

**Deferiet Redevelopment Corporation  
Appointed Directors Board Meeting Minutes  
March 6, 2025**

The Appointed Directors of the Deferiet Redevelopment Corporation held its board meeting on Thursday, March 6, 2025 in the board room at 800 Starbuck Avenue, Watertown, NY.

**Present:** John Condino, David Converse, Lisa L’Huillier, Robert Aiken, William Johnson  
**Zoom:** Joseph Cook, Paul Smith

**Excused:** None

**Absent:** None

**Also Present:** Marshall Weir, Jay Matteson, Lyle Eaton, Peggy Sampson, Robin Stephenson, Ryan Piche (Jefferson County Administrator)  
**Zoom:** Sarah Bullock (Town of Wilna), Jen Voss (Dept. of State), and Susan Caruvana and Lisa Nagle (EDR Consultants), Justin Miller, Esq. (Harris Beach), and Craig Fox (Watertown Daily Times)

**I. Call to Order:** Chairman Condino called the meeting to order at 9:44 a.m.

Mr. Weir introduced the attendees who joined via Zoom.

**II. Minutes:** Minutes of the meeting held on February 6, 2025 were presented.

Mr. Condino said there was a discussion at the last meeting about creating a non-voting member of the board of directors and asked Attorney Miller if anything had been done with that. Attorney Miller said nothing has been done formally, but if there is a desire for the board it can be established in the bylaws. Mr. Condino said the minutes reflect that making a bylaw amendment was a bit onerous and we could do it simply by making a resolution between the JCIDA and the DRC. Attorney Miller said the board of directors has the right to amend their bylaws and the IDA as the member can supersede that if they decide to do so. He said that if we want to tweak the bylaws, he can provide the red-line version to get on the agenda to adopt. Mr. Weir said that he would like to continue to work with Mayor Cook to identify the appropriate person and then revisit it.

A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Mr. Aiken, seconded by Mr. Converse. All in favor. Carried.

**III. Committee Reports:** None.

**IV. Unfinished Business:** None.

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**V. New Business:**

- 1. Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) update** – Sarah Bullock, Community Development Coordinator for the Town of Wilna, said she wanted to talk with the board today regarding the BOA study that is being done in Deferiet. She said in 2023 the Town of Wilna and the Village of Deferiet received a joint grant from the Department of State for a brownfield opportunity area nominating study. The focus of it is to study the area and come up with ideas for reuse and a pathway forward for redevelopment for the community. The boundary map is the entirety of the Village of Deferiet and does extend outside the village because there is former mill property that extends outside of the village. Altogether the study is 627 acres and approximately 200 of those acres are the former mill properties. She said it is important to keep in mind the definition of a brownfield according to the Department of State – a brownfield is any property that is vacant, is abandoned, underutilized, and potentially environmentally contaminated. She said it also includes the former gas station along Route 3 in Deferiet and includes some of the green space that is owned by the village that is being underutilized at this time or could be used for purposes. The study is not specific to the mill property, it is a village redevelopment study. She said that right now, the BOA plan is a project for the Town and Village, but what is going to matter comes later. It is her understanding that once the Restore NY project is completed by Jefferson County, then the property will be turned over to the DRC at which time it will be this group's responsibility to continue to seek cleanup and redevelopment of the site. BOA helps to identify the steps that need to be taken in order to do that. She said it is fantastic having worked with Lisa at EDR. She said this is going to be a partnership with the Town, County, Village, and economic development.

Ms. Bullock said she wanted to talk about the process over the last couple of years. Over the last two years, they have had a small steering committee that has included representation from the Village Board, Village residents, the Town, Tug Hill Commission, Jefferson County, Marshall, and a business owner from the area. She said the committee has been tasked and EDR has led the way in identifying existing conditions, what the community already has, what is lacking, and what needs to be improved. They surveyed the community, which resulted in a small number of responses, but from that they have identified sites for redevelopment and ideas for reuse. EDR is preparing the nomination study and then will be turned over to the community for review. The whole goal of the process is to get the designation which comes from the Secretary of State on whether or not the Deferiet BOA will be a designated BOA. With the designation it opens the door to further funding for Phase II site assessments, for environmental remediation, for brownfield tax credits, and for extra points on a consolidated funding application.

Lisa Nagle, EDR consultant, gave kudos to Jefferson County for establishing the DRC. She said they will continue to work with Marshall since he's on the steering committee because the DRC will be the driver. She said the village is small, but the mayor has been involved, and they have been trying to impress upon the steering committee to get the land redeveloped. She said the village and town are on the committee but noted that the village is very challenged with capacity since there are only approximately 300 people in the village.

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**BOA update continued –**

Mr. Aiken asked if they hope to have conceptual projects when the planning process is done and if the deliverable is to have cost estimates for those to start applying for grants. Ms. Nagle said not quite that far; they will have a conceptual framework plan for redevelopment on what can go where. One of their sub-consultants on their team is an economist real estate expert, and he did a study of the area to determine what likely could work from an economic standpoint in terms of redevelopment ideas. She said they then take the information and use it for forward planning for placing things on land, and that's as far as BOA takes it, but once the BOA plan is fully nominated/designated, you are in the 'BOA club' and you can go back for implementation dollars specific to the BOA program to advance any of these things. It is funded each year, and there is an application process, but you are competing against a smaller group because there are not that many designated BOA's in the state.

Chairman Condino asked Ms. Nagle what the estimated timeline is to get the nomination to be admitted to the 'BOA club'. Ms. Nagle said they are aiming for this year but indicated that it could go into 2026. She said the village and the town, as the municipalities, will always have to be the applicant.

Mr. Piche asked what the scope of the BOA plan is and asked if it is published online. Ms. Bullock said there is a website ([www.deferietboa.com](http://www.deferietboa.com)) to find some preliminary information. Mr. Piche asked if the initial plan includes a proforma of redevelopment opportunities and market study for the mill site. Ms. Nagle said the latter, not the proforma part, but a market study. Ms. Nagle said if this format works for the DRC, they'd be happy to make another presentation to go through the market study and the recommendations so the board can see it. Mr. Weir said yes. Chairman Condino said it would be a great next step to understand where this is going.

Mr. Piche said he would like to attend any public input sessions. Ms. Nagle said they have held one so far and are in the process of scheduling a second session to share the recommendations. Chairman Condino said it would be helpful for the DRC and the County to be informed of the meeting schedules.

Mr. Piche asked if the DRC has a budget. Chairman Condino said not currently. Mr. Piche said they may think about County funding or some other source. He said by using the market study proforma for the site, we can get budget numbers about what redevelopment will look like and give some revenue projections, because it is an important piece of the puzzle. He said if the BOA puts in the marketing data, we can extrapolate from that (some of the reuse data). Ms. Nagle said that is a great first step. She said in the market study they are thinking through how to generate revenue for the DRC, and they have some ideas. She said it will be good to present to this board the recommendations, the market study, and the physical plan before they go to the public. Mr. Weir will take the lead in scheduling the presentation.

Other – Mr. Weir said that he will reach out to Mayor Cook on any potential additions to the board. Mayor Cook said they are trying to reach out to people to get some help.

Chairman Condino thanked everyone for their participation.

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- VI. Adjournment:** With no further business before the board, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Aiken, seconded by Mr. Johnson. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:11 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Peggy Sampson*