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From: "Lynne Eckardt" <midfarm@bestweb.net>
Date: Fri Jan 20, 2006 2:57 pm
Subject: SE Town Board Meeting 1/19/06

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Hi All,

Below please find my recap of last night's Town Board meeting. Except for questions under New Business this was the usual 20 minute, pro-forma voting session. As Supervisor Dunford explained at the meeting's start: all agenda items have been discussed before hand- either at previous meetings, over the phone or at Jack and Jill's. Oh right, well, he didn't actually mention Jack and Jill's so I'll assume that these after hours meetings are strictly social. Anyhow, most of this meeting was your basic nuts and bolts- not exactly a barn burner but not such a bad thing either. Let's face it- although interesting we all tire of the continual 'Sturm und Drang'.

As always the snide comments are solely mine and reflect no organization unlucky enough to have me as a member. I'd like to take a minute to say that my hero of the evening was John Lord. And John, feel free to disavow this dubious honor and maintain some semblance of respectability. But really, Mr. Lord asked great questions and made more than a few valid points.

REGULAR MEETING:

Proclamation- American Legions:

A proclamation was read honoring 4 heroic Chaplains of World War II. This proclamation will be presented on February 6th at the American Legion.

Public Hearings:

7:30 Special Permit: M. Burdick: This permit was for 509 Route 312 (the building where 'Creme de la Creme' Bakery is. There will be no site work done and there will be parking for 6 vehicles under 15,000 lbs. (full size pick-ups or Vans). The Board asked if the parked cars would be within view of 'Spring Knolls'. Answer: No

I asked if all applicants could present their projects to the audience as the Public Hearing is heard for public input. Supervisor Dunford said that they usually are and offered to show me the plans. I declined as I was familiar with the project.

Pine Ridge Estates: Release of Performance Bond:

There were no questions on this.

Section 280a- Waterview Estates- Withdrawn by applicant.

**1. Review of Minutes: December 22, 2005
January 5, 2006**

Accepted 4-0

2. Correspondence

Accepted 4-0

3. Approval of Voucher List \$609,969.71

Approved 4-0

4. Motion approving the Attached Budget Transfers

Approved 4-0

5. Motion setting Meeting Dates:

February 2, 2006

February 9, 2006

February 16, 2006- Regular Meeting

All are at 7:30, all are at the Civic Center. Passed 4-0.

6. Motion calling for the following Public Hearings

February 16, 2005: Amendment to Rental Registration Law

February 16, 2006 Civic Center 7:30

Passed 4-0

Councilwoman Mitts explained that there had been a typographical error and that some numbers had been transposed so that there had to be another Public Hearing.

7. Motion- Authorizing the Public Hearing Fee for Performance Bonds that are less than \$500 to \$50.

Supervisor Dunford explained that the fee used to be \$250 which the Board thought onerous.

Approved 4-0.

8. Motion- Appointed Thomas J. Frasca as Chairman of the Architectural Review Board

Passed 4-0

NEW BUSINESS:

Cathy Croft asked if the Budget had been posted to the Town Website- Answer: Yes. She mentioned that the Conservation Commission Meeting in December had been marked: 'Canceled' but was not and continued that there was no mention of any meeting in January. Town Attorney, Willis Stephens, said that there would be a CC meeting this Tuesday (January 24th).

Cathy also asked if the Board was still considering submitted applications for any opening on Town appointed Boards. Supervisor Dunford answered that they were and that Cathy would be notified when interviews take place.

Ron Lipschitz thanked the Board for their proclamation.

I asked what Board appointment protocol is as sometimes the Board reappoints an entire Board and sometimes not. Supervisor Dunford explained that if the decision to reappoint is not unanimous or if they're not 100% happy with an Board member they open up the position.

I asked if there had been any town payments made to any homeowners in Pine Ridge subdivision (due to some possible zoning enforcement issues). Answer: no.

I asked if the payments to AWS were the same in January as in December. Councilwoman Mitts said that they were always the same but Supervisor Dunford interjected that the fees had gone up by 3%. Councilman Johnson indicated that 6 new units had also been added to the district thus upping the total cost.

I asked when there would be Public Hearings on the Route 22 Overlay District. Supervisor Dunford said he wasn't sure but hoped within 6 months.

John Lord asked the Board which appointed Boards were advisory. Willis Stephens explained that boards like the Conservation Commission were advisory while the ZBA and Planning Board were not. Mr. Lord continued that he had not seen the Conservation Commission turn down many wetland permit applications. The Board explained that the Commission was not bound to deny permits- even those with wetland encroachments.

I suggested that the Town Board might want to explore disbanding the Conservation Commission

and hire a wetlands inspector as they have in Patterson. I continued that although the Conservation Commission works hard not all members seem qualified to serve. This is due to the fact that wetlands and their buffers have become such a complex issue. Supervisor Dunford explained that we do have a wetlands inspector and that I was referring to a consultant. I reiterated that the Commission had never denied an applicant as the developer was so far into the process by then that they would feel badly doing so. John Lord reiterated his point about enforcement of the regulations. Councilwoman Mitts said that the Commission certainly cut down on wetland incursion and Councilman Johnson said that Chairman Steve Fasano was an excellent Commission Chairman.

Supervisor Dunford concluded by saying he was sorry that Mr. Lord had not applied to be on the Commission.

COMMENTS:

'New Business' was far and away the most interesting with John Lord's observations and questions about the Conservation Commission. John did a remarkable job of keeping his frustration in check as he has attended more than a few CC and Town Board meetings and really knows the drill.

The Board paid the usual lip service to having the strictest-in-the-universe wetland regs (sigh) and Councilwoman Mitts reported that the Conservation Commission usually gets the applicant to scale the project somewhat out of the wetland buffers. In a rather brilliant non sequitur and in 'sotto voce', Councilman Johnson somehow managed to once again throw the phrase 'Constitutional rights' into the mix. He then launched into a completely gratuitous and unnecessary soliloquy on what a great job Steve Fasano does as the Conservation Commission Chair- as if this were at issue. Upon completion, and in what struck me as a mini-fit of pique, he looked annoyed and superciliously snapped his laptop shut.

It came as no surprise that the 'Garbage Contract' had increased in January by 3%. Hey, remind me again why we didn't get to bid this out...

I was fascinated to learn of the 100% rule. That is, if the Board isn't 100% happy with a Board member on any committee (whose term has expired) they can open up the interview process. What they didn't mention was that usually the newly appointed replacement is the 'flavor of the month' already serving on the Republican Committee. Or, as I like to say, 'To the best Republican Petitioner go the spoils'.

To be fair this isn't always so. Once in a while if there's someone so qualified it'd be hard to say no (and get away with it) they actually appoint someone deserving. And I can think of members on the Conservation, Planning and Zoning Board where this has been the case. But other times... Oy vey!

I thought it was a cheap shot for our esteemed Supervisor to point out that John Lord hadn't applied for the Conservation Commission- but then that's what one gets for being a concerned resident.

Finally, I still think we might be better served by a qualified Wetlands Consultant who could sit in on all Planning Board meetings providing guidance along the way. The Board mentioned that we have hired wetland's consultants in the past (although I can think of only one instance and that was 'The Meadows'- after round one in court). I asked Councilman Johnson to name other times where this had occurred- (he couldn't) but perhaps this should be done on all major subdivisions (5 lots and over) . The Board said that they would consider any requests that a consultant be hired. And I kinda, sorta think that 'consider' is the operative word here. Still it would be better than the system we have now.

As always feel free to e-mail me with any questions or comments that you might have. Have a great weekend!

With Best Regards,
Lynne Eckardt

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