

**Webster Town Board**

January 12, 2023

A workshop meeting of the Webster Town Board was called to order by Supervisor Flaherty at 5:30 p.m. at the Webster Town Board Meeting Room, 1002 Ridge Road, Webster, New York, with the following officials present:

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| Supervisor.....    | Thomas J. Flaherty  |
| Councilman.....    | William G. Abbott   |
| Councilwoman.....  | Patricia T. Cataldi |
| Councilwoman.....  | Ginny L. Nguyen     |
| Town Attorney..... | Charles J. Genese   |
| Town Clerk.....    | Dorothy M. Maguire  |

Absent:

|                 |                |
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| Councilman..... | John J. Cahill |
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Department Heads Present:

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| Community Development Director..... | Josh Artuso |
| Finance Director.....               | Paul Adams  |

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Supervisor Flaherty announced a Public Hearing to consider pursuing RESTORE NY funding for West Webster Hamlet Revitalization, specifically properties located at 600 Ridge Road, 602 Ridge Road, 1041 Gravel Road and 1043 Gravel Road.

At 5:31 p.m. Supervisor Flaherty opened the Public Hearing.

Matt Chatfield, Webster Economic Development Alliance Executive Director, appeared before the Town Board for a presentation on the RESTORE NY Communities Initiative, Municipal Grant Program.

Mr. Chatfield described the Grant Program and the application process. The Grant Program provides financial assistance only to municipalities. Municipalities can apply for the funds and are able to either conduct rehabilitation projects themselves if they own the property, or they can enter into a contract with a private property owner whereby the private property owner would conduct the rehabilitation project. Reimbursement would take place upon completion of the project. Monies would flow from the State to the Town and then to the private entity. There are no residential components being contemplated, only commercial properties. The eligible buildings need to be vacant, abandoned, condemned or surplus. A whole host of things can be done with the buildings including demolition, rehabilitation, deconstruction and reconstruction. The contemplated project for this application is to rehabilitate the structures that are being identified. Projects should be either consistent with nearby and adjacent properties or consistent with the municipality’s local revitalization or Comprehensive Plan. Municipal used buildings are not eligible for the Program. The goal is to revitalize urban centers. For a significant period, the West Webster Hamlet has been a focus of continued revitalization. The Town was awarded approximately \$100,000.00 last year to conduct a master planning effort for the Hamlet and is one of multiple projects that are happening simultaneously.

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Mr. Chatfield stated that the Town would be eligible to apply for up to \$2 million for this project. The five sites identified were 600 Ridge Road, 602 Ridge Road, 603 Ridge Road, 1041 Gravel Road and 1043 Gravel Road. To date, the owners of the two sites located on Gravel Road have shown no strong interest in participating in the program. There is hope they will be interested but if not, they will not be included in the final application. The total investment for the other three properties being projected in the community is approximately \$3.4 million. The Town's anticipated RESTORE NY application request for 600 Ridge Road, 602 Ridge Road and 603 Ridge Road is \$1.61 million.

Joe Kozelsky, Webster Resident, read aloud the following statement and provided a copy to the Town Clerk.

Mr. Supervisor, members of the Town Board and others. Thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening. I wish to talk about "A hidden gem in plain sight".

We live in Hillsboro Cove, just off Bay Road, directly at the west end of Ridge Road. As such, we drive along Ridge Road frequently, as do our neighbors. Every time I drive along this section of the road, I marvel at how unique it is that the ridge is elevated from the base ground levels on either side by 10 or 15 feet or so. I have mentioned this to some of my neighbors who also travel this road and they said they never noticed that as they were driving along the ridge.

It is highly unusual for a town or settlement to not develop along a stream, river or other waterfront. But Webster owes its existence to a ridge of which at least some people are not even aware of and probably few realize that this was the reason why Webster came to exist.

Yet, the Town of Webster along with the Towns of Ontario, Williamson and Sodus, owe their very existence to the ridge that runs through these communities, which developed along Ridge Road. Originally it was a game trail, then an Indian trail, then a dirt road, then a Federal highway and now most of it is a State road.

That it is unseen could be in part because as the Town develops, more and more of it becomes obliterated, as we have seen recently with the opening of one of my favorite stores, the new Country Max store adjacent to the Creek Edge Farm Market. As the Town continues to develop, it is possible that more and more of the ridge will be lost.

The Webster Furniture Strippers and the Jade Palace buildings are both situated on the ridge and serve as central focal point of this section of the ridge. Many people feel it is desirable that they be preserved, and many uses have been suggested. Those buildings and all the stretch from Empire Blvd. to Bay Road would not exist but for the ridge. Yet the ridge goes unrecognized.

The Town has asked for ideas pertaining to this area. My thoughts are as follows:

1. This section of road represents many historical stages of the development of Webster in general and West Webster in particular; and there are several architectural types of structures representative of the different periods of development along the ridge.
2. The Webster Furniture Strippers building is classical Greek Revival most likely dating back to the early 1800s. The Jade Palace building is stated as being from 1883.

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3. There are many front gable side wing structures from the 1850s and 60s.
4. I was told once that the Webster House Picture Framing Building is one of the very first structures along this stretch of road. It is very well preserved.
5. There are newer structures up to and including some more modern ranch homes, situated right on the ridge.
6. There are several (11?) Revolutionary War Veterans in the Cemetery at Ridge and Maple Drive.
7. There is at least one, one room schoolhouse and also a Sears and Roebucks house.

This section of Ridge Road is truly unique, and I would suggest that the Town of Webster strive to preserve it and celebrate it as much of it as possible. If it were to be designated as a historical preservation district, it likely would turn into a very desirable section to live, with associated increases in property values for all the owners along this section of Ridge Road.

The Town of Webster should take advantage of this unseen unique hidden gem and do what it can to preserve and celebrate the ridge it resides upon. I can envision some ways in which such a project could be approached. Again, thank you for the opportunity to present.

K. Judy Zicari, Webster Resident, stated she wholeheartedly agrees to Mr. Kozelsky's comments. She would like to conserve the history of the area and does not want to see any more commercial development or have the zoning changed. She would like to see the sidewalk extended from Route 404 to Five Mile Line Road.

Lynn Barton, Webster Resident and Town Historian, is happy the Town wants to protect the Furniture Stripper's Building located at 600 Ridge Road. She believes in adaptive reuse of older structures and is hoping it can be preserved along with the old hotel. Hotels usually do not survive in towns and villages. West Webster is an area that has not been well documented through the years. The museum did a lot of research last year, but they are always going to be looking for more photos and history on the buildings in that area. She stated she does not know if sidewalks are possible in the future, but it would be nice in the four corners area. Having good sidewalks in that area may be an encouragement to businesses to locate to West Webster.

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:06 p.m.

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An update on future plans for available American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds was provided by Paul Adams, Finance Director.

As of December 31, 2022, the Town of Webster has received \$4,050,860.00 in ARPA Funds and spent \$1,868,361 with \$2,182,499.00 remaining. A timeline for use of the funds was presented. Eligible expenses must be incurred between 3/31/21 – 12/31/2024, funds must be obligated by 12/31/24 and construction may continue beyond 12/31/24 and the period of performance will run until 12/31/26.

After discussion, it was the consensus of the Town Board to come up with a proposed plan on the use of the remaining ARPA Funds.

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An update on Exemption Income Limits for Limited Income Seniors (RPTL 467) and Disabled Persons with Limited Income (RPTL 459-c) was provided by Donna Komor, Assessor.

On September 8, 2022, a presentation was made to the Town Board on the Exemption Income Limits for Limited Income Seniors and Disabled Persons with Limited Income. Adopting the exemptions would require a separate and distinct Public Hearing for each. If the Town Board wishes to make any alterations to either of the exemptions, they have the opportunity and the objective to set the income limit for the 50% level of benefit between \$3,000.00 and \$50,000.00. The Town is currently at \$26,000.00. By March 1, 2023, the options for the 2023 assessment roll are: do nothing, and the exemption would remain in place as it has been since 2010; lower the Town income limit level for 50%; raise the Town income limit for the 50% benefit; or revisit the question in future years.

There are five deciding tax jurisdictions found on the Town of Webster assessment roll: Monroe County, Webster Central School District, Town of Webster, Village of Webster and Wayne Central School District. On January 10, 2023, Monroe County adopted the new State maximum. Webster Central School District is taking no action and the Village of Webster is pending. No information has been received from Wayne Central School District which has 44 parcels. The majority of the Towns within Monroe County are opting to take no action at this time.

After general discussion, it was the consensus of the Town Board to take no action on the matter and revisit it in one year after more data becomes available.

Brought to the Town Board's attention was new legislation signed by the Governor on December 23, 2022 that requires an annual mailing to all residential properties to repeat an eligibility senior citizen tax exemption notice found on the tax bills. A quote of \$7,311.00 to send out the mailing including postage has been received. Other quotes are being obtained.

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Jim Montgomery, Code Compliance Officer, appeared before the Town Board to present the concept of Residential Refuse Collection Zones.

A Residential Refuse Collection Zone is a zone or defined area within the Town that is created and enforced jointly by the Highway Superintendent and the Code Compliance Officer. Zones are assigned specific days of the week that haulers may collect refuse. It will be for residential waste pickup only and will not include commercial properties. All zones would be displayed on a master Refuse Collection Zone Map and would be made available to both residents of the Town and the refuse haulers. Haulers are made aware of all zones and which days they are permitted to collect. Information is also provided to them upon application of a Refuse Haulers Permit.

Benefits of the refuse collection zones will reduce visual blight, blowing refuse, residential noise and traffic. Refuse haulers will be required to have an annual equipment inspection performed by Town Highway Department personnel. The requirement will reduce carbon emissions from truck exhaust and prevent leaking of harmful fluids onto Town roads which run into storm drains and pollutes soil and water.

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The following steps would be taken to create Residential Refuse Collection Zones. Applicable code ordinance(s) would be drafted. Proposed zone boundaries would be configured. A Public Hearing would be held to adopt a Local Law. The current Refuse Hauler Permit Application would be revised.

Following the presentation, general discussion took place.

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There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

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Dorothy M. Maguire, Town Clerk