

SE Town Board Meeting Recap 4/7/08

Hi All,

Yeah, believe it or not, it's time for another 'Thursday Night at the Fights' courtesy of your dysfunctional Southeast Town Board. But always the optimist I must say it was simply delightful to have this train wreck clock in at under four hours. Wheeee!

The bicker-fest kicked off early when the always inscrutable Supervisor Rights started jumping around on the agenda. Frankly, I knew we were in trouble when we skipped 'Review of Minutes' and 'Correspondence'- I mean, how controversial could this banal bullsh*t be? Oh... you have no idea. These guys could throw punches over who was the coolest Saint... In fact, they even managed to fight over meeting dates in May. And out of 30 items the Board actually battled or exchanged barbs on over 22 of them. Way to go, guys!

The coveted 'Spontaneously Combustible Pants' award was really a jump ball this week but Councilman Yee wins by a hair for his bravado performance epitomizing outrage and indignation. This outrage concerned how appointments were made to various boards. Yee claimed that these appointments had been made without any input from he and Rights. And I would agree wholeheartedly with Councilman Yee's premise... if only it were true. Because I know that Mr. Yee was privy to at least one appointment that he had the unmitigated gall to b*tch about.

The 'Grasping at Straws' award was won handily by Rights for his harebrained effort to appoint Phil Franze to the Architectural Board of Review. Never mind that Mr. Franze isn't a resident of Southeast and, hey, don't let the fact that Mr. Franze has been hired by the town for three separate projects get in your way. Nah, maybe Rights figured that since Franze would be on the company dime Rights could call the shots.

For consistency (read: redundancy- I was actually trying to be gracious but what's the point) Rights has no equal. I think he managed to accuse Councilman Johnson of 'lining his pockets or the pockets of his friends' at least 43,000 times. Honestly, couldn't he drum up a new insult? So unoriginal, so tedious. Scheesh, I get sued (and lose...) over the word 'fabrication' and this crap airs on channel 8 with no repercussions. Personally, I can't wait for Rights to accuse Ms. Mazzei of anything even remotely misdemeanor-esque, just to see how fast she hits speed dial for Richard Goldsand.

On the story that just won't go away... there was more intrigue concerning the \$1300 buttery leather executive lounge- because really, the town doesn't have bigger things to worry about. Still, I have to admit that I really want to sit in it once- just once. I figure since I almost had to pay 73 cents for the damn thing I deserve it.

Finally, I noted that the audience gets more restless every week- believe me, this ain't no Oprah crowd. The outbursts are more frequent, louder and ruder thus I fear 'workplace' litigation when Supervisor Rights claims Carpal Tunnel Syndrome after banging that cheesy 'walnut' gavel nonstop. He should either consider a new career in percussion or set-up the disability trail now by wearing a wrist wrap.

As always the out of line, over the top, caustic, biased and totally fed-up comments are mine alone. They do not remotely reflect any organization unlucky enough to have me as a member.

Southeast Town Board Regular Meeting:

1. Open Space Committee Presentation:

Committee Chair, Mildred Nugent, informed the Board that money raised in a silent auction was distributed to The Putnam County Land Trust, FROGs, and Landmarks Preservation. Each received over \$600.

5. Vouchers:

Vouchers in the amount of over \$780,300 were to be paid. Councilman Johnson asked that the \$1281.24 chair and \$152.54 food for the Ball Route 22 Rally be deducted. Supervisor Rights said that former Supervisor Dunford had ordered the chair, that it had been approved by the judges and he only signed for

it. Rights felt that Johnson was trying to embarrass him. He then announced that the New Town Hall on Route 22 had gone more than \$130,000 over budget.

By a vote of 3 to 2 (Rights and Yee) the vouchers were approved *less* the chair and Route 22/Ball food expenses.

6. Setting of Meeting Dates and Public Hearing:

May 1 Work Session
May 8 Work Session
May 15 Regular Meeting
May 15 Public Hearing- Contractors Law
May 22 Work Session

The May 22nd date was removed and this item passed by a vote of 3-2 (Rights and Yee were the dissenting votes)

7. Resolution- Pegasus:

This was a permit to construct an covered riding ring.
Passed 5-0

8. Board of Ethics Appointments:

Elizabeth Hudak and Reverend Kim were nominated. Councilman Yee felt that he and Supervisor Rights were left out of this decision. Yee would like to see resumes. Rights said the process was a complete disgrace.

Motion passed 3 approved 1 Nay (Yee) and 1 abstention (Rights)

9. Board of Assessment Review Appointments:

Wendy Weiner and Ed Vreeland were nominated. Yee said he had never met with them and would like to meet them before voting for them.

3 Approved 1 Nay (Yee) 1 Abstention (Rights)

10. ARB Appointments:

Supervisor Rights nominated Phil Franz to fill the vacancy on the Architectural Review Board. Honeck and Johnson noted that Mr. Franz does not reside in the town and that there would be a conflict of interest as his company is employed by the town.

11. Town Clerk Appointment:

My apologies- I didn't catch the replacement's name.

12. Videographers Fees:

Paul Rotchford, who has been doing the videotaping for years at \$125 an hour wants to increase them to \$250 for the first hour and \$100 thereafter. Yee thought that this was too expensive and suggested that a high school student do it. Johnson said that Rights' videographer charged \$600 per meeting thus Rotchford's fee was reasonable by comparison.

Passed 3 Yea 1 Nay (Yee) 1 abstention (Rights)

13. Resolution for "Volunteer Park"

The resolution to name the ball fields on Zimmer Road "Volunteer Park " was passed by a vote of 5-0. Rights brought up the recently torn down dug outs and mentioned their shabby construction. Paul Johnson said that none of the dugouts had fallen over but rather had been pushed. Rights mentioned the former TB in a negative light. Yee said he had inspected the dug outs and they were shoddy.

Councilman Johnson said that he was sorry that all this 'crap' had to be aired when the TB was trying to honor volunteers throughout SE.

15. Road Names:

Monticello Drive, Belmont Court and Woodstone Farms Lane were all adopted by a vote of 5-0.

16. Recreation Advisory Board:

Johnson felt that this should have been on a work session. Yee and Rights felt that May was too long to wait on this. Motion withdrawn and this item will be on a May work session.

17. Special District Coordinator- Maintenance Manager

Levon Bogosian (Sp. sorry) was hired at \$71,000 per year.

Passed 5-0

19. Highway Bid Awards:

Approved 5-0

20. Trailer Furniture:

As discussed last week the town will lend used town office furniture to the Friends of Tilly Foster.

Approved 5-0

21. Sheriff's Contract:

There was a discussion on what exactly the present contract provides. Honeck said that the old rent-a-cop was \$45,000 a year and that for an additional \$15,000 it was worth having professional. Yee still wants a precise commitment and logs before an award is made. The contract as it presently reads was extended for 60 days- Yee wanted to limit it to 30 days. I corrected Councilman Honeck as I believe that the rent-a-cop had been less than \$35,000. I suggested that until we really know what we're getting for our money that the contract only be extended for 30 days.

Passed 4 to 1 (Yee)

22 Tobacco Resolution:

This resolution asks for voluntary compliance in reducing tobacco advertising- primarily so it will not appeal to minors.

Passed 5-0

23. Upgrade of Electrical and HVAC- Town Hall

Referred to Levon Bogosian the new town Special District/Maintenance manager.

5-0

24. Air Conditioning- New Town Hall

My apologies, I was out of the room for this.

25. Zimmer Road Ball Fields:

This had been covered earlier under "Volunteer Park"

26. Village of Brewster Utility Easement:

At Wells and Markell Park.

Approved 5-0

27. Town Fencing Repairs:

This was deferred to a work Session as it was believed that a RFP would have to be done. Will be on a Work Session agenda.

28. Mailboxes for Town Board

Update. Rights said that supporting shelving would be needed.

29. Blackberry Pool Coping:

Although three bids were procured they were not uniform (and were all over the \$10,000 threshold) so it was decided that fixing the entire pool area would entail an RFP. It was decided that to be operable by Memorial Day the coping could be fixed now. The Town Engineer will help on this. Audience Member Peter Bell suggested that the new Special Districts Manager be assigned to this.

30. Supervisor Authorization- Peach Lake

This will be placed on a Work Session.

Motion to Close the Meeting:

There was a motion to close the meeting. This was defeated by a vote of 3-2 (Rights and Yee)

2. Agenda Resolution:

This was a resolution to ensure the agenda be followed numerically rather than Supervisor Rights jumping around. Rights mentioned that by skipping around it was probably difficult for Paul (Johnson) 'to keep up'.

3. Review of Minutes:

There was discussion re. punctuation problems in the minutes. Town Clerk Mazzei instructed Yee that he was not her punctuation teacher. There was a request from the audience to update the minutes on the website. The Board wanted the minutes to be correct. I asked that the draft minutes be added and said that Concerned Residents of Southeast would post them on our website if the town was unwilling.

The March 1 Minutes were approved 3-2 (Yee and Rights voting no)

The March 13 Minutes were not approved in a vote of 2-2 (Rights and Yee) with Honeck abstaining as he hadn't been at the meeting.

4. Correspondence:

The reading was waived. Johnson asked Rights if he had sent out any correspondence, Rights said that he couldn't recall.

Approved 5-0

14. Website Coordinator:

A motion was made to remove Yee as webmaster and give control to Joe Vera and Councilman Johnson. Yee said that Paul Johnson wanted to fill his friends pockets with money and that he did it for free while Vera charged \$85 an hour. Gross said that as of now everyone was locked out of the website. An audience member was recognized by the Supervisor. She said that she was sick and tired of the TB's behavior. That absolutely nothing was being accomplished. There was more bickering between Board members and the resident threw up her hands in disgust and walked out. Gross then said that he'd known Paul Johnson since 1993 and that he was an honorable man.

Yee was removed as webmaster by a vote of 3 (Yea)- 1 Nay (Yee) and 1 abstention (Rights)

18. Security Systems:

This discussion centered around the fact that presently only Yee and Rights can have security tapes released unless there is a resolution to do so. The Board would like to view the March 17th tapes to see who removed the boxes of vouchers that disappeared and were subsequently returned.

The Board voted 4 Yea and 1 nay (Rights) pass the resolution.

New Business:

Councilman Johnson asked that the Bearberry/Minor Road stop sign be placed on the May 15th agenda
Passed 5-0

New Town Vehicle:

A new Jeep (not to exceed \$20,000) was approved for the Zoning Enforcement office.

Approved 5-0

Denis Castillo mentioned that there was still a lot of used furniture left in the trailer and that the town would need to move it if the library would be using the building for storage.

Castelli also asked about an FBI investigation. Supervisor Rights did not know the status.

I asked about the positions available on the Open Space Committee. I was told that they had not been filled and there were two positions open.

I asked why food for the Route 22 Ball Forum was paid out of town funds. There was no answer forthcoming but there was some debate about whether or not said forum should have been held in Town Hall.

COMMENTS/OPINIONS:

Vouchers:

Well, who doesn't love the always dreamy Mr. Ball's posse trying to bilk the town out of \$152 worth of grub to feed Route 22 Forum officials. This was so over the top I don't even remember Yee or Rights disputing the point. And I see that while they accuse Councilman Johnson of lining his friend's or his own pocket they certainly don't mind using our hard earned tax dollars to fund a Ball extravaganza.

Hopefully we'll be bidding the executive lounge a fond farewell as it appears we won't be paying for it. Just for yucks though I would like to know the true story.

May Meetings:

To their credit Rights and Yee wanted a fourth meeting added to the agenda. I'm thinking that this might actually reduce meeting times to under three hours each. Nah, who am I kidding- they'd all simply find additional trivial items to wrangle over.

Appointments:

Here I have to agree in theory with Yee and Rights- all appointments should be considered by all members of the Board. But I heard later that **all** Board members were apprised of at least one appointment.

Videographer Fees:

"My videographer is better than your videographer." "Is not." "Is too." "Is not." "Is..." Well, you get the picture. Yee thought that someone from Brewster High School might want to tape the meetings for free. No Dwight, teenagers are selfish, volatile and lazy- **but** they're not insane. Besides, I happen to think that Nick Genovesi's taping of TB meetings is beyond clever.

You see, Mr. Genovesi is smart enough to know that someday these tapes will be worth a fortune. They'll either be used as teaching tools in psychiatric hospitals throughout the US or purchased by 'Hard Copy' after the inevitable shooting spree takes place.

Special Districts Manager:

Congrats to Levon Bogosian. Levon was always very nice to me when he was on the Rec Committee- in fact, no small feat. This proves he'll definitely have the perfect temperament to deal with irate customers who have hideously high water bills, carcinogens running out of their tap or rust stains that suggest someone was garroted over their toilet while they were out shopping at Kobacker's.

Seriously, Levon (if you're reading this) I think you're great and you'll be fine with almost all SE residents except ... those lunatics on the Town Board. Make sure the medical benes are good and will minimally cover a recuperative 5 week nervous-breakdown-stay in Four Winds. PS I got a special kick out of the great salary debate as frankly \$71 million wouldn't be enough to tackle this job.

Volunteer Park:

Leave it to these guys to blow the one 'feel good' item on the agenda. But kudos to Councilman Johnson for actually uttering the word 'crap' at a televised meeting- I didn't think he had it in him. Because honestly, I almost have a Tourettes attack after the first five minutes. Of course, like picking at a scab, the boys had to rehash the Zimmer Road dug outs. This TB has gotten like a really bad marriage- something akin to 'The War of the Roses'. You know now it's only a matter of time before a flaming bag of dog sh*t is left outside of Rights' office, someone short-sheets Roger's bed, a whoopie-cushion is gleefully left on the executive lounge and/or there's a panty raid on Ruth's office. By all means, count me in on the practical jokes although I'll take a definite pass on the panty raid.

As I see it, the bottom line on the dug outs is recouping some or all of the construction costs. Hey, wait a minute... maybe *they* were a practical joke left by the last administration.

Sheriff's Contract:

Oh, you knew I just couldn't leave this one alone. And I still have no idea why we discuss this every month and nothing is ever accomplished. I did think the idea of having Yee and Honeck talk to the Sheriff a good one. This way both bases are covered. Still, I doubt that we'll have anything resolved before next November. In the meantime I'd rather be flushing singles down the toilet than paying for this charade.

Agenda Resolution:

This was notable for the Supervisor's snide comment re Councilman Johnson whom he had it in for all night. We were even treated to a dust-up over Robert's Rules of Order (Order being the operative and ironic word).

Rights seemed to think that the motion was made because Johnson wouldn't be able to follow the convoluted agenda otherwise. Ouch! What next? "Your mother wears army boots?"

Correspondence:

I loved this one. When asked if Supervisor Rights had sent out any correspondence he 'couldn't recall.' Are you kidding me? Between his Route 22 diatribes and Ball's fake forums you just know letters have been sent. Hey, do robo calls count?

Website Coordinator:

Well, if I had a penny for every time Rights accused Paul Johnson of 'lining his or his friend's pockets' believe me, I'd be sipping a Margarita on a Caribbean beach- not covering this hell hole.

In fact, if there had been more women involved, this little psycho-drama would be worthy of a mini-series on 'Lifetime'. I can see Javier Bardeem (with a slightly reconfigured 'No Country for Old Men' hair-do) in an Emmy winning role as Supervisor Rights.

But I digress. Councilman Gross seemed to be the most agitated here- and that's really saying something, as agitation has become an art form during these events.

Review of Minutes:

This was downright hilarious as Yee and Mazzei debated the merits of correct punctuation. Apparently Ruth used an lower case 'l' instead of a '1'... ..or was it a capital 'l' instead of a lower case 'l'.....oh wait..... I think it was a lower case 'l' instead of an uppercase 'L'. Oy Vey. I wish Mr. Genovesi had this one covered on YouTube if only for the banality of it all.

Security Systems:

Anyone remember Spy Vs. Spy in Mad Magazine? Well, that's what this little caper reminded me of. I could somehow picture Rights and Yee in Rights' hemoglobin painted office- plotting to keep the riveting security tapes under wraps (and under their control) while Honeck and Johnson were blithely unaware that *anything* would actually change under the new administration.

Kudos to Rights and Yee for coming up with this diabolical way of protecting the top secret tapes. A resolution needed to release them- dear God. Hopefully we'll finally uncover who removed the vouchers from Temple Beth Dunford... and not just some poor employee picking their nose or scratching their *ss. The horror, the horror!

Anyhow, between the bad acoustics, virulent insults and nasty little 'fibs' these meetings have become more and more difficult to follow. They've pretty much become an elongated version of 'To tell the Truth'. I say we all chip in for an industrial size jug of Sodium Pentothal or 5 polygraph machines- whatever's cheapest. After all, someone's gotta look out for the taxpayer.

That's it from my desk. As always please feel free to e-mail me with any questions or comments that you might have.

With Best Regards,
Lynne Eckardt