

aghini_99 · alberghini@crse.org

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From: "Lynne Eckardt" <midfarm@bestweb.net>
Date: Fri Mar 11, 2005 2:42 pm
Subject: SE Town Board Recap 3/10/05

Hi All,

Well, it was quite the meeting last night. Supervisor Dunford was on vacation and this was almost like having a 'fun' substitute teacher instead. People in the audience were allowed to participate (Yahoo!) and jokes were cracked. All and all a rather refreshing change.

Of course there were several problems (I'll explain) and no, it wasn't a complete 'Love Fest', but still it was a big improvement.

Pay close attention to the commentary on the Transportation Improvement District (TID) planned along Route 312. As always the comments are my own (no one 'helped' me) and if too snide and/or opinionated please accept my apologies in advance- or just skip the commentary altogether.

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1. Route 312 Transportation Improvement District:

This is a portion of Route 312 that is considered for traffic improvements. Town Planner Trelsted felt that the Town of Carmel must also be considered because of large projects proposed or approved. Intermunicipal agreements were discussed. Mr. Trelsted has been in contact with the Carmel Town Planner via e-mail.

A more comprehensive report will be completed by the end of April.

2. Welfare Road:

The Board asked if Brian Alberghini was present and invited him to sit up front. Councilman Johnson then announced that the town engineer had been brought in 'just for you'.

Mr. Alberghini gave a history of his pond and problems with sediment and turbidity. Problems began when a new house across the street began construction. He added that a private one hole golf course seemed to have exacerbated the problem. Mr. Johnson mentioned that he and Councilwoman Mitts drive around town after 'rain events' and that many of the town's waterways

are cloudy. Town Attorney, Willis Stephens said that his pond was cloudy after heavy rains.

Councilman Bonanno asked why Mr. Alberghini didn't pursue a civil suit against the new home's owner. Town engineer, Tom Fenton, felt that the problem was that the entire area is a 72 acre watershed and that the pond discussed is the low point. Highway Superintendent, Jim Lawler, felt that added drainage along Welfare might help.

The Board asked Mr. Alberghini what he would like done. He stated that road improvements would be welcome and should help alleviate the problem.

3. SusCom- Cable

SusCom representative Bob Burns was there as there have been numerous complaints made to the Town Board re. the 'migration' of RCN to SusCom. Inaccurate/higher bills were also discussed as were the new 'programs' offered (apparently you must now take the 'long distance program'- even if you don't want it. In turn this costs you \$10 more per month). The long wait time was also mentioned as a major problem.

Lorraine Mitts said that in the contract negotiations with the town that SusCom had promised that there would be no changes in exiting programs. The Board asked Mr. Burns if SusCom would reconsider the long distance addition. He said that it had been a business decision to change the program but that SusCom would consider it. He added that there will be additional customer service reps. who had recently been trained to assist customers. He apologized for any inconvenience, admitted it had been a very rocky start and vowed to do better.

COMMENTS:

Transportation Improvement District: Route 312

This one's a beaut so bear with me. It illustrates perfectly a breakdown of government at the local level.

Gateway Summit/Fairways is a large project in Carmel just east of Putnam Plaza (partially on the Southeast border). 150 Room Hotel/Conference Center, a YMCA, Restaurants, some office space and over 300 units of (yeah, you guessed it) 'Senior Housing/Assisted Living'. So perhaps this complex will slightly increase traffic along Route 6 and 312. Oh right, and not to overwhelm you, but there's another Camarda project planned, Carmel Centre [sic] (behind Friendly's at Putnam Plaza) of 380+ units of 'Senior Housing'.

In any case, I've been asking the Town and Planning Board to look into the Gateway Summit project for several months. Southeast is listed as an 'Interested Party' in the DEIS. Well, maybe not that 'interested'...

In the letter sent to the Carmel Planning Board by Supervisor Dunford claimed that the town had never received the DEIS and needed more time to study the traffic impacts. The applicant, the almost always charming Paul Camarda, promptly produced proof of receipt. To add insult to injury I had called several days earlier and spoken to Mr. Dunford about the project following up immediately with another call (to Mary Rhuda) saying that Planning had, indeed, received a copy.

Dear God, it's another sure sign of the Apocalypse when you can trust Mr. Camarda over your own Town Board. My head really is going to explode.

Suffice it to say that Carmel and Southeast (and all Putnam municipalities) need to work together on Regional Planning. Are we sick of home rule yet? I mean, that's part of the reason traffic is abysmal, water and air pollution unacceptable and taxes- well, don't get me started. Also, who was the brain trust who thought approving 'The Highlands' wouldn't change the traffic flow along the Route 312 and 6 corridor. Never mind- rhetorical.

I see a bigger bridge, at least two more traffic lights, and a widened Route 312 in our future. I also see endless development possibilities for additional land that Mr. Lepler owns nearby. Can anyone

say: Vicious circle?

Welfare Road:

Of course I could have lived without Councilman Johnson's gratuitous we've called in these experts 'just for you' remark. But better late than never.

Mr. Alberghini explained the history of the pond's problems, the Board listened and the experts commented and made suggestions. Part of the problem is the planning approvals that were granted on the property across the street. Very steep slopes where the septic fields lie.

I loved Willis Stephen's comments on his own pond being muddy after rain events. Is that a pond or a retention basin? Just asking. But what I did like was the Board (Pat Bonanno) finally asking a resident 'what can we do for you?' Because, really, isn't this what good government is all about? This doesn't mean that government can provide (or fund) all answers but it's the question they should always ask and then respond to honestly.

SusCom:

Ouch. Poor, poor Mr. Burns was really in the hot seat and may have been as inconvenienced as some SusCom customers over the past two weeks- well maybe not. I liked the Board's 'due diligence' question re.SusCom's crumbling infrastructure claim.

My question is: Did Southeast have a choice in cable providers? If so did they use 'due diligence' in checking out the competition and if not, how carefully was SusCom vetted? And if the contract signed allows no changes to existing programs how will this be enforced. And for how long does SusCom have to comply?

What I loved about this portion of the meeting was how miffed the several members of the Town Board were because:

- A. They had to wait for service for up to 45 minutes.
- B. They had to pay \$10 more a month for a service they didn't want.

Welcome to my world. Think of how I feel every time I try to FOIL at Town Hall or open my town tax bill.

Seriously, Mr. Burns seemed sincere and suitably remorseful so now we'll see how SusCom delivers and what recourse the town has if they don't.

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

Best Regards,
Lynne Eckardt

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