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Message 1526 of 1537 < [Previous Message](#) | [Next Message](#) >

From: "Lynne Eckardt" <midfarm@bestweb.net>
Date: Fri Feb 17, 2006 3:57 pm
Subject: SE Town Board Meeting Recap 2/16/06

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Hi All,

Last night I attended the Southeast Town Board Regular Meeting. Although almost as well choreographed as always there were several flies in the ointment. We had a late start time due to disorganized folders (Horrors! It seems that Supervisor Dunford's ever efficient assistant, Mary Rhuda, has been out of the office) after endless (Ok, Ok 10 minutes) of serious paper shuffling all seemed in order. There was a brief, although well deserved, disruption during agenda item number 2 as a Mr. Cousins's from the Peach Lake area seemed slightly less that enthralled with Supervisor Dunford's apparent inability to return phone calls. Mr. Cousins was told that he could speak under new business which he did. Oooooooo, and check out Councilman Honeck's NIMBY move- a real classic under item 6.

Obviously the Dubious Achievement Award for February is a lock despite 12 days remaining. Ta Da! And congratulations Supervisor Dunford for successfully evading 13 (count 'em)13 phone calls or letters from constituent George Cousins. I mean, this has to be a record of sorts!

Councilman Bonanno was absent.

Oh, and as is already evident all comments are my own disenchanting and skewed view of our town government. They reflect my personal bias alone and not any organizations to which I belong. Oh, and sorry or the length. What can I say- too much pent up energy from a not long enough hiatus.

AGENDA:

Public Hearings:

Amendment to Rental Registration Law

It was explained that there were only technical changes being made. That a line had inadvertently been dropped and was added.

I asked who had dropped the line and Town Attorney, Willis Stephens, said he had.

1) Review of Minutes:

Only minutes from the February 2 meeting were accepted. Minutes from the January 19 and 26th meetings were deferred as, according to the Town Clerk, they were unfinished.

2) Correspondence:

A member of the audience, George Cousins, interrupted the proceedings to state that he had written and called since January 10th and had received no reply. Supervisor Dunford explained that

Mr. Cousins could ask about this under 'New Business'.
Correspondence was accepted 4-0

3) Approval of Voucher List:

\$1.4 million plus. Approved 4-0

4) Motion setting Meeting Dates:

February 23rd	Informational Meeting	Peaceable Hill Water District
March 2	Work Session	
March 9	Work Session	
March 16	Regular Meeting	

All will be held at the Civic Center at 7:30. Passed 4-0

5) Motion Calling for the following Public Hearings:

March 16th	7:30	Brewster Commercial Complex- Special Permit	Civic Center
March 16	7:31	Stonecrest Senior Housing- Reduction of Performance Bond	Civic Center

Passed 4-0

6) Resolution- Special Permit- M. Burdick, Route 312 Centre

Passed 3-1 (Dick Honeck was the dissenting vote)

7) Resolution Release of Performance Bond- Pine Ridge Estates

Bond released by a vote of 4-0

8) Motion- Awarding Engineering Services for Springhouse Water District to Malcolm Pirnie

Passed 4-0

9) Resolution - SEQRA Amendments to Chapter 83- Historic Sites

Negative Declaration passed 4-0

10) Resolution- SEQRA Amendments to Chapter 123- Subdivision of Land

Negative Declaration passed 4-0

11) Resolution- SEQRA Amendments to Chapter 138- Zoning

Negative Declaration passed 4-0

12) Resolution- Adoption of Local Law to Amend Chapter 83 of the Town Code: 'Historic Sites'

Adopted 4-0

13) Resolution- Adoption of Local Law to Amend Chapter 123 of the Town Code 'Subdivision of Land'

Adopted 4-0

14) Resolution- Adoption of Local Law- Extension of Moratorium:

This was referred to as an 'Interim Development Law' passed 4-0

15) Appoint Planning Board Member:

Tom LaPerch was reappointed to a 7 year term. 4-0

16) Motion- Dog Control Officer- Seize and Impoundment Procedures:

This was a clarification of procedure in writing. Passed 4-0

17) Resolution- Temporary Road Closure- Barrett Road

Due to dumping this road has become an 'attractive nuisance' and at the property owners request (Seabury Corp. owner of 'The Campus' development') will be closed and gated. No other property owners will be affected. Passed 4-0

New Business:

George Cousins was recognized to speak. Mr. Cousins said that he had been in contact with the Town Board about a year ago. Back then he asked if the Town Board could over rule the Zoning Board of Appeals. Councilwoman Mitts answered 'no'.

Mr. Cousins continued that he understood that the Town was now being sued over the ZBA's denial of the Cingular Cell Tower and he had called the Supervisor approximately 13 times and had yet to receive a call back. Supervisor Dunford explained that they'd definitely set a time for a

meeting. Another resident of the area (and litigation attorney) spoke to the pending litigation and explained that the town should not settle with Cingular as there was no gap in service coverage. That although Cingular would save 'pennies' through the erection of their own tower the coverage already existed. He offered his services should the town be interested.

Ed LeStrange asked the Supervisor if he had been working with Mayor Degnan re. the Garden Street meeting held in January. The Supervisor said he had talked to School Superintendent Sabetella and that he hoped there would be another meeting when there was more to report.

I asked about the wisdom of temporarily closing Barrett Road. I pointed out that Nelson Road had been closed years ago and now the applicant wanted the Town to pay half the expenses of bringing the road up to town specifications. Supervisor Dunford asked Highway Superintendent Jim Lawler to field this question. Mr. Lawler explained that any proposed improvements on Nelson Blvd. were not a done deal. The Board also explained there were no other property owners affected on Barrett. I asked if this meant it was then unlikely that the Town would pay for Nelson Blvd. improvements. No direct answer was given.

I asked why the voucher list, which is usually between \$600,000 to \$800,000 was \$1.4 million plus. Supervisor Dunford said that winter was more expensive. I said that since it was just acknowledged that we were under budget on Highway what else beside oil would it be. No specific answer was forthcoming.

I asked if there was a Drainage District for Pine Ridge Estates. The answer was yes- it had been implemented around 2001. I asked if there had been any money collected from residents there. Answer 'no'. I asked if the same was true of Indian Well (Gage Road) and Crosby Hill (Enoch Crosby Road) and the answer was that no funding of either Drainage District had ever been collected from the homeowners.

I asked if the Garbage fees in February were the same as those in March. Answer 'yes'.

Cathy Croft asked if she could pick up the Resolution on Historic Sites in Town Hall on Friday. Supervisor Dunford said that she could try but it would be up to the Town Clerk to actually give it to her.

Ms. Croft also asked if a town-wide clean-up day had been designated. She mentioned that Earth Day was April 22 and perhaps we could co-ordinate with the Village. The Supervisor said a date hadn't been established.

John Lord asked if one could use Nelson Blvd for walking although closed. Answer from Town Attorney: Yes- but it was important not to trespass on private property and stick to the road.

COMMENTS:

2. Correspondence:

Of course I love that George Cousins was bold enough (yet polite as well) to stand up during the meeting and ask why no one returned his 'correspondence'. More on this under New Business...

6. Special Permit Route 312 Centre:

As some of you know I love Special Permits as much as the next guy but what I love even more is to see any member of any of our local Boards kick into NIMBY overdrive and this seemed to be the case here.

Councilman Honeck lives right around the corner from this small shopping center (pops! Centre!) where service trucks will now be parked out back. Since Councilman Honeck has never met a 'Special Permit' he didn't like and since this won't directly affect the Councilman I'm guessing that this is a move to appease neighbors who may be impacted. As a side benefit it may also shore up votes in his home district.

8. Springhouse Water District:

Don't get me started on the district's contaminated water. Oh, and the fact that it took this Board over 80 days pass along this little tidbit... Completely coincidentally I believe that the firm of Malcolm Pirnie gave to the incumbent's political campaigns.

15. Planning Board Appointment:

Once again I didn't make the cut. Back in January I had applied to serve on the Planning Board (although I haven't yet received my rejection letter- which, when it arrives, I will sheepishly tack onto my ongoing 'Wall of Shame'). Anyhow, congratulations to Mr. LaPerch with whom I don't always agree but I like for his sunny disposition, forbearance and civility to me.

New Business:**Cell Tower:**

Three cheers for George Cousins who was polite but wouldn't take no for an answer. Wow, 13 tries to the Supervisor's office without benefit of reply. Although I would hope that the Town might stand up to Cingular on this I'm betting we cave. I think because of the Peach Lake scrutiny we may hang in a little longer than usual- But unless this suit is still in works near the '07 town-wide elections I believe it will be settled.

Garden Street Meeting:

I liked the question and I think the answer very important- what I didn't get was the reply. I believe that Mr. LeStrange asked rather specifically about cooperation between the Mayor and the Supervisor but this part of the inquiry was never answered at all. I must say that Supervisor has honed deflection to a fine art and yeah, if I sound jealous it's because I am.

Temporary Road Closings:

This one was fun because the Board really got really defensive about the pending subdivision on Nelson Blvd insisting that no approvals had been granted. True enough... for now. Still this subdivision will probably be approved and we'll have to shoulder the financial burden, even if shared, of upgrading Nelson Blvd. I just love when we get to pay for a developer's access, you know, like the \$60,000 of improvements for Mr. Lepler's project on Zimmer Road- Hey, who doesn't.

That Darn Voucher List!

Although the Board, while in front of the camera, attributed the steep increase in voucher payments to the chronic and hackneyed scapegoat 'Old Man Winter' it seems that there was also a forgettable payout of almost \$900,000 to the Fire Department. This was 'discovered' after the meeting and Supervisor Dunford passed the info along to me. While I appreciate the information requested why does this Board insist on always 'knowing' the answer even when they don't? From the 'Thank God for small favors' Department at least they didn't try to blame local civic organizations for outrageous 'copy fees' due to pending litigation against the town. Phew.

Drainage Districts or Drag out the Hindquarters:

C'mon, who doesn't love a good fake 'drainage district'? You know- the ones that were set up to appease neighbors and assure other residents that, at least, the new subdivision's convoluted drainage system wouldn't cost them a penny.

Surprise! Of all the drainage districts created in Southeast over the last decade- not one, that's right, still **not one**, has paid anything for their system's upkeep. The Board assured me that aside from periodic inspections (free I guess) no maintenance on any of these districts has been necessary. Jeeze, I feel better already.

Bottom line. Let's either have Drainage Districts that are viable or let's ditch the charade. Because some day someone's gonna have to pay for something.

Town Wide Clean-Up:

This always seems last minute to me. In light of the rather tenuous relationship between the town and village it seems to me that coordination of this 'event' might be a positive step and possibly save some money.

That's it from here. As always please feel free to e-mail me with any comments or questions you may have. Have a great weekend.

With Best Regards,
Lynne Eckardt

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