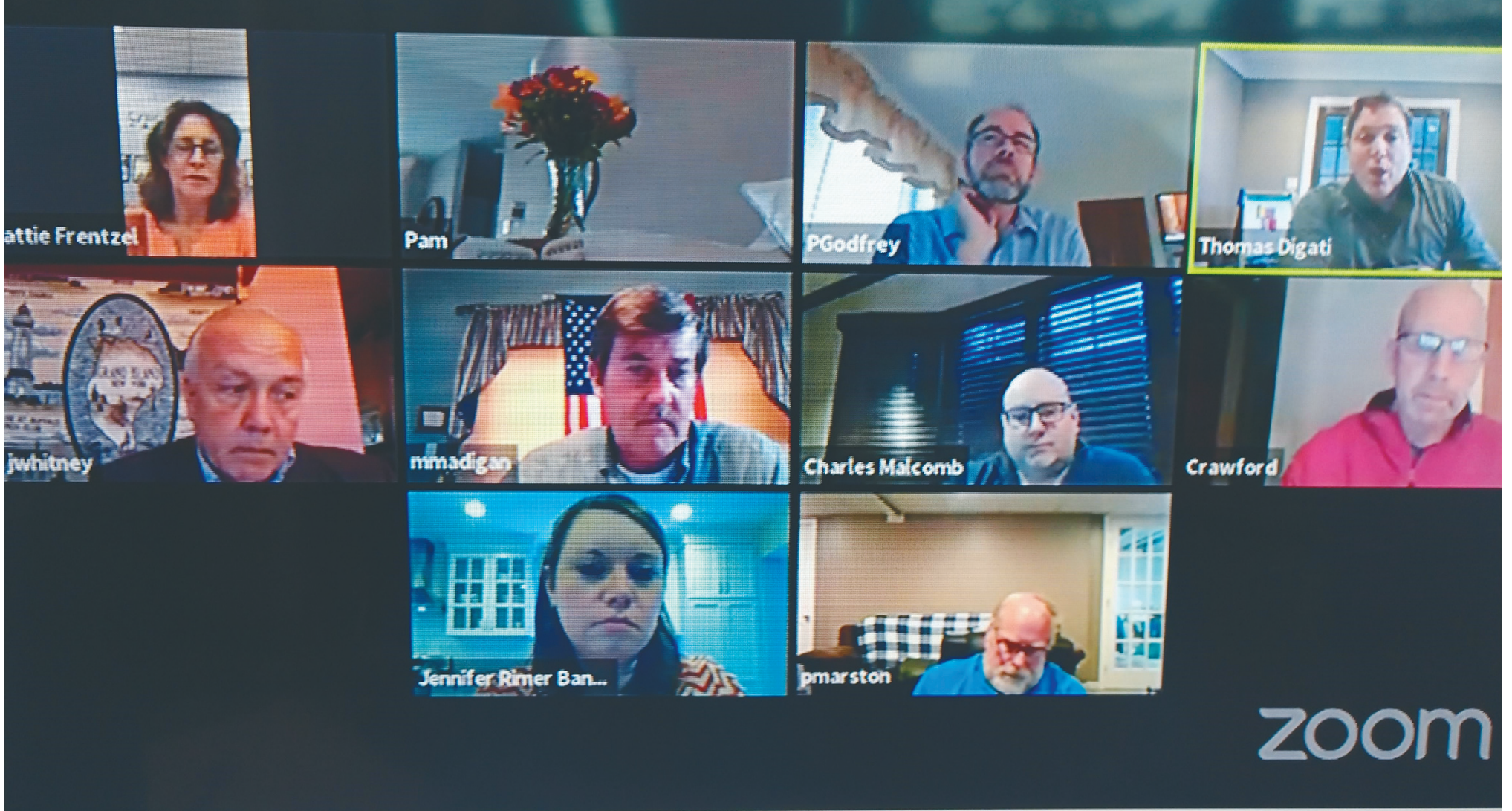


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Grand Island Town Board discusses virtual meetings



April 20, 2020 Town Board Workshop

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The Town of Grand Island held a virtual meeting earlier this week.

BY MICHAEL J. BILLONI
Contributor

On Monday, The Town Board of Grand Island held its second virtual meeting via its YouTube channel because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the state of emergency declared by Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo last month. During the pre-meeting workshop session, each councilmember and Supervisor John C. Whitney, P.E., discussed an ability to involve

residents virtually with the town's various public meetings and hearings.

"Good government relies on an open communication with the public," stated Councilman Michael H. Madigan. "We cannot make decisions on a number of matters without public meetings, and I am concerned about the number of residents who cannot access our meetings virtually because they do not have a comput-

er and cannot get into the library to use one there."

Councilman Thomas A. Digati asked Whitney to consider convening a workshop virtually of department heads soon to address virtual meetings to include public comments for the backlog of public hearings, including "Project Olive," the code name for the proposed 3.8-million-square-foot warehouse and distribution center on part of a 145-acre plot along

Long Road. These virtual meetings would include the opportunities for residents to participate via online or phone call-in.

"We need to be prepared for the weeks after the May 15 date the governor has set for New York 'PAUSE' to end. We need a plan for the Planning Board and the architect and zoning review boards to meet because the building season is short and we have a lot of projects on the table," Digati said.

While members cannot imagine a time when a room will be filled for a public hearing in the near future, it was agreed they would look at a combination of opening public hearings with social distancing enforced along with virtual meetings on the same subject.

During the 48-minute board meeting, a motion was passed for the town to call upon Congressman *SEE RESIDENTS, continued on Page 2*

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