

**Village of Walden
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
December 1, 2020**

Mayor Taylor called the regular meeting of the Village of Walden Board of Trustees to order at 6:30pm.

On roll call the following were:	Mayor:	Susan Taylor
Present:	Deputy Mayor	John Ramos
	Trustees	Brian Sebring
		Willie Carley
		John Elliott
		Cheryl Baker
		Lynn E. Thompson

Absent:

Also Present:	John Revella, Village Manager
	Marisa Kraus, Village Clerk
	Kelly A. Kelly, Village Treasurer
	Dave Donovan, Village Attorney

Presentation – Greater Montgomery Business Council

Randi Picarello: I'm approaching all 3 Villages as well as the IDA for a membership with the Business Council for 2021. We're asking the IDA for the highest membership, which is \$5,000. Then we're asking each municipality to maintain a membership at the \$2,500 level. The thought process behind it being that the end goal is to build out the mentorship program at the middle school and high school level, to get the businesses working together and make sure that we're paying attention to what store fronts are open and available, taking surveys of prospective tourists and residents to see what services and stores they'd like to see in these businesses, and then helping to advertise them to get them full. We'll also be working on maintaining each Village's unique events and character, but trying to pay attention more together as business districts to take the good that Walden has done and bring it to Montgomery and vice versa. So, those are just some of the things that we'll be working on, but the main goal in the end is obviously a boost in economic development and tourism, which is why we'd like all of the municipalities to carry a membership so that the memberships that the businesses are carrying are really just going towards investing in their advertising and marketing and their mentorship programs, because we're going to do a business to business curriculum as well to mentor all incoming small business owners and new small business owners that are interested in learning more about all the different aspects of entrepreneurship.

Trustee Thompson: I know from some of the place making and other things that I've been involved in with you, Randi, how are you going to propose moving forward with this with some of the difficulties we encounter with some of the landlords?

Randi Picarello: It's not going to be easy. That portion of it, to really hold the landlords accountable. I think that we've been doing a little bit of research on how other municipalities are doing that. I did touch on that in place making, we do have a realtor on our board. I recently got my realtor's license as well. I'm trying to initially just use avenues of communication and following up with people and just trying to be kind and productive and see what we can do and approach it in a way of what can I do to help you if you're not a local landlord and maybe do incorporate some of it into community clean up days or beautification days or some of the Cub Scouts doing their projects

to spruce up some of these storefronts. In that way, as far as how they look, that's how I'm planning on approaching it. If it works or doesn't work, remains to be seen. But we are researching in the meantime with other municipalities. As far as getting the spaces filled, the end goal for me and I'm also researching the legalities and the different ways we can do this is doing like a mini pilot program for these businesses to get them full. But that's like a 2 year plan. Giving the landlords an incentive to assist a new business in coming in to build out the storefront the way that they would need it to work properly for them. So, whether that is incentivizing it to lower the rent or give them a free couple of months rent or to assist in making sure everything's up to code, I'm not sure exactly how that will look, but that's my goal.

Trustee Thompson: I think that's going to be, I don't want to sound negative or discouraging, from past experience, I think that's going to be a formidable task. I applaud you for even attempting to tackle that, because that's a huge hurdle in our Village.

Randi Picarello: I know and I recognize that and I appreciate it. I think a lot of what I've heard over the last 8 years in the Villages, we've tried that and it didn't work and not just from you, I mean from everybody. I just think I'm trying to assemble as many people that are just done hearing it and want to keep trying different ways until we can't possibly try anymore. I think we have the makings within the 3 Villages and the Town. We have the makings right now for like a huge tourist weekend destination. People do want to develop here. And we do have a chance to dictate a little bit more what kind of development we want or what we would call for it and we need to start really looking at how we can be more active in that. Not that I don't care that it hasn't worked before, but I'm not interested in how it didn't work before, I just want to try every way we possibly can to make it work this time.

Trustee Thompson: I definitely think the timing for this is excellent. I think the interest right now is at an all time high to make something like this succeed. I'd like to hear more about exactly how you plan on getting this off the ground. I'm willing to help you.

Randi Picarello: The committee meetings, we have just separated into 4 or 5 committees, I believe, and the committee meetings will all be open to the public. I can send out the list of when they'll be over the next couple of months.

Trustee Carley: The Chamber of Commerce, are you the same as the one in Montgomery, or is this something different?

Randi Picarello: This is different from the Chamber of Commerce.

Trustee Carley: Okay, what's the difference?

Randi Picarello: Some of that is outlined in the packet that was sent out, but the main difference is in addition to this being a chamber, there is a chamber component to it, of course, because it's structured around the businesses and a lot of networking. But the main difference, I would say, is that it's more of a value in education than just a networking group. We're investing in our younger workforce and we are building out mentorship program with the school, as well as a curriculum for business to business mentorship as well. We're really trying to make sure that more than discounts and deals, we're connecting people with people. We're trying to get every business that operates in the Town and all 3 Villages to utilize as many local services. I think that people don't realize the difference in the quality that you get when you use a local accountant, a local attorney, a local insurance agent, that you're putting a face to the name. Although you might be paying a little bit more that you have someone that's accountable to you, and if we're all accountable to each other, we're all kind of investing in everyone's being a little bit more solvent as a business. And the more

businesses that we have that survive here long term, the better off we all are as a whole. That's one of the differences. Every single member that joins gets a one on one and we talk about your business plan. We go over what your 10 year plan is, what you think you might want to do, where your business plan is lacking, people that we can connect you with to build that out a little bit. We do have some pretty lofty goals with our mentorship program as well.

Trustee Carley: The mentorship is for K through 12?

Randi Picarello: It's going to start at the high school level for the next year or 2. If you go on the website, threevillages.org, there's a video on there where there's a tour of what we are calling the 112 Building, its 112 Bracken Road. We're looking at doing something in the next probably 3 to 4 years. I don't know if you're familiar with the Newburgh Armory, but something similar to that where there's learning pods and an after school and weekend program for kids so we can start them younger and younger and younger.

Trustee Carley: Yes, I'm familiar with Mr. Kaplan and that whole thing in Newburgh. The video is that the one that Brian Maher is on?

Randi Picarello: Yes.

Mayor Taylor: Maybe with what's going on now with the Covid, I think, as Lynn said, the timing is probably great for this because we may be seeing a change in how people shop instead of big malls, big crowds. I think small businesses may make a comeback. We know a lot of small businesses, at least in our Village, had a problem with local support. People were going to a big supermarket, they could get everything there, and they had no need to utilize a small business in the Villages or at least in our Village, because they could get everything one stop shopping. I think that kind of frame of mind may be changing now. Maybe people are going to come back to their smaller businesses in their communities and support them. That was a big issue in the Village. I know as a former small business owner in the Village, I happened to be lucky. I got a lot of community support, but some of my fellow business owners in the Village weren't as lucky. Don't know the reason for it other than one stop shopping and not having to walk through the Village to get to businesses. I think that's a great idea just for the purposes of people that are online that they couldn't read the packet, what is the membership monies used for?

Randi Picarello: The membership monies will be used for things like any supplies we would need for any beautification efforts, putting into the events and the fundraisers to obviously recoup some of that money. But a lot of the events, we're going to try to do 1 a quarter, that include all of the businesses all 3 Villages and the Town area. Advertising, marketing, doing some print ads as well. We're looking into a couple of different survey services to make sure that we're consistently keeping up on seeing how each Village identifies themselves and how we can best fit businesses that would suit each Village individually. Everyday costs. Right now we have office space being donated by the Town. I don't know that that will always be how it is. Working expenses and payroll. There's 1 employee, which is me and the rest of the board is volunteers.

Manager Revella: I did talk to Randi about our budget. It runs from June 1st to May 31st. We don't start budget discussions until March/April. So, if we're going to take on something like this, it is going to be hard for us to contemplate that until we do our budget at that time. Since we have a lot of negative effects on our budget this year from sales tax and other things. It'd be hard pressed to do that with those impacts.

Mayor Taylor: Right and you understand that, Randi? You want to make a commitment, but you need the financial wherewithal to do that financial commitment. That would be the time frame.

Randi Picarello: I'm not looking for a commitment tonight. I wanted to make sure that I'm introducing everybody to the idea and they can reach out to me. We can meet one on one. You can come to committee meetings and you'll have some time between now and then to see how valuable you think it is. I think \$2,500 is not impossible to find and if it's something that's not valuable, then there's no reason to do it, especially in a time like this. I think it's something that's reasonable if everyone finds the value in it.

Trustee Carley: The connection with the Chamber of Commerce is just to link to or something different?

Randi Picarello: There is no connection to the Chamber of Commerce. As far as my understanding is that they're not really a functioning unit. They were all invited to combine with us prior to us formally forming. The existing board members were all invited to a board meeting of ours prior to us starting the formal board. They have varying degrees of interest, but have not made any commitment as to what they're doing as a chamber, what their involvement would be in the Business Council. I wanted everyone that wanted to be a part of this. John Fallon is on the list participating in the Chamber of Commerce prior to this. But other than that, I've worked with a couple of the members from the previous Chamber of Commerce. They were all invited to become a part and come together and move forward together. I don't know that that's something they're interested in doing, but I don't think that they're very active overall anyway.

Trustee Thompson: Are you participating at all to move this forward with the Orange County Partnership at all?

Randi Picarello: No. Not to say that I wouldn't in the future, but I wanted to make sure that everyone as far as each Village, the Town and our IDA are all in agreement and support of this effort before I bring someone like the Partnership into it, although I think it could be beneficial, it would also be very controversial, in my opinion, at this time.

Trustee Thompson: I agree.

Trustee Sebring: With your committees that you said you have, can you send our Village Clerk, Marisa, the names and times and dates of when they will be meeting? So all of us will have that information in front of us.

Randi Picarello: Yes.

Village Manager's Report

Manager Revella: We had a short week last week due to holidays, but the Public Works and Parks have been setting up the Village for Christmas in the Square. Everything's decorated. They worked on getting the catch basins cleaned up, the rain storms recently filled them back up again, obviously, but they clean them up again today. CSEA, we had some back and forth with their attorneys and also with PBA. We'll talk about that more in exec. The Clerk got some FOILs done. Went through those with our attorney. Updated website and Facebook. There were a few issues with the wells and the sewer pump. Actually, last night we got pushed a little farther back on Pond Rd pump station. We have to do some work over there now. We had an electric issue at Well 8 for water wells that's being fixed now. It was a faulty wire. They're trying to fix that. Sweeper has been out a little bit, but depending on the weather. It can't be out if it's too cold. The sidewalks are done on Maple and Walnut. They put the straw down for the grass seed. Public Works are pretty much ready for winter. Hopefully, it's not too rough on us, but they're prepared. Everything in the Parks is winterized, just waiting to take the next step after Christmas in the Square. I was away last week

and Dean was away last week, but Dean's been training up and making sure the new employee has the training they need to do the job. They're going to be in the next code class that's coming up to get their certifications. They've been going through and doing some inspections on vacant properties. That's a big one. Some follow up for some code enforcement issues, finally, now that we have the court open to help us out with those and land registry issues. We're starting to see the end of those finally.

Trustee Sebring: Ask Mike if he had the Veterans Park sprinkler system winterized.

Manager Revella: He did.

Trustee Thompson: I'm curious, I understand that there will be some alterations with the Christmas tree ceremony festivities. Are they still meeting in the church for the Santa Claus, for the children?

Manager Revella: They have a social distance with Santa setup. So, everyone's going to be socially distanced and separated and they have everything sanitized and prepackaged, so there are no issues with touching things.

Mayor Taylor: 1 family at a time can go in the church.

Trustee Thompson: That's kind of how they have always done it, that's why I was questioning what's going to be different with that. A little more enforcement?

Manager Revella: It's not as long. It's shorter and more spread out and there's not as many people participating because they can't.

Trustee Baker: Has there been any headway or any word about replacing on the sidewalks, the red bumps that are missing, like on Pine Street and also at the intersection here by the Municipal Square?

Manager Revella: The ones by Pine Street, we have to talk to DOT for that and it takes a little bit longer, but it'll happen. We had a kind of an ADA type meeting with the DOT rep to make sure that they were aware of the ADA issues with those bumps, the textured sidewalk, and that's what that's for, ADA compliance. The ones for ours, we have a concrete contractor that can do them just depends on weather. They just finished the big project. So, depending on the weather, if they can get to other ones, because they actually have to cut that whole piece out and redo the whole piece, they're set in the concrete itself.

Mayor Taylor: I see that we're still having issues with flushable wipes in the Village. I know we've sent out notices. Any ideas about how to get the word out to people? They say they're flushable, but they'll go down, but after that, there's an issue with the sewer system.

Manager Revella: They clog our system completely. We'll keep sending notifications and we'll keep trying to send notifications as often as we can and can put it on the calendar. We'll do it again on the next bill as well. We have some other language to put on there, too, that Dave suggested. So, we'll work on that.

Mayor Taylor: Is there any way to possibly encourage landlords to maybe post something in their buildings or get something to their tenants? Not everybody reads the minutes online. Some people don't see the water bill, because it goes to a landlord instead of a tenant.

Manager Revella: Yes, we can start work on that, putting fillers into mailers.

Mayor Taylor: As I read the report from Fred, it's really an issue.

Trustee Thompson: Is that something, I don't know if it's appropriate or not, when Dean schedules the fire and safety inspections on the rental properties, can he can he provide that information to the landlords as well?

Manager Revella: That's what I was thinking about, putting in an insert on anything we're mailing out.

Trustee Thompson: It doesn't necessarily have to stop with the Water and Sewer department. It can come from the Building Department as well.

Manager Revella: It's the best way to get to landlords.

Approval of November 5 & November 17, 2020 Minutes

Deputy Mayor Ramos made a motion to approve the November 5 & November 17, 2020 Minutes. Seconded by Trustee Sebring. All ayes. Motion carried.

Action Items

Resolution 10-20-21 – Records Retention Policy

Attorney Donovan: We did this when the prior policy came down from the State about 7 years ago. This is just the new requirement that we have to adopt so that we're in conformance with the State requirements as far as record retention.

Deputy Mayor Ramos made a motion to adopt Resolution 10-20-21 Record Retention Policy. Seconded by Trustee Thompson. All ayes. Motion carried.

Police Reform

Manager Revella: I just really want to make sure the public was aware that the Board has been reviewing all of the police policies and procedures in accordance with the executive order 203. We posted in numerous places the reform provisions and the meeting times and locations. We have public meetings coming up December 7th at 6 p.m., January 4th at 6 p.m., February 1st at 6 p.m. and March 1st at 6 p.m. for input from the public on these various things. We'll be discussing those in public at those meetings as well. Various sections of those policies and procedures that the public is aware of. If there's a need for change or any comments from the public, obviously we'll take that into consideration. The Board will consider whether if they need to make changes or some revisions.

Mayor Taylor: Right now, is that first meeting in December supposed to be public or we're going to go Zoom?

Manager Revella: It is public, but likely to be Zoom on Facebook live stream as well.

Attorney Donovan: Generally speaking, just for the benefit of the Board. The executive order came down a while ago and the states come out with some guidance. That doesn't there's no required format for us to do this. The state recommends a 4 part planning process, part 1 being a review of the existing department procedures about policies. That's why you have those now. The 2nd part is kind of a listening part, and that's what's envisioned by the various public meetings. The public has the ability to comment. The 3rd part is an identification of what may need to be changed. And the 4th part is the extent required adoption of modifications to our policies and procedures and

adopted by the board. That's kind of what the vision is and it's been laid out. Trustee Carley has done work in setting forth kind of a schedule and what's going to be addressed at what period of time. It's a nice format for the Board to review it, for the public to comment. While we have our own views on state mandates, we also can look at this as an opportunity to have a better police force. Chief Herlihy is on board with this and I think if we view it as an opportunity to improve, it's going to be good for everyone in the Village.

Mayor Taylor: Thank you for doing that, Willie. Much appreciated.

Trustee Carley: You're welcome.

Annexation - Biagini

Manager Revella: Our time frame since the initial vote is pending. We don't have a lot of time left, so I wanted to make sure it's on the agenda for anything that needs to come up or be discussed.

Attorney Donovan: The 90 day period would expire December 15th. We have the petition, we've had conversations, we have a full environmental assessment form. We've circulated that with the Town of Montgomery. To the extent the Board satisfied to move forward, what we need to do on the 15th is adopt a Negative Declaration relative to the SEQR process and if the board's inclined to go forward, you would adopt a resolution determining if the annexation is in the overall public interest and approve the annexation. We need to coordinate with the Town and the Manager and I will do that if the Board's inclined to move forward at the next meeting, because the Town would have to adopt the same resolution in terms of determining if the annexation is in the public interest.

Manager Revella: Just want to make sure the resolution needs to be in the final form for the next meeting?

Attorney Donovan: That's correct.

Manager Revella: We need to make sure that the board has their stipulation in there, like they want to make sure the zone that's coming in as is the correct zone first. That's the most important part.

Attorney Donovan: At that time, you designate the zone. My understanding from our discussion is R3 the correct zone?

Manager Revella: R3 is the largest zone.

Mayor Taylor: Any Board members have any questions, something they're not clear on, you can send them to the Manager. I hope that John Elliott, Willie and Cheryl have been brought up to speed about what this is all about. I'm concerned that they may not have all the information. Has that been given to them? Do they have that so they have a clear understanding of what we're talking about?

Manager Revella: I know they have the full EAF. I have the maps in my office for them to review, if they have time to check those. They're big and fold out so it's hard to really scan that size paper.

Trustee Baker: I have reviewed the maps in John's office.

Mayor Taylor: If everybody can review them, ask any questions that you have, I know it's hard to play catch up, but it's a big decision for the Village to annex that property in. So, if everybody can kind of be up to speed, if you have any questions, please get with John Revella so that on the 15th we can have a discussion and see if the Board is inclined to move forward at that time.

Resolution 11-20-21 – Designate Time and Place for Annual Village Elections

Mayor Taylor: I know I've asked you this before, we know the Covid numbers are rising and there's concern that we're not getting any direction from Albany as far as signatures have to be gathered on petitions in January. Are there any suggestions from Albany or alternative ways to gather those signatures other than going door to door?

Manager Revella: Not yet. They have not given any guidance yet. You have to go door to door still in the middle of winter when people are more susceptible right now.

Deputy Mayor Ramos: I did talk to the Board of Election again. I've been in contact with them at least once a week and they have not received any guidance from Albany as of yet. So, it will be forthcoming as soon as they get it. It's the same game plan for January 1st. We'll see when it comes next 30 days.

Mayor Taylor: Can we reach out again? The Governor speaks practically on a daily basis about the dangers and self-quarantining, staying away from groups. I would think that this would be something that he might want to think about and address. I wouldn't even use the word encouraging, forcing people who want to run for office to have to go out and gather these signatures and go door to door.

Manager Revella: It's brought up at every county meeting that we have on Covid and we have no answer. The County Exec has been asking. Marisa was actually in a course the other day and no change.

Deputy Mayor Ramos made a motion to adopt Resolution 11-20-21 Designating Place and Time of Annual Election for March 16, 2021 in the 3rd Floor Bradley Assembly Room. Seconded by Trustee Sebring. All ayes. Motion carried.

Payment of Audited Bills

Trustee Thompson made a motion to approve Payment of Audited Bills. Seconded by Deputy Mayor Ramos. All ayes. Motion carried.

Correspondence

Trustee Sebring: I did get a message from Becky Pearson about us turning down that project on the end of Northern Avenue.

Trustee Thompson: I received the correspondence from Rebecca about Northern Avenue and also regarding the upcoming discussion on the annexation, and I also received more information from the Winum family. They're still having difficulty with the bus company. I believe she sent that to everyone.

Trustee Baker: The same as they had mentioned from Mrs. Pearson and then the Winum's and also I had several people reach out to me in regards to the refuse service in the Village. They feel they pay more for the service in their taxes than if they bought their own service, had different company come in. I guess lot of them complain that they don't get the service on time. They get missed deliveries and they feel that they're paying more for it than if they just got their own service. They wanted to know if there was a possibility of them not have it on their taxes and their ability to get their own service that they feel would be more suitable for their needs.

Deputy Mayor Ramos: I, too, received an email from Mr. and Mrs. Winum about the busing. I did talk to Mr. Mench. He is going to divert that one light that hadn't been used in almost 9 years. He's going to divert it in a different direction. He's with the Building Department trying to get his

property in shape. They're closing at the end of the month and he's just trying to do his best. I shot him a picture of what the Winum's sent us and he's going to do his due diligence and making this possible and be a good neighbor. Received the email from Mrs. Pearson and I got a letter from Mrs. Hernandez, thanking me and what a great job the Police Department has been doing and helping her out.

Mayor Taylor: Any timeline for that light issue to be remedied?

Deputy Mayor Ramos: I was hoping that he was working on it the day I called them, which I believe was Monday. I haven't driven past there in the dark yet and we haven't gotten any more correspondence from the Winums. That light was in actuality was not functioning. Historically, the Amthor property just didn't activate that light and where the light is illuminating is where all the bus employees are parking their vehicles. There has to be some illumination, especially early in the morning. But I asked Mr. Mench if he could just explore the fact to set another light pole to the east corner of the property, pointing toward the parking area and away from the Winum family. He is in agreement of possibly doing anything. But it's a slow process and he's going to try and remedy that.

Mayor Taylor: I received the same correspondence from Becky Pearson and from the Winum family. Obviously, it's a concern. They've been talking about the lights for a long period of time. I guess the process is really slow.

Miscellaneous Comments from the Board of Trustees

Trustee Thompson: We voted quite some time ago about redefining our liaison roles and nothing has happened. I think it's time to revisit that and we have several new people on the board, so I'm wondering if we want to revisit the entire topic and perhaps discuss that again about redefining the roles or reevaluating whether we should go back to the way we were doing the liaison roles, but I feel like there is a need to do something and we've let it sit for way too long. I would really like people to think about it and perhaps get it on to an upcoming agenda for a future discussion.

Deputy Mayor Ramos: I'd like to thank Parks and Rec, DPW, the Police Department and the obviously the wonderful work on the direction of the tree and the ornaments and the decorations around the Village Hall. I want to thank them personally and on behalf of the Board.

Mayor Taylor: Ditto on the tree. Beautiful. Thank you so much for the donation, absolutely gorgeous. Probably the most beautiful tree I've seen in a long time. A shame it has to be this year when a lot of people aren't going to get to enjoy it the way we usually did. If anyone wants to revisit that issue that Lynn was just talking about, please let me know. We can put it on an agenda in the future and see where we want to go with this maybe we can get, I know former Deputy Mayor Moore was working on that issue. I don't know if she shared the paperwork, what she had done. I can look and maybe Marisa can search and see if we have any of those notes that she had, if they were ever prepared and given to us in a format where they could be retrieved and given especially to the new board members so they could see what the conversations were, what the liaison positions were and how we came to drop them in essence.

Executive Session – Collective Bargaining Negotiations with PBA, CSEA

Trustee Sebring made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss collective bargaining negotiations with PBA, CSEA. Seconded by Trustee Thompson. All ayes. Motion carried.

Reconvene

Trustee Thompson made a motion to reconvene the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees. Seconded by Trustee Sebring. All ayes. Motion carried.

**Village of Walden Board of Trustees
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December 1, 2020
Motions & Resolutions**

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