA; they are waiting on the YMCA Attorney. They also asked him to send a letter to the County to find out their interest in the extra space and prepare an RFP to market the space. Mr. Walldroff asked if the space will be marketed for purchase or lease. Mr. Alexander said both. Mr. Jennings asked if staff should check with JCC one final time to see if there is any interest in the space. Mr. Alexander agreed.

Mr. Alexander said that he has been eliminating expenses related to the building. He said that he has Jerry Countryman mowing lawns to minimize expenses.

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Zoom Video Call - Board Meeting Minutes  
June 4, 2020**

**VII. Council Reports:**

- a. **Manufacturing** – Mr. Zembiec said he is resuming the safety training program. He said there are 44 hours left and they plan to offer COVID-19 safety workshops. Mr. Zembiec said we continue to host weekly inter-agency calls sharing information. He said we will support tourist businesses during this short season.

Mr. Jennings left the meeting at 9 a.m.

Mr. Walldroff asked when the border will reopen. Mr. Zembiec said that he was unsure and said that it is still restricted at this point.

Robert Ferris entered the meeting at 9:02 a.m.

- b. **Marketing** – Mr. Weir said that he has been working with agency partners on a branded support campaign for retail and tourism. He said the focus will be to buy from local whenever possible because there is a lot of opportunity and they are working with Chambers. He said there will be posters, a landing page, and brand. He said it is a low cost ó high impact piece. He said it will be an add-on (manufactured locally ó sold locally).
- c. **Jefferson County Agricultural Development** – Mr. Matteson said that he sent out a one-page summary yesterday that he and Mr. Gardner worked on. He said this is the perfect opportunity because of the demand in product due to the virus. He said producers will utilize a label to put on their product.

Mr. Gardner said he would call it a "flagging campaign" which will make it easy to identify locally made products. He said he will send his report out tomorrow morning but concluded that during these last few months people are shopping online, but said that we need to get them offline because people suddenly became interested in local foods. He said we need to find out the cost to print the labels and get the word out. Mr. Matteson said that the process should be simple and effective. Mr. Zembiec pointed out that the label will identify the product as local and not replace the brand.

Mr. Warneck asked what we need to do to get the local products in stores. Mr. Matteson said that they must be GAP certified to get into stores and said that most local producers prefer food stands, farmers markets or other means to sell their products. Mr. Walldroff said he personally doesn't look at supermarkets for his products because of their price markups, so he chooses direct selling.

Mr. Matteson said the time is right and said that he needs to move quickly and noted that the Chamber involvement makes it easier.

**VIII. Unfinished Business:** None.

**IX. Counsel:** None.

**Jefferson County Local Development Corporation  
Zoom Video Call - Board Meeting Minutes  
June 4, 2020**

**X. New Business:**

- 1. COVID-19 Business Assistance** Mr. Alexander said that the board originally allocated \$500,000 and initially set aside \$200,000 for the loan/grant program. He said an extra \$100,000 was added. Mr. Eaton said that \$290,000 has been lent to 30 businesses (2 participated with the Sackets Harbor LDC) with \$10,000 remaining. Mr. Zembiec said it represents 122 jobs. There have not been no new inquiries.

Mr. Gardner said that during his research for background survey questions the healthcare/frontline workers were listed as the heroes; however, he said the new round of heroes are going to be the economic developers.

- XI. Adjournment:** With no further business before the board, a motion was made by Mr. Gardner to adjourn the video call, seconded by Ms. LeHuillier. All in favor. The video call adjourned at 9:35 a.m.