

## **TOWN BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING**

**February 3, 2014**

A regularly scheduled Town Board Workshop Meeting was held on Monday February 3, 2014 in the Town Hall 284 Broadway Port Ewen, New York at 7:30 PM with the following persons in attendance:

**Supervisor John Coutant**  
**Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet**  
**Councilperson Wayne Freer**  
**Councilperson Kyle Barnett**  
**Councilperson Diane L. McCord**

**Recording Administrator Holly A. Netter, Town Clerk**

Supervisor John Coutant called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM.

**Public Comment:** None

### **Bill Fitzgerald – Presentation Church**

The parking lot located on Bowen Street is currently utilized by many people who attend events at Ross Park and is owned by the Presentation Church. For many years the Town has rented the space for a dollar per year. Three years ago the church approached the Town and expressed their desire to subdivide the property into a building lot and the parking lot area. The property was surveyed and the Town started pursuing a grant to purchase the property.

Bill Fitzgerald, a local Broker with Mary Bono Real Estate, has been handling the matter for the Presentation Church. He attended this meeting and was looking for the status on the purchase of this parcel. Due to budget cuts at the State level, the grant which was to be used to purchase this property, has been withdrawn. The process of purchasing this parcel started three years ago. If it is the intent of the Town not to go forward with the purchase, the Church would like to put it on the open market.

Councilperson Wayne Freer does not know where the money will come from to purchase the parking lot. He is not sure this purchase is the best way to use taxpayers' money. Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet feels we need the parking lot. There was a discussion about taking a section of the park which is already owned by the town and making it into a parking area to save the cost of purchasing the lot. There would be a cost to the Town to improve the area so it could be utilized as a parking lot. The lot is always filled when there are games or events at the park. She also feels they should have probably budgeted for this purchase but since that was not done they need to look for the money elsewhere. Councilperson Diane McCord agreed with Gloria and feels it would be a detriment if we are not able to purchase the

lot. Councilperson Kyle Barnett agreed with Councilpersons McCord and Van Vliet and feels the purchasing of the lot is the more economical way to obtain parking. He also recognized the fact that the Church has been very patient and recommended the Board pursue other ways to fund the purchase. The Town Board has committed to give an answer to the Church by March 19, 2014.

Supervisor John Coutant was appalled at the way the State has handled the request for the grant. There has been a grant in the name of the Town of Esopus and we had assurance we were going to get it. Every time the Town goes back to check on it they are faced with another stall point. The State was aware of the need of the parking, familiar with the project and still the communication with them is not available. He agreed to explore other areas to fund the purchase, even if we have to borrow a portion of the funds. Bill Fitzgerald had a copy of the proposed subdivision. The division lines have been determined. The survey has been completed and paid for. The approximate footage of the new lot is .48 acres. More parking can be obtained by removing the hump and tree.

### **Michael Minor Planning Board**

Michael Minor attended the meeting to speak as a member of the Planning Board and the waterfront Advisory Board, not as a representative of the board. He expressed his disappointment with the Planning Board Liaison, Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet and her lack of respect which was given to the Planning Board at their meeting on January 15, 2014. At this meeting Mike Minor said he felt we had one of the best Planning Boards in the county. He recalled Gloria saying at that meeting that the Planning Board was not very good. Mike Minor did not feel it was a very respectful comment especially coming from the liaison. Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet did not recall saying those words specifically. She explained in the past she had complaints about the board. She also did not think this was going to be blown out of proportion. She feels the Planning Board does do a good job. Unfortunately the tape recorder for the Planning Board meeting did not work, therefore the actual conversation that occurred is what each of them recalls.

A highly qualified individual had applied for the Planning Board position and several Planning Board members felt his expertise would be an asset to the board. Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet said the problem she had was not with the individual applicant. The Town Board received the application the day before the meeting. The Board wants to be able to interview and give it some time to see what other candidates come forth. She understands the Planning Board feels strongly about this candidate but she felt she was being pushed into being told that we need that individual on the Board. She also did not feel he should have brought this matter up at this meeting with the press present. However, Mike Minor had been on the agenda for some time and was not aware the press would be in attendance. The Town Board will interview qualified candidates to fill positions that are vacant on the various Boards.

Mike Minor presented a letter of resignation. He has a commitment to making a contribution to this town. He feels there is a great need for qualified individuals to be on the Planning Board. To be successful the Board needs a good skill set, as well as an enforcement function that can and will enforce the planning decisions. We need the most qualified people we can get. There is a lot of work that needs to be done. They need to maintain seven member boards not decrease it to a five person board that has been recommended in the past. Mike takes his position very seriously and currently attends the Planning Board meetings as well as the Pre-submission meetings for the Planning Board. He attends the Waterfront Advisory Board meetings as the liaison and he reads and reviews the minutes and all literature that is provided. He agreed that there probably were complaints about the Planning Board. There will always be people who will not like what the Planning Board does and mistakes can be made. You need a strong Planning Board and they may have varying opinions about a project, but in the end the decision will be made that is best for the Town. There will always be people who are only happy if they get their way. Respect is the key.

Supervisor John Coutant thanked Mike Minor for the job he does and said, "Don't you dare give me your resignation". The Planning Board has come a long way - only good thoughts have come back to the Supervisor. When suggestions were made to change the orientation of the Stewarts operations and the Birches project, it ended up with a national award. If we did not have the expertise and qualified people sitting on the Board to advise us it would cost the town a fortune to hire specialists in the various areas. John has been studying some of PB minutes and the one thing he notices when someone says I think we ought to have ... it is one person making the remark. He feels Chairperson Roxanne Pecora should say, do we all feel the same way. It confuses a candidate and they start to question, are we being told to do this by the Board or is it just an opinion of one individual. Supervisor Coutant gave an example of how things are handled on the Town Board. If Councilperson Kyle Barnett makes a suggestion it is discussed, put into a motion and voted on. That way it is clear what the expectations are. Mike Minor will take the suggestion back to the Planning Board.

It has been determined that the Planning Board needs to purchase a new recorder.

### **Resolution Opposing Pilot (UCIDA)**

The Town Board had the opportunity to listen to Ken Wishnick and the opposition of the Park Point project in New Paltz at the last Town Board Meeting. Councilperson Kyle Barnett said we held off voting at the last meeting because we had only heard one side. Kyle has looked at both sides and feels that they are total opposite in opinion. The property is already tax exempt at least with a PILOT program it will elevate some of the burden. He deems the matter outside of the Town Board's authority and suggests judgment not be passed on it. The precedent of the Esopus Town Board has been, if it does not fall within the parameters of our government and clearly in the hands of another governmental entity it may be something we should not take a formal position on one way or another. Only two constituents have come forward with a concern of this matter. Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet believed the UCIDA should not be

dictated to by a municipality. It was formed to make decisions independently. Councilperson Van Vliet was also informed by a member of the Legislature that the resolution was supposed to be passed at the County level and never made it out of committee. Councilperson Wayne Freer also looked into this matter and determined the property was on the tax roll as agricultural then went off. The project as it stands now would not be on the tax rolls but would at least bring some funds in as a PILOT. If SUNY decided to do the project on their own it would be tax exempt. What it does is bring 600 students from localized housing to centralized housing next to the campus.

**Motion to table the resolution was made by Councilperson Diane McCord Seconded by Councilman Freer. All in favor. Motion carried.**

### **Dog Kennel**

The Kennel is in need of major repairs, heating & electric. Heating has always been a nightmare and causes the water to freeze. Supervisor John Coutant has looked into the cost of leveling the building and erecting a more energy efficient one. Only 500 sq feet of the current building is being utilized for the dogs. The cost of the proposed steel building 25 feet x 40 feet is \$7,900. Insulation spray foam would be used to insulate the building and the project can be constructed easily within three days. Recently one tank of propane was \$900. We should look at a waste oil heater. Approximately 1600 gallons a year is collected by the Highway department and the transfer station. It should be enough to heat 1000 sq feet if the building was energy efficient. Supervisor Coutant put together a drawing of proposed building. Estimates were given for a well and the total cost needs to be determined. We have six other municipalities that have contracts with Esopus to house their dogs at the location. The current building is poorly laid out and in the same amount of space we could accommodate almost twice the amount of dogs. Supervisor Coutant believes if the structure could be made self sufficient in heat and water and we can double the occupancy we would be able to make money. The total cost of the project needs to be determined before a decision will be made. Councilperson Freer would also like to have a breakdown of the cost of the feed, shelter and staff to run the kennel. City of Kingston has outstanding bills from 2013 totaling over \$9000.00 which will be revenue for 2014.

### **Volunteer Applications**

Copies of various resumes were given to the Town Board for the many positions we have for the volunteer boards.

### **LIAISON APPOINTMENTS**

**The supervisor has made the following Liaison Appointments for 2014:**

Port Ewen Water and Sewer Department

Councilperson Wayne Freer

Building Department	Councilperson Kyle Barnett
Recreation Board	Councilperson Wayne Freer
Planning Board	Councilperson Gloria Van Vliet
Transfer Station	Councilperson Wayne Freer
Waterfront Advisory Board	Councilperson Diane McCord
Environmental Board	Councilperson Gloria VanVliet
Highway Department	Councilperson Kyle Barnett
Assessor's Office	Councilperson Gloria VanVleit
Tax Collector's Office	Supervisor John K. Coutant
Dog Warden	Councilperson Diane McCord
Zoning Board of Appeals	Councilperson Diane McCord
Justice Court	Councilperson Kyle Barnett
Recreation Maintenance	Supervisor John K. Coutant

**Supervisor Audit**

A copy of the letter from Brian Pickard who performed the Town audit was given to all Councilpersons. All receipts and disbursements were found to be accurate and properly recorded.

**Mail Machine Contract**

Councilperson Diane McCord researched various mail machine options. We have been dealing with Pitney Bowes for years. After researching it was determined that they all deal with Pitney Bowes, the price differences occur with the supplies. An authorization to sign the contract will need to be given to the supervisor at the next Town Board Meeting.

### **Visit to Selux Solar Lighting – Highland**

Supervisor John Coutant and Councilperson Diane McCord visited the Selux Solar Light factory with Randolph Horner along with a few other representatives from the Town of Rosendale and City of Kingston. They looked at the latest LED lighting that is available for streets, parking lots and some interior lighting as well. They were very impressed with the product however the cost of conversion is the question. It may be beneficial to look at the cost of a mutual project such as the Rondout Bridge with the City of Kingston. A while ago the environmental board did a complete study of lighting which has a listing of every pole in the town. At that time we requested Central Hudson to change the lights to the most energy efficient lights that they had. They would not make a commitment to do that all at once but did say they would do a little each year. The real problem is they have not reported back to us on what they have done. There are billions of dollars worth of grants NYS put aside for the conversion. If several municipalities got together and applied it could be beneficial. The lights would have a 25 year life span and they become the responsibility of the Town. A suggestion was made that the entire Board tour the plant.

### **Miscellaneous – Town Clerk**

The new Town Directory and Website will list the official mailing address as PO BOX 700 Port Ewen, NY 12466. Parks Scheduling will begin March 3<sup>rd</sup> for residents of the Town of Esopus and open for the public April 1<sup>st</sup>. The Board was asked if they would like to make any changes to the rules or fees. If any changes are to be made they will advise the Town Clerk at the next meeting. No changes to the park fees are anticipated. However, Councilperson Diane McCord did say she felt the rental fees for the Community Center needed to be reviewed. She felt they are too high. Supervisor Coutant also has fielded complaints regarding the fee as well. This matter will be revisited at a later date. Advertisements for volunteers were placed around town as well as the news brief in the Daily Freeman.

SSIP (Seniors Staying In Place) is a not-for-profit community volunteer organization whose purpose is to help older people help one another to continue to live in their homes. They requested the use of the Community Center on October 16<sup>th</sup> to offer a free workshop regarding issues facing older adults and is open to the public and all Esopus Seniors are invited to attend. The Town Board agreed to waive the fee for the use of the room.

### **Diane – Important Information from Association of Town School**

Councilperson Diane McCord shared several items that were discussed at the Association of Towns training she went to in Albany. CD's were brought back for all of the councilpersons regarding changes that have gone into effect. She distributed a copy of a 5 Year financial data

comparison which goes line by line to see what has been used. Although we already have a tight budget, this will give the councilpersons time to analyze where improvements can be made. New York State Municipal Workers Compensation Alliance has been set up by the Association of Towns that help deal with Workers Compensation, like NYMIR. Councilpersons have questions on how the program is set up and Councilperson Diane McCord will invite him to a meeting to see what he has to offer.

**A Motion to adjourn at 9:30 PM was made by Council person Kyle Barnett and seconded by Councilperson Wayne Freer. All Town Board Members voted in favor. Motion Carried.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Holly A. Netter**

**Town Clerk**