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From: "Lynne Eckardt" <midfarm@bestweb.net>
Date: Sat May 7, 2005 5:50 pm
Subject: Southeast Town Board Recap 5/5/05

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Hi All,

Ah, it's been awhile since my last 'recap' but it's a lousy day so I may have the time to churn this out.

The Town Board met last Thursday night (May 5th) for a Work Session- below please find my report. As always the comments are my own and reflect no one else's totally caustic take on life in Southeast.

This was a meeting with absolutely no fireworks- always a good thing although it does make for a dull read. For the record Councilwoman Mitts and Councilman Honeck were MIA. For fun check out Triple J and the Southeast Courts.

AGENDA:

1. Building Department Fees:

Building permits are now renewable for a \$35 per year charge. The Board would like to revert to the original fee charged after a single one year (\$35) renewal expires. The feeling was that there are too many outstanding permits and a lot of 'mud and debris' (Paul Johnson) at construction sites.

2. Blackberry Park District:

This was a presentation of the 'Capital Improvement Committee' new master plan.

The park is 30 years old and needs revitalization. There are tennis courts, gazebo, clubhouse and play areas. There will be safety lighting. The rate per Blackberry homeowner will go from approximately \$275 per year to \$400.

Since vandalism has been a problem in the past security cameras may be installed.

3. Various Topics- M. Levine

Special districts manager Michael Levine discussed several water districts and Brewster Little League.

Springhouse District: There is a water emergency- a leak that no one can find.

Brewster Little League: Little League has requested help for safety improvements. Poles and netting between fields at Markell Park (estimate \$25,000)

New fencing around the girl's field (estimate \$4000)

Some new fencing for the boy's field (estimate \$1400)

Estimates were from D-Fence. There is \$5000 in '05 budget for fencing.

Landfill Closure: Plan submitted to the DEC in October. DEC responded in March.

Brewster Heights Water: Problem with General Contractor

Refuse District Contract (AWS): Expires this year. Councilman Bonanno wanted to discuss this further.

Special Districts: Severn Trent contract is for 3 years with a three year extension.

Fox Hill: Water System Improvements: Estimates were double what was expected.

Starr Ridge Water District: While under repair equipment will be need to maintain pressure. Booster pumps can be purchased for \$7000 to \$10,000 and then sold.

Peaceable Hill water District:Severn Trent looking into pressure problems. Hydrants need to be installed on Panorama, Brady and Manor. About 10 residents in the district asked questions regarding pressure, water quality and possible installation of water meters. All town water districts except Peaceable Hill are metered.

Supervisor Dunford assured residents that there would be another informational meeting held this fall. In the meantime possible alternatives to village water are being studied.

4. Peach Lake Sewer District:

Resident and CRSE Board member, Susan Coyle, presented the Board with a letter regarding the proposed Sewer Project. Since one can not usually speak at Work Sessions Susan had asked when the next meeting (where one could speak) would be.

There will be an informational meeting on May 17th with both the North Salem and Southeast Town Boards. This will be at 7:30 at Vails Grove.

5. Reduction of Performance Bond: Reservoir Ridge.

Bond will go from \$443,000 to \$277,100. There will be a Public Hearing in June.

6. Establishment of a Performance Bond- Triple J

This will be set at the May 12th meeting.

7. Putnam County Lake Management Program 2005 Contract

\$5000 will come from the County.

8. Intermunicipal Records Storage:

This will be \$1.25 per cubic ft. and is in the Town Clerk's budget.

9. MS4 Stormwater Steering Committee:

Southeast needs to appoint someone to the committee above. Laurie Taylor and Michelle Powers already sit on the committee.

10. Southeast Courts:

Because the courts are so busy (110 cases per night) an increase in staff will be needed. Supervisor Dunford will be meeting with Town Justices Vercolone and Borkowski. Court space also needs to be expanded. Because of the backlog court dates set for violations now can't be heard until October/November.

Executive Session: Personnel

Comments:

Various Topics- M. Levine:

Whew- where to begin... This job (Special District's Manager) has to rank right up there with Assessor as a complete nightmare. I mean, there's always, always something wrong. And what's up with Little League thrown into this mix?

Landfill:I especially loved the Landfill reference to the DEC reacting slowly. Hello, hello! The landfill was closed back in the late eighties and we're rolling our eyes over a six months lag in a DEC response time? You're kidding, right?

Yeah, I know that the landfill closure was 'hung up' in the Estate of Nelson but it would be

interesting to see what this baby has cost in legal fees alone. It's a perennial billing fave of our Town Attorney, Stephens and Charbonneau- running around 4K in '04.

Refuse District Contract: Councilman Bonanno said he wanted to discuss this- and it didn't seem in a good way. I would love to hear more but I suppose this will come under the Executive Session heading: 'negotiation'.

Peaceable Hill Water District: Kudos to Supervisor Dunford for allowing questions and comments from Peaceable Hill residents. This is the way all Work Sessions should be. Sure the questions can be tedious but you guys work for the residents, and they deserve answers to their questions.

I am concerned about the study for the district as it's expensive and it's difficult to believe, that with capital costs figured in, we'll be able to get water any cheaper than what we have now. I don't like the increase and I especially don't like the loosey-goosey contract with the village (I'd love to meet the genius who signed onto this). Still, I believe that the water quality here will improve once the new pipes are in.

Peach Lake Sewer District: Great news about the joint Town Board meeting but until Thursday night neither Susan Coyle (a Seven Oaks resident) nor myself had heard anything about it. Less than two weeks away and it wasn't even on the Southeast Town calendar. Let's hope this meeting isn't 'top secret'.

Establishment of a Performance Bond: Triple J: I am still confused by this gem.

Originally approved by a vote of 6-0 over a year ago (4/27/04). Chairman Rohrman was concerned that the project had been in the planning process for so long that it would lose it's former status and have to conform to the new stricter regs. Horrors! We wouldn't want to protect the environment rather than the applicant's right to make a buck would we?

The Planning Board then granted Triple J a 90 day extension on October 25th of '04. Next they were granted another extension on January 24th of this year. Problems arose as this had to go through the Patterson Planning Board as well.

Now we're going for a Performance Bond but I have no idea when Mr. Rohrman signed off on the plat. Am I missing something? Oh right, two of the applicants are Jay Hogan (former partner of Willis Stephens and formerly Town Counsel) and John Petrillo.

Southeast Courts: Interestingly this was a last minute addition to the calendar. Completely coincidentally Cathy Croft had FOILED for the salaries of the Justices and clerks earlier in the week. The Justices make \$23,987. The tentative Budget figure for '05 was \$260,892- with \$1500 budgeted for equipment and \$36,500 budgeted for contractual expenses.

I don't have the breakdown yet but, as a sidebar, I was surprised to see that when both clerks attended what I assume was a three night conference in Saratoga Springs last October the Holiday Inn bill was over \$1200. I'm sorry, but someone got hosed. And it wasn't even racing season in Saratoga. I mean, \$215 a night? For Holiday Inn? I haven't been in one since the early 70's- are they way nicer now?

Anyhow, now we need an additional clerk- Super. But I'm thinking with all the fines handed out maybe this is one branch of our government that is self-supporting (unless you're the one found guilty). By the way, a six month wait for a court date is not unusual. In Bedford it's about two years. I've heard tell that Ossining is even worse-

That's it from my desk.

Have a wonderful weekend and Happy Mother's Day!

With Best Regards,
Lynne

  

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