

MINUTES BOOKTOWN OF COEYMANS**

July 29, 2021 – Public Hearing – 6:00pm

A Public Hearing was held Thursday, July 29th, 2021 at 6:00pm at Town Hall, 18 Russell Avenue, Ravena, New York

PRESENT: George D. McHugh, Supervisor
Daniel D. Baker, Council member
Linda S. Bruno, Council member

ABSENT: Zachary S. Collins, Council member
Brandon L. LeFevre, Council member

ALSO PRESENT: Cindy L. Rowzee, Town Clerk
Nick Laraway, Carver Companies

PRESENT BY CONFERENCE CALL:
Krystine Hilton, Carver Companies

Audience (1)

Supervisor McHugh opened the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance. He stated that all Board members were present except Councilmembers Collins and LeFevre. He then asked Town Clerk Rowzee to read the Notice of Public Hearing.

Notice of Public Hearing

The Town Board of the Town of Coeymans will hold a public hearing on July 29, 2021 at 6:00pm at Town Hall, 18 Russell Ave., Ravena, NY for the purpose of hearing public comments on the Town of Coeymans community development needs, and to discuss the possible submission of one or more Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications for the 2021 program year. The CDBG program is administered by the New York State Office of Community Renewal (OCR), and will make available to eligible local governments approximately \$20 Million Dollars under the CFA funding round for the 2021 program year for housing, economic development, public facilities, public infrastructure, and planning activities, with the principal purpose of benefiting low/moderate income persons. The hearing will provide further information about the CDBG program and will allow for citizen participation in the development of any proposed grant applications and/or to provide technical assistance to develop alternate proposals. Comments on the CDBG program or proposed project(s) will be received at this time. The hearing is being conducted pursuant to Section 570.486, Subpart I of the CFR and in compliance with the requirements of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended.

The Town will hear comments on submitting an application for a GOLD standard LEED

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building being built in the Coeymans Industrial Park by Carver Companies. The Town will seek funds to support this project in exchange for the company retaining and relocating 125 jobs and creating 50 new jobs at this location. Funds will be used to purchase equipment.

The Town will hear comments on submitting an application on behalf of Composite Technology & Infrastructure, LLC. located within the Coeymans Industrial Park. The company is planning on expanding in the near future to support projected growth and anticipates creating at least an additional 50 jobs, funds will be used to purchase equipment.

Please note that all comments will be heard at the above date, time and place. Written comments may also be submitted to the Town Clerk until 4pm the date of the meeting.

**By Order of the Town Board
Of the Town of Coeymans
Cindy L. Rowzee
Town Clerk**

As there were no comments from the audience at this time Supervisor McHugh read the following letters and gave comments regarding them:

Annette Demitraszek of Ravena wrote in to ask the following questions, Supervisor McHugh's responses are after each question:

In reading the notice my understanding is that this Community Development Block Grant is to secure funding for equipment for a building being built in Coeymans Industrial Park by Carver. Is that correct?

This is correct, Carver Companies is building a Gold Standard LEED building with a green roof, this feature will help with stormwater run-off from the nearly 44,000 sq ft building. Carver Companies is working with NYSERDA to develop as energy efficient building as possible that will suit company needs. This building will be the new Carver Companies Headquarters, relocating their Office Headquarters from Schenectady County to Coeymans.

If so, my understanding would also include that this equipment is part of the expansion of the companies involved. Again, correct?

The equipment involved will be utilized to support the expansion of the company at this location. With the desire to offer training in this location for anticipated jobs within the company and the industry, some of the equipment will be earmarked to help fit up that space as well as fit up space throughout the structure.

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Another question: Is this promise of the creation of 50 jobs and the retention of current positions something monitored by the Town or NYSOCR (New York State Office of Community Renewal)? My guess would be the NYSOCR, as the Town is acting as a sponsor. Correct?

The Town is the applicant on behalf of the business for this grant and will be required to submit regular reporting on the project including job retention and creation. The grant cannot be closed out until the creation of the 50 jobs is complete, the fact that 125 jobs are being relocated to this new office and are being committed to be retained will also be monitored by the Town and NYS. The net job retention/creation will be an essential outcome.

Last one: Is there any deadline for the creation of the jobs...and are the 125 retained jobs promised for a significant period of time?

There will be a timeline for the grant, and job creation should be accomplished in a two-year time frame. Again, if this is not met, then the grant cannot be closed out and it leaves control over the project on the granting entity. During the timeline of the project, job monitoring will continue to occur.

My concern is that promises are often made to secure funds ...I hope the businesses follow through on the promises and I just am curious who is responsible for making sure that they do.

Thank you for being diligent about your interest in a positive outcome for this project. The Town will be working closely with the State to ensure a successful project that adheres to the promised outcomes.

Councilmember Baker asked Mr. Nick Laraway if under the Gold standards they are held to USA standards. Mr. Laraway, upon checking with the architect stated that they are not but the use of local materials gives points to the overall score.

Councilmember Bruno stated that the building is incredibly green.

Krystine Hilton stated that there are new requirements from the government for grant funding that are increasing in general for using USA materials from the current 50%, to 60% and then to 75%. She stated that this is a Federal requirement. She stated that they want to keep as much local and regional as it is important to communities. She then answered another question by Councilmember Baker regarding reporting to the Board and stated that the Town will have complete knowledge of where the companies are at with job creation, spending and meeting the outcomes as promised as the Town will monitor and administer the grant.

Clean Air Coalition of Greater Ravena-Coeymans, NY:

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The Clean Air Coalition of Greater Ravena-Coeymans would like to comment on an application the Town wants to make for a Community Development Block Grant. According to the Town’s website, this grant is for “housing, economic development, public facilities, public infrastructure, and planning activities, with the principal purpose of benefiting low/moderate income persons.”

We understand the purpose of the public hearing is to get comments on the town’s community development needs, and “allow for citizen participation in the development of any proposed grant application.”

In fact, the request for public comments is bewildering as the Town has already identified the purpose of the application. The Town will be asking for public money for a “GOLD standard LEED building being built in the Coeymans Industrial Park by Carver Companies” for a company called Composite Technology and Infrastructure, LLC. In return the company would retain and relocate “125 jobs and create 50 new jobs”, with the funds being used “to purchase equipment”.

There are several problems with this public hearing and with this application.

1. A grant application requires considerable work, and this one needs to be sent in soon after the public hearing. Despite this, the Town does not have a copy of the application for review by tax payers, voters and residents in Coeymans. Without the application, how can people know whether this grant money would really benefit the community?
2. The Town notes that the purpose of the Community Development Block Grant is to benefit low/moderate income persons. However, as described on the Town’s website, the Town’s application will benefit a private business by buying equipment for a building Carver Companies is already constructing. Where is the community benefit in that?
3. To justify the use of public money for private gain, Composite Technology and Infrastructure LLC, has offered to retain or relocate 125 jobs while creating fifty new jobs, but these numbers are not trustworthy. According to the company’s online information, they only have 37 employees: 27 in Rochester and 10 in Coeymans. So how many jobs are really being offered here? How many would really go to Coeymans residents? What kind of work would they be doing, for what kind of pay? Where is the real community benefit this grant is supposed to provide?

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4. We have all seen the rapid expansion of the Port of Coeymans, the Coeymans Industrial Park and Carver Companies, but have we also seen an improvement in the quality of life for people who live in Coeymans? Would more industrial expansion bring residents a better quality of life, or simply create more industrial traffic and pollution? Will more people decide to work in Coeymans, but live somewhere else? How does the Coeymans community benefit from that?

The Community Block Development Grant could serve many goals - improving public health, investing in the library and activities for young people, improving or building more affordable housing for people in the Town, etc. We all know that public investment in public goods makes sense, so where are the Town's proposals on that?

The Coalition believes that Coeymans could be a town with a great future, backed by high standards of governance serving the good of all. That future will be harder to achieve if the Town proceeds with an application for public money that only benefits a single business, not the wider community.

We respectfully ask that the Town not submit this application on behalf of Carver Companies and Composite Technologies and Infrastructure LLC.

Supervisor McHugh stated the following in response to this letter:

After reading your letter, it is apparent there is some confusion. There are multiple applications that the Town is "considering" applying on behalf of two different businesses in the Coeymans Industrial Park, in exchange for job creation by each of these companies – not just one single application or project. On a separate but related note, aside from the projects involving Carver Companies and CTI, the town is also applying to CDBG for a water and sewer infrastructure grant.

Let me assure you that this is a preliminary meeting discussing the Town's desire to support the creating of LMI jobs, where people can and will be trained to fill positions that are currently open and for future jobs in the Town and region. The application for small business is an open round funding application, so there is plenty of time to have community input throughout the development of these depicted applications. There will be steering meetings to gather overall interests of the town residents and businesses. The town board and residents have been working hard to move this community forward in all aspects of responsible development; environmentally, economically, and aesthetically. The Town will be applying for a water and sewer infrastructure grant tomorrow through this 2021 competitive round of CDBG funding as the current infrastructure is old and lacking in capacity.

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As for the proposed applications, there is confusion in this response, so let me try to clear this up. The small business applications being proposed are in their initial phase of a multistage process. This is the time that the Town will answer questions, address concerns, and make sure that the residents are well represented in the process. Unfortunately, this letter from the coalition has intertwined two different projects together into one project. This has caused quite a lot of misconceptions.

The first proposed project is a building that Carver Companies is planning on construction that is in the development and design phase. This is a Gold Standard LEED Building. It will also have permeable pavement and a green roof, all things that will contribute to a more environmentally conscious building. This to me would appear to align itself with the concepts of clean air and water. Carver Companies is retaining 125 existing job that are dispersed throughout the state and moving them to the Coeymans Industrial Park, in this new energy conscious office building. In addition the company will be creating an additional 50 jobs to support companywide operations including the future development at the Port. This means more people to support the local economy in so many ways.

The second is a business as identified in this letter, Composite Technology and Infrastructure LLC, this company has invested in a location at the Industrial Park and is looking to expand its business offerings and job creation by purchasing additional specialized equipment to be able to offer more services and invest further in job creation. This company has pledged to create jobs to go along with this support and are willing to train LMI people for jobs that are currently open and jobs that will come with anticipated growth.

Both companies offer a competitive wage with benefits and residents are encouraged to apply to these companies for jobs.

The town supports these entities on behalf of the residents for the ability to have good paying jobs available to LMI residents. Investing in job creation at the Industrial Park is identified in the Town's Comprehensive Plan that was created and adopted with community input and support.

Thank you for your letter. I hope this response helps clear up the misconceptions as evidence by your letter.

Supervisor McHugh then emphasized that this is not one project but two. He stated that this is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan that received input from the community. He stated that the relocation of jobs would bring families, spending and more assessment to the Town. He stated that we currently have the lowest tax rate in over 20 years. He stated that we will get a fee to administer the grants.

Councilmember Baker stated that they depicted the building as already being constructed and asked Mr. Laraway to speak to that. Mr. Laraway stated that the building was not being constructed, the design was not complete and there was no building permit.

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Krystine Hilton stated that CTI currently has a building but that Carver Companies does not and CTI will be looking at expanding their services in the near future. She stated that these projects would be driving tax costs lower by increasing the tax base.

Supervisor McHugh then opened the floor for public comments again. As there were no comments he continued on with the following resolutions:

Resolutions

Resolution #136-21 – Authorize CDBG Application for Carver Companies

On motion of Councilmember Baker, seconded by Supervisor McHugh, the following resolution was: APPROVED – VOTE – AYES 3 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT 2 – SO MOVED

WHEREAS, Carver Companies has requested that the Town of Coeymans sponsor an application for pursuit of a New York State Community Development Block Grant (NYS CDBG) in which the NYS CDBG program will make approximately \$20 million dollars available to local governments under the CFA funding round for the 2021 program year; and

WHEREAS, the NYS CDBG Application shall require no out of pocket costs or expenses from the Town of Coeymans; and

WHEREAS, that the Town Board of the Town of Coeymans, in furtherance of the accompanying proposed New York State Community Development Block Grant Application, conducted a public hearing upon such proposed NYS CDBG Application on July 29th, 2021, at 6:00pm at Coeymans Town Hall, 18 Russell Ave., Ravena, NY 12143.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Coeymans does hereby authorize Nicole Ambrosio to pursue and submit applications for the aforementioned grant opportunities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Town Supervisor George D. McHugh is hereby authorized to execute any and all documents necessary to submit the subject grant application.

Resolution #137-21 – Authorize CDBG Application for CTI

On motion of Councilmember Bruno, seconded by Councilmember Baker, the following resolution was: APPROVED – VOTE – AYES 3 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT 2 – SO MOVED

WHEREAS, Composite Technology & Infrastructure, LLC (CTI) has requested that the Town of Coeymans sponsor an application for pursuit of a New York State Community Development Block Grant (NYS CDBG) in which the NYS CDBG program will make approximately \$20 million dollars available to local governments under the CFA funding round for the 2021 program year; and

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WHEREAS, the NYS CDBG Application shall require no out of pocket costs or expenses from the Town of Coeymans; and

WHEREAS, that the Town Board of the Town of Coeymans, in furtherance of the accompanying proposed New York State Community Development Block Grant Application, conducted a public hearing upon such proposed NYS CDBG Application on July 29th, 2021, at 6:00pm at Coeymans Town Hall, 18 Russell Ave., Ravena, NY 12143.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Coeymans does hereby authorize Nicole Ambrosio to pursue and submit applications for the aforementioned grant opportunities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Town Supervisor George D. McHugh is hereby authorized to execute any and all documents necessary to submit the subject grant application.

Supervisor then asked for a motion to close the public hearing and the special meeting.

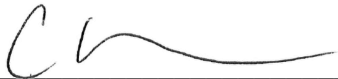
Motion to Close Public Hearing and Special Meeting

On motion of Councilmember Baker, seconded by Councilmember Bruno, the Public Hearing regarding the Community Block Development Grant and the Special Meeting was closed.

APPROVED – VOTE – AYES 3 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT 2 – SO MOVED

Time – 6:26pm

Respectfully Submitted,



Cindy L. Rowzee, Town Clerk