

The Town of Moriah Town Board held a Special Meeting on the Waterfront Economic Development Plan on Thursday, April 20, 2017 at 6:00pm at the Town of Moriah Court House, 42 Park Place, Port Henry, New York.

<b>Present:</b>	Thomas Scozzafava	Supervisor
	Paul Salerno	Councilman
	Thomas Anderson	Councilman
	Lucille Carpenter	Councilwoman
	Timothy Garrison	Councilman

**Others Present:** Michael Crane-Crane Associates, Hannah Murphy-Essex County Planning, Bill Trybendis, Lohrer McKinstry, Bill Bryant, Mark Davenport, Sharon O'Connor, Jackie & John Viestenz, Sue McHone, Cathy Sprague, Suzanne Maye, Debbie Henry, Tim Bryant, Linda Smyth, Jeff Kelly, Jim Curran, Ann Tesar and Rose French-Town Clerk.

Supervisor Scozzafava opened the meeting at 6:00pm.

The Supervisor introduced Michael Crane from Crane Associates who has been working on the Waterfront Economic Development Plan for the last 5-6 months. This has been paid through a grant from the NYS Department of State. The purpose is to make sure the Town is utilizing both campsites and the waterfront to its maximum potential. Mr. Crane reached out to the townspeople and the campers to get input on what they love/hate about the waterfront and what they would like to see done with it. Mr. Crane stated he had a great time getting to know everyone. He "came, saw and stayed". Mr. Crane also mentioned that this will be the last community meeting. Then he will present draft findings, write up final report and submit it. He also mentioned that there is a survey he would like everyone to take and fill out and have back to him by May 5, 2017.

In order to maximize economic development for the Town, Mr. Crane did the following three (3) steps:

1. Public Opinion
2. Economic Analysis
3. Strategic Planning

Mr. Crane then did a power point presentation on his findings:

Regarding revenue and expenses, Mr. Crane stated Bulwagga Bay Campsite is generating an "average" amount of profit. The Supervisor stated the Town had to take out a five (5) year BAN on the original Shoreline Erosion Project-accounting for the expenses. Mr. Crane said his analysis is for the year 2015 only. He also stated that the Town should be making a minimum of \$102,000 per year at Bulwagga Bay Campsite. It is the Towns largest non-taxable asset.

Mr. Crane proceeded to explain what the camper survey said and what the campers are looking for. Councilwoman Carpenter said they are looking for "glorified camping". The Supervisor stated that a lot of the campers feel it is an entitlement; some families have been camping there for generations. He also said the tax cap is critical. He feels the Town should not be in the campsite business. The Town raised the rates a few years ago and the Town took a big hit because of it. We need the campers to keep coming back. He feels we should be tapping into the Lake Placid Market. ROOST collects 1.2 million dollars from bed tax and Essex County does not see their "fair share" from it. Councilman Garrison stated we want boaters to stay here on Lake Champlain and not tow their boat somewhere else. Councilwoman Carpenter and Councilman Garrison agree that we are competing for the same area. The Supervisor asked Mr. Crane to give him a name of a campsite that is charging twice what we are, and Mr. Crane said one campsite in the study was from Lake George and they get \$7,000 for a seasonal site. Linda Smyth asked if the Supervisor would please let Mr. Crane finish his presentation.

Mr. Crane presented three (3) development scenarios he feels would generate the maximum value for the Moriah Waterfront:

Scenario #1:

### Improved Campground:

Improved landscaping, decrease density, aesthetic changes, youth and family activities, swimming pool, infrastructure improvements, new pricing structure, new management and marketing, new rules regarding aesthetics and reduce seasonal sites.

Cost: \$800,000.00

The Supervisor stated that when the Government is involved it is usually twice the cost. Councilman Salerno asked if this would be a lease and Mr. Crane said the developer would do it all. Mr. Crane said the developer would pay the Town \$102,000.00 if not more per year. Sites would be reduced to 140.

### Scenario #2:

Improved Campground *AND* Cabins/Yurts.

Cost: \$1,100,000.00

Councilwoman Carpenter asked if Scenario #2 would be seasonal and Mr. Crane said yes. Linda Smyth asked if the Cabins and Yurts would have bathrooms and Mr. Crane said no. The Supervisor asked if they had kitchens, and Mr. Crane said no. Mr. Crane also explained that the Cabins and Yurts would not be seasonal and they would be \$100 per night. Linda Smyth asked how many new employees would be needed and Mr. Crane said same as Scenario #1-6 employees. Tim Bryant said a cleaner would be needed also.

### Scenario #3:

Adirondack Lodge with Cabins and Yurts:

Lakefront and non-lakefront rooms, yurts, cabins, conference room, public restaurant, pool, public beach, accessible by boat, at least 20 full time jobs, 6-10 local contractors.

Cost: \$9.4 million.

Jeff Kelly asked if they would hire someone to run the facility and Mr. Crane said yes and that job would pay @ \$40,000.

The Supervisor reminded everyone again that the Town will not be selling either campsite. The Town couldn't, even if they wanted to, it would take action by the state legislature to sell it. He said the Town Board could chose to lease the campsites; however it would be subject to permissive referendum. The people of the Town of Moriah own the campsites, not the Town Board.

Councilwoman Carpenter asked if the Champ RV Park (former Village Beach) would be run by the Town or private. Mr. Crane stated that it would be owned by the Town but run by a Community Development Corporation and it would be open to the public.

Mr. Crane said the Town should investigate 485b tax breaks as a potential incentive for Developers. The Supervisor stated the Town already offers it. Businesses won't take it. Tim Bryant said he thinks Bryant's Lumber is the only business who takes it. Mr. Crane said the Town should establish an "Industrial & Commercial Incentive Board" or an Economic Development Committee. Councilwoman Carpenter said it takes the responsibility off of the Town Board and puts it on this committee. Mr. Crane referenced Mount Morris, New York who used funding from regional and state organizations and also municipal resources and private investors to better their community. Debbie Henry stated that Mount Morris has a State Park that attracts people, Moriah does not have that.

The Supervisor reported that the next phase would be to reach out to the Department of State for funding. There should be \$75,000.00 available from them for this phase. Mr. Crane said step 2 is to hire a developer and get a developer agreement. Finish the financial model. Councilman Anderson asked where the money is going to come from. The Supervisor stated that we need

“seed” money to get this project started. Mr. Crane said that would be the developer. Councilwoman Carpenter asked if what we needed now was a committee and an investor and Mr. Crane said yes. The Supervisor said we need money to get an investor interested. He also asked how many other hotels are on Lake Champlain and Mr. Crane said hardly any on the New York side. Sue McHone said there are some on the Vermont side near Burlington. Mr. Crane said there is the Basin Harbor Club and Linda Smyth said there used to be Camp Normandy. The Supervisor said that Camp Normandy went bankrupt. The Supervisor said in the 90’s we went through the same thing with Velez Marina. The Supervisor said we need something to attract a Developer like a restaurant. Sue McHone said it is a bad spot for a hotel right next to a waste water treatment facility and Councilwoman Carpenter said she has seen them in worst spots.

Mr. Crane said the Town has two (2) things going for it; The Town owns the land and can get 20% in state grants.

The Supervisor asked if Mr. Crane would be interested in and how much would he charge to go after a developer for the Town.

Councilman Salerno voiced his concern about the winter months. He stated that Lake George in the winter is a ghost town. He asked what the draw in the winter would be. Mr. Crane stated that is the developer’s problem. Councilwoman Carpenter stated that would not be the Town’s responsibility. Councilman Garrison stated the Town would be guaranteed a stipend. He feels business will develop on Main Street with Scenario #3.

Councilwoman Carpenter asked if the first step was to get a developer and form a committee, but how do we form a committee. Mr. Crane stated that you have to find people who are interested with a lot of energy and they would need a “leader”. Councilman Garrison stated the committee would need a facilitator.

Councilwoman Carpenter asked about funding in the future and Mr. Crane stated there is money to start the process. The Supervisor stated there is \$75,000.00 from the Department of State for the next step. Mr. Crane would like to see the Town use Port Henry Beach as the money maker. Tim Bryant expressed his concern that the revenue from this beach is already in the budget. Debbie Henry asked how long the Town would be without revenue and Mr. Crane said approximately 18 months. The Supervisor said when the budget was done; \$30,000 revenue was put in for Port Henry Beach. It will leave a hole in the budget. Mr. Crane said there will be a transition period during the construction phase. Tim Bryant asked how the Town is going to stay afloat during this phase and Mr. Crane said to start with Government grants and then find a developer and see if the model works. Cathy Sprague said the Town of Ticonderoga received funding from government grants; the Supervisor is not sure what grants these are. The Supervisor said we need to get a consultant on board to help us, like Michael Crane. He also said that Ticonderoga gets grant money because they have “skin in the game”, people who are willing to work hard to go after the money. Councilwoman Carpenter asked what we would use as revenue and Councilman Anderson asked if the process would start when we had a developer. Mr. Crane said he would like to see Port Henry Beach used as revenue for the project. 25 Yurts would bring in \$30,000 a season easily. Tim Bryant said the Town could get one grant for \$75,000 for startup, but if construction lasts between 18-24 months, he worries we will run out of money and then what happens, just walk away. The Supervisor stated that income is critical to property tax in this area.

Suzanne Maye asked if the plan was on line. Mr. Crane said it could be. The Supervisor asked Suzanne Maye if ROOST could help with the development process and she said no, just the planning part. The IDA is more geared for that.

Mr. Crane would like everyone to fill out the survey, get a committee together and start finding some funding. Jeff Kelly asked if he was interested in helping us find a developer, and Mr. Crane said he might be. Linda Smyth asked if Mr. Crane has worked with other Towns that are “economically depressed” and Mr. Crane said yes, he has. Cathy Sprague asked if they were as bad as Moriah. Councilman Anderson asked if we had hope and Mr. Crane said there are ample opportunities here. The Town of Moriah is in the middle of a transition.

Suzanne Maye said she feels that sometimes as residents we need to appreciate where we are more. Mark Davenport said it takes everybody to believe that we can do this. Councilwoman Carpenter said we have to encourage people, have to be open to change. Councilman Garrison said we have two (2) choices, stay the same or move forward.

The Supervisor stated again that the Town of Moriah should not be in the Campsite business.

Councilman Salerno told Mr. Crane he feels he did not answer Mr. Bryant's question regarding how and where do we get the money to get started and keep going. Councilwoman Carpenter said it is up to the "committee" to generate these funds. Mr. Crane stated the Town has to have a business plan. Councilman Salerno said it feels like we are "gambling", Mr. Crane said it is an investment. Sue McHone said if this falls through and we don't get a developer, we still have a campsite.

Mark Davenport would like to see the Dollar General rebuild.

Sharon O'Connor said we need to get a committee together; we will get out of this project what we put in to it. Now is the time. She would like to thank Michael Crane for all of his hard work and the presentation.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

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Town Clerk