

## SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING

The Special Meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Cortlandville was held at the Raymond G. Thorpe Municipal Building, 3577 Terrace Road, Cortland, New York, with Supervisor Tupper presiding.

## Members present:

Supervisor, Richard C. Tupper  
Councilman, Theodore V. Testa  
Councilman, John C. Proud  
Councilman, C. Randolph Ross  
Councilman, Douglas E. Withey  
Deputy Town Clerk, Patricia L. Romer

## Absent:

Town Clerk, Kristin E. Rocco-Petrella

Others present were: Town Attorney, John A. DelVecchio; Highway Sup't. Glenn Bassett; Town Residents: Bob Martin, Donna Johnson and Stephen Flatt.

Supervisor Tupper called the Special Meeting to order and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Gutches Lumber Sports Complex (the "Park"). Supervisor Tupper prompted the Board to ask questions and to give their input.

Members of the Board examined the development and progression of the Park. Discussion occurred with regard to its current status and financial aspects were analyzed for its future.

Supervisor Tupper updated the Board on Phase 1 of the Park, which included two artificial turf ("turf") baseball fields, a pavilion, a bathroom and bleachers. The turf baseball fields are complete, the pavilion is in process and the bleachers are in place. A flagpole and its placement were in discussion. Cortland County Tourism and Cortland Crush NYCBL Baseball Inc. donated a first-class sound system on both fields. The only item left on the punch list was the correction of a low spot at the top of the Park that gathers standing water due to rain. The area would be re-seeded and corrected when the weather permits. The Park has been in operation since March 10, 2019 for games and practices. Supervisor Tupper noted that he has received extremely positive comments and feedback for the Park.

Supervisor Tupper explained that before the Town considered the concept of the Gutches Lumber Sports Complex, a feasibility study was conducted which cost the Town approximately \$37,000. The study was based on the full build-out of the Park, which started at an estimated \$12 million and increased to \$18 million (eight soccer fields, lacrosse, multi-use fields, four baseball fields, a parking lot for 1,000 cars, two or more bathrooms, concession stands in two or more locations, large building with restrooms, storage, locker rooms and referee rooms). Statistical data gathered for the study was favorable in its examination of the Park's ability to generate enough income to sustain itself. The anticipated general tourism revenue could generate over \$1.5 million in additional sales tax. Supervisor Tupper indicated that more hotels would be needed in the future if there is a full build-out of the Park.

Supervisor Tupper reviewed the funding of the Park to date. The Town borrowed a \$3 million Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) at 3% interest and made a \$55,800 interest payment in 2019 – the Town will have to refinance at the end of the year; the Town was awarded an Empire State Development (ESD) Grant in the amount of \$862,000.00; and was awarded a grant for the initial design work for \$75,000.00. Supervisor Tupper said that private donations were actively being sought and requests for funding from the State would be ongoing. The revenue for 2019 was estimated low at approximately \$40,000.00, but would most likely be a higher amount as the 2019 Park calendar was full for the year.

Councilman Withey voiced his concern for the amount of money to be expended on the Park with future bond payments, and with the amount of money being spent for in-kind services provided by the Highway Department. He stated he was committed to the Park, but was concerned for the finances. Supervisor Tupper agreed and indicated that in his two meetings with the Governor's office he explained that the Town, with a population of approximately 8,500 people, cannot afford to put any more money into the project. The Town's facility would be the only facility of the type in a 300 mile radius; more fields must be constructed in order to generate money. Supervisor Tupper stated that sports tourism is one of the growth industries, but the Town must have a bigger facility - more than two fields. The Town went back to the Governor and has asked for help from the State. He also indicated that he was looking at other private investors/companies who may be interested in the Park and building the fields.

Councilman Ross asked to hear more information on that topic. He stated that if sports tourism is a growing industry and it takes the Town 15 years to construct the other phases, would the Town have missed its chance? Without putting the Town in more debt, he questioned what

other funding source options the Town had. Supervisor Tupper explained that he met with a company that has facilities in the South, West, and Midwest, but does not have a facility in the northeast. The company visited the site, met with the County IDA/BDC who suggested the company submit a proposal. The company was very interested in the Park. Supervisor Tupper indicated that there are not a lot of companies that want to operate multi-million dollar facilities.

Councilman Proud questioned whether “foundation” money could be sought to help fund the Park. He agreed that the Town could not support further development of the Park without funding. He stressed that while the Park is in the Town, it was a benefit to the County and the communities surrounding the Town.

It was acknowledged that the progress of Gutchess Lumber Sports Complex would stop at Phase 1 until further funding became available to continue development. Additional phases are possible that would include cross country tracks, walking trails and dog parks. The Town’s intent was to maximize what the Park can currently offer and proceed with solicitation of funding sources. The Board agreed that the 100-acres of Town land designated for park activities has great potential for the growth of the industry of sports tourism.

Councilman Ross questioned what was being done to draw sports teams, potential sponsors and foundations outside of New York State to the Park. Supervisor Tupper explained that the Committee has discussed the matter at length and all of the different possibilities. Machell Phelps, Executive Director of the Cortland Regional Sports Council, has been an asset and has the contacts to bring teams from out of state to the Park. Construction of the future phases would be important to maximize the potential the Park has.

Councilman Withey questioned what remaining expenditures the Town has for the Park, other than the remaining contract with ZMK Construction for Phase 1. Supervisor Tupper explained that payment for the bleachers and the construction of the restroom and pavilion were being paid for out of General Fund A. The Town has half of the money for the playgrounds (one for young children and one for older children), which have not been constructed and are part of the Citizens Park land swap. The initial cost of the playground was projected at \$250,000, however the playground was redesigned and the cost was reduced by \$70,000. The Town has \$84,000 to put towards the playground as a result of remaining CDBG program income funds. Supervisor Tupper was looking for funding to cover the remaining \$80,000 (approximate) and was soliciting donations.

Councilman Proud questioned what the outstanding grants were. Supervisor Tupper explained that the Town was waiting for the original \$50,000 grant from the State for the design work (the money would go back into General Fund B); was waiting for a \$250,000 “Member Item” from Senator Seward to be signed off by the Governor – the paperwork was completed by the Town over one year ago (the money would go into the Capital Project H fund).

Councilman Withey questioned what the parking situation was. Supervisor Tupper explained that there is temporary parking for 140 cars. Councilman Ross asked Highway Sup’t. Bassett for more information about the parking and whether more work had to be done or if it could wait until future phases. He wanted to make sure that Highway Sup’t. Bassett informed the Board if more work was needed. Highway Sup’t. Bassett explained that he has been onsite during recent games at the Park and the parking lot has been full. Parking could occur on the grass as it has been tamped, however due to the rain parking on the grass has not been possible. He explained that over the last few days he has been bringing in more gravel to extend the roadway. However, he stated he did not want to spend money if it was not budgeted for.

Councilman Withey stated he was in support of the Park; he noted the Board’s concern for the Park and funding.

Supervisor Tupper stated he had all the designs, drawings, and cost estimates on what was being constructed at the Park and offered them to the Board for their review.

Councilman Ross stated it would be nice if either Machell Phelps or John McNerney could attend a Board meeting and update the Board as to “Plan C” or “Plan D” for the Park. Supervisor Tupper stated that the Committee meets often to discuss all ideas; unless something changed he did not think it was necessary for them to come before the Board. Councilman Ross stated it would be good for the Board to know what the Committee was doing and what the ideas were.

No further comments or discussion were heard.

At the conclusion of the meeting members of the Board visited the Gutchess Lumber Sports Complex.

Councilman Withey made a motion, seconded by Councilman Proud, to adjourn the Special Meeting. All voting aye, the motion was carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin E. Rocco-Petrella, RMC  
Town Clerk  
Town of Cortlandville

\*Note:

The draft version of this meeting was submitted to the Town Board for their review on June 5, 2019.

The revised draft version of this meeting was submitted to the Town Board for their review on June 19, 2019.

The final version of this meeting was approved as written at the Town Board meeting of \_\_\_\_\_.

DRAFT