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- [Photos](#)
 - [Pending](#)
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SE Town Board Work Session 5/11/06

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Message #1662 of 1707 < [Prev](#) | [Next](#) >

Hi All,

Mon May 15, 2006 4:33 pm

Last Thursday night I attended the SE Town Board Work Session.

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This was actually an almost frenetic free-for-all and I spent the better part of two hours feeling like I was inside a kettle drum. All over a stone wall. I can't even report on anything I heard as there were children talking, unhappy babies, dueling strollers, and cross conversations between the Board and the public.

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Lorraine Mitts was the unequivocal hero of the evening. She was relentless on another zoning variance sought by Westchester Tractor and really held the always debonair Mr. Lepler and his rep accountable. Very impressive.

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No local celebrity spotting- although Bob Buckley, who's often in Charming Paul's entourage, was there. Knowing how cagey our Board can be, it's a safe bet he's keeping eyes and ears open for any chit chat on Stateline or the proposed rezoning. Smart move.

I'll insert my usual disclaimer here. All snippy comments and opinions expressed are solely my own. They do not represent any organizations to which I belong.

Town Board Work Session:

1. Rec Petition:

Joe Cavanaugh, a nine year resident, gave a presentation of a proposed Recreation Center for Southeast. A petition of 479

signatures had been turned in along with a 12 page report. He spoke about Rec Centers in Patterson and Southhampton, NY.

Mr. Cavanaugh said that the town lacked recreational facilities. A figure mentioned for the Southhampton facility was \$3.5 million. Mr. Cavanaugh said that the interested parties would also be willing to raise funds for the Center.

2. Mannuccia Stone Wall:

A ticket was issued by Zoning Enforcement Officer, Ron Harper. A wall was moved without knowing about the town's ordinance as the homeowners were worried about it injuring children.

This will be on next weeks Work Session.

3. Westchester Tractor- Special Permit:

Terry Hahn, Landscape architect for the applicant made a brief presentation asking for outside storage. Councilwoman Mitts said that when the original Special Permit was granted the Board was told that there would be no outside storage.

Ms. Hahn said that they weren't sure if they'd need it and Mr. Lepler added that most of the equipment on site would fit under the already approved structure.

Ms. Mitts said that the Board had made a field trip to the Goldens Bridge site of Westchester Tractor and wanted to avoid what has happened there.

4. Mt. Ebo Corporate Park- Special Permit:

This is the site (off Route 22) of 168 units of Senior Housing in 6 buildings on 29 acres. There will be a Club House/Medical offices on site as well.

There was much discussion about fire safety and water capacity. The Fieldstone Pond fire was mentioned. Mr. Lepler said that the fire had consumed 300,000 gallons of water and that the water tower took a day and a half to recharge. The tank holds a total of 500,000 gallons. A meeting is going to be held at the High School for Fieldstone residents and officials. The Board questioned whether there was enough water capacity to meet needs of all new development. United Cerebral Palsy, the Temple and the 168 units of Senior Housing are all proposed (and the first 2 are approved) for the Mt. Ebo site.

Councilman Bonanno asked what the Senior Units would sell for: Between \$285,000 and \$300,000.

The Clubhouse will have a footprint of 5000 sq. ft. With medical offices (staffed part time) below.

5. Wetlands Local Law Amendment:

This is a proposal to hire a professional Wetlands Inspector. He/she would be paid on a per diem basis- possibly by an escrow account (via the applicant). There was some discussion about hiring any SE resident. Supervisor Dunford said that he wouldn't hire a resident that 'he couldn't work with.'

All applications for a wetlands permit would go through the Planning Board secretary. The Wetlands Inspector would report on the site and the Town Board would make a determination

based on this report.

There will be a Public Hearing on this May 25th.

Town Planner, Graham Trelstad mentioned there was a consultant (who has done work for the town) interested in this position.

New Business:

Lorraine Mitts then gave a brief report on the status of the proposed Day Laborer's work station in the village.

The site will not be at Village Hall, the County building or Markel Park. The village may meet with the DEP again to determine the best site.

COMMENTS:

1. Rec Petition:

Mr. Cavanaugh gave a good, solid presentation of the rec center proposal complete with 12 page report. While in its preliminary stages I have about a billion questions which may not be answerable yet. Of course I'm very interested in a realistic price tag as Southeast residents will be footing the bill. And there seems to be a lot of other bills that we'll be footing in the near future. Capping the landfill, the promised old Town Hall renovations, ball fields at Terravest, possible new digs for our town fathers- well, the list goes on.

So while I think it's terrific that there are private fund raising efforts proposed I'd be interested to know what the annual financial 'upkeep' of a rec center costs?

And does it make sense to pursue a Center if a YMCA is proposed on the Southeast/Carmel border? Rather than a duplication of services would working towards a state of the art 'Y' make more sense? And would this project actually come to fruition sooner?

I look forward to answers as proposed Rec Center progresses so that the residents of Southeast can make an informed decision if a referendum is needed.

Mannuccia Stone Wall:

I'm sorry- I haven't a clue as to what was going on here. This was right out of a bad Robert Altman film- actually, make that a Fellini flick. Frankly, I get a headache just thinking about it.

Westchester Tractor:

Well, since I'm on a movie jag... "It's Baaaaaaaaaaaaaack...."

Hard to believe that the ink is barely dry on the totally gratuitous variance and the resulting Special Permit issued to Westchester Tractor yet they're back for more. This definitely wins the coveted Chutzpah Award which I haven't given out in quite some time.

Councilwoman Mitts was great here. She was clearly aggravated and couldn't get a direct answer as to why an outside storage permit was suddenly 'de rigueur'. But like a dog with a bone she asked several times what circumstances had changed until Terry Hahn finally admitted, errrrr, 'nothing'.

So, let me get this straight. The 10,000 square foot car park on steroids isn't enough of a display/storage area for equipment that Westchester Tractor sells (remember- it's 'not retail'). Just as the parts they sell, again, 'not retail', just as they don't fix anything 'on site', just as they promised outside storage would not be necessary.

Anyone see a pattern emerging?

And if you don't think this is any big deal drive down to Westchester Tractor in Goldens Bridge and take a peek. Now picture this mess perched on a ridgeline- because you can see this site from Route 312 in Dykemens. And, even without heavy equipment, it isn't pretty.

Mt. Ebo:

I'm still amused by the Clubhouse/Medical Office combo as I know that there has to be an angle here somewhere. I mean, Mrs. Lepler raised no fools... so why you'd want part time medical offices as an 'amenity' I haven't a clue? Me? I'd take an indoor lap pool over a gaggle of docs any day.

Maybe that is the point. Because it's gotta be a lot more profitable to rent office space then maintain an indoor pool. Also, hmmm, I wonder what becomes of the space if no doctors want to rent it? Remember the doctors who rent here can only serve the residents of this complex- and the highest that the population here can be is about: 504 people (an overblown and unrealistic estimate). And that's if everyone is married, has a live-in and/or has an extra body in the spare bedroom. Can you spell "hardship"? Because my best guess would be that the docs renting here could not pay their lease just servicing this complex.

There was tons of chit chat about fire safety and concerns over whether the Mt. Ebo water district can provide for this latest project. I'm especially concerned about the WWTP in Fieldstone as well. Especially as residents still complain about the smell.

Anyhow, if someone died and made me queen- I'd lose the medical offices and insist on more amenities for our Seniors.

Oh, and I'd love to know when the meeting between Fieldstone Pond residents and the TB is to take place. In light of the fire and the concerns shared by all residents of SE I trust that this'll be a completely open meeting.

Proposed Wetlands Amendment:

While I find this should be an improvement to our existing system I do have several concerns.

First, the good news. The wetlands will be looked at sooner in the process rather than at the tail end. Second, they'll be looked at by a professional. Third, one person (in this case the Planning Board secretary) will be in charge and thus will have a handle on what's going on.

Where I'm getting a little stuck is that one person appointed by the TB will be the one to give 'thumbs up' or 'thumbs down' and they will be paid out of an applicant's escrow account- in other

words, paid by the applicant.

In light of this, I think a Commission of some sort might be needed for oversight.

That's it from my desk. As always if you have any additions or corrections feel free to e-mail.

With Best Regards,
Lynne Eckardt

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Message #1662 of 1707 < [Prev](#) | [Next](#) >

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Lynne Eckardt
[lynneeckardt](#)

May 15, 2006
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