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SE Town Board Meeting 7/20/06

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Hi All,

Sat Jul 22, 2006 5:20 pm

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On Thursday night I attended the SE Regular Board Meeting. I have two words to describe the proceedings... Oy Vey. New Business was a 'bring-your-own-torch-and-pitchfork' affair and hosted more disgruntled residents than 'Grievance Day' at Town Hall.

"Lynne Eckardt"
<midfarm@bestweb.net>
[lynneeckardt](#)
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Fortunately the mood was rather 'light' (thank God the heat had broken and there wasn't a full moon) still, I'd urge everyone watch the festivities on Channel 8 when available. Oh, and I believe I'm off Councilwoman Mitts' Christmas card list...

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I'm going to take a moment here for my usual tired disclaimer. Once more and with feeling... the post below reflects my bad attitude and quasi-dismay with life in Southeast. I love this town but, gosh, sometimes it is hard. As always, my opinions are my own and reflect no organization with which I'm affiliated.

Highlights include (but aren't limited to): The garbage contract-it's going out to bid (Yippee!), the Sheriff's Department-they've pulled the plug on our local 'doorknob jiggling' SE facilities patrol, and wetlands permits- One (High Meadows) was issued to a project the Conservation Commission **did not** recommend and one was denied to the one they **did** (Salmon's Daily Brook) recommend. Hey, go figure... but this one's especially fun as both properties are owned by the same applicant.

Best Actor in a limited (make that, seemingly unlimited) series went to Supervisor Dunford. He quite convincingly said he didn't know who the applicant was on the two projects mentioned above. Miraculously, the Supervisor's pants didn't spontaneously combust.

I apologize in advance for the length of these notes but 'New Business' was about an hour long and jam-packed.

REGULAR MEETING
Public Hearings:

7:30PM Mt. Ebo Corporate Park - Special Permit

Continuance:

Terry Hahn gave a brief description of Harold Lepler's Senior Housing project (168 units) on Route 22. The Board is still waiting for a letter from the Brewster Fire Department. I asked about the amenities- they are: Clubhouse/Conservatory, library, exercise room, kitchen, medical offices, sidewalks and a gazebo. I stated that since I'm only a year away from eligibility a pool might be nicer to have than medical offices.

The Public Hearing was closed. There will be a 10 day comment period.

1) Review of Minutes:

May 25,2006 Regular Meeting/ June 15, 2006 Regular Meeting. Approved 5-0

2) Correspondence:

Approved 5-0.

3) Approval of Voucher List in the amount of \$1,039,004.07

Approved 5-0

4) Motion - Approval of Budget Transfers - Attached

Approved 5-0

5) Motion setting Meeting Dates:

August 3, 2006	7:30PM Civic Center	Work Session
August 10, 2006	7:30PM Civic Center	Work Session
August 17, 2006 Meeting	7:30PM Civic Center	Regular

Approved 5-0

6) Motion Calling for the Following Public Hearings:

August 17, 2006 7:30PM Reduction of Performance Bond - Arborscape
7:31 PM Road Name Change - Fields Corner Road to Pugsley Road

Approved:5-0

7) Resolution - Wetlands Permit - Pennella, LLC- (Fields Lane)

The Conservation Commission's recommendation was upheld 5-0.

8) Motion - Authorization to Send Request for International Boulevard Road Dedication to Planning Board for Review

Approved 5-0

9) Resolution - Wetlands Permit - High View Meadows Farm (Welfare Road)

The Conservation Commission's recommendation was overturned by a vote of 5-0.

10) Motion - Authorizing Special District Administration to Bid out the Garbage Contract

Passed 5-0

11) Resolution - Wetlands Permit - 76 Dingle Ridge Road

Approved 5-0

12) Motion - Authorizing Supervisor to Sign Conservation Easement for Triple J Development Corporation

Approved 5-0

13) Resolution - Wetlands Permit - JP International (Old Milltown Road)

The Conservation Commission's recommendation was upheld. 5-0

14) Resolution - Adoption of Amendments to Wetlands Local Law

This was moved to the end of the meeting and was passed by a vote of 5-0.

15. Resolution - Wetlands Permit - Salmons Daily Brook

The Conservation Commission's recommendation was overturned by a vote of 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

Susan Coyle asked several questions regarding the proposed Peach Lake Sewer District.

- Will there be a waste water treatment plant on Cobb Road (as reported in the Patent Trader)?
Ans. no
- Why was David Bruen (representing PLEC) at a meeting with Hahn Engineering and Supervisor Dunford after residents were assured that meetings with PLEC representation only would not occur? Answer: It really wasn't a meeting.
- Will storm water mitigation figures and WWTP figures be shown to residents at the same time? Answer: A definite maybe.
- Will the cost estimates be on any official petitions passed around? Ans. Yes. Figures must be approved by the NYS comptroller's office.

A resident of Middle Branch Lane said that they had been rezoned 'Gateway Commercial' and asked when would this be converted back to residential. Supervisor Dunford said they were working on it.

Mr. Hecht had questions regarding Tonetta Lake Beach. Guatemalans holding Guatemalan Consulate cards with proof of SE residency may now use the beach. Mr. Hecht questioned the wisdom of this as it's so easy to fake documentation of residency. It was explained that the consulate cards must be accepted as proof of identity within the US. Mr. Hecht said that we 'have to get our act together'.

Another man said he was concerned as Tonetta has always been a 'family friendly beach' but now 'those women' are swimming in their bras.

Mr. Hupp mentioned that his child's doctor advised that his 19 month old son should have a Hepatitis A vaccine because of the large immigrant population.

Bradley Schwartz mentioned that if Peach Lake was to get sewers the Board should be looking at different models.

I read a letter from another resident of Middle Branch Lane. He had contacted the Supervisor about the 'Gateway Commercial' zoning in May and had heard nothing back. The Supervisor said that the Town Planner was working on it.

I asked about:

- The Sheriff's SE patrol. If there was still a dedicated car. Ans. No one had spoken to the Sheriff recently. When I added that the dedicated patrol had been terminated on the 19th the Supervisor said he had a call into Sheriff Smith. I asked where the checks had been sent. Ans. Putnam County Commissioner of Finance.
- The Landfill status: The DEP has sent the Town a letter. Special District Manager spoke with the DEC. We'll know more by the end of August and Sterling Engineering will have to do an updated estimate of the costs.
- When will a wetlands consultant be appointed. Ans. Probably within 45 days.
- When will the Town discuss a proposed amendment to the code re. the 25,000 sq. ft. retail limit. Ans. In August.
- I asked why the TB had overturned the Conservation Commission determination of 'High Meadow Farm' and 'Salmon's Dailey Brook'. That I was concerned that at the last Work Session as the Board had been mis-informed on the vote itself and that they were rewriting history. The Board said they had a right to do as they thought best as the CC was

only advisory.

- I asked who was holding the conservation easements on High Meadow Farm. Ans. The Town. I asked if this had been done before? Ans. no. I asked if this would be the wave of the future. Ans. Town Counsel, Willis Stephens said 'maybe' and when pressed wouldn't commit further. Supervisor Dunford advised me to look into my 'crystal ball'.

John Lord asked about the Conservation determinations and vote as he had been at the meeting in May. Supervisor Dunford said that 'Lynne had already asked those questions'.

I asked if the Board knew who owned the two project's whose CC determinations had been overturned. The Board said they did not. I asked the Supervisor to check. When I mentioned that Ross Allen owned both Councilwoman Mitts said she had no idea.

COMMENTS:

Whew... what a night. Obviously 'New Business' has become the happening place on the third Thursday of every month. You gotta love grassroots democracy in action. But, scheesh, the natives certainly are restless- I'll take this in order.

Mt. Ebo Senior Housing:

I won't go into the full blown rant but my favorite comment came from someone sitting nearby who opined on the amenities: 'Look, they'll have one big room and a kitchen... what more do you want?' And that's it in a nutshell. We (ok, actually Mr. Lepler and the Town Board) stick our seniors on a busy stretch of 22- walkable to virtually no where anyone would want to go, tout a 'medical office' and a gazebo as amenities and think it's just super.

Wetlands Permits:

This was a travesty. Finally... finally... after sitting through years of Conservation Commission meetings there is a negative determination made and yet Town Board thinks the applicant has been 'jerked around enough'? Apparently 'jerked around' so much that the TB re-wrote voting history. What's up with this?

Look, Ross Allen is a developer- he knows the ropes. He bought lousy property to develop and he let permits expire on the other. Why on earth should we accommodate him at the expense of the environment? As for Supervisor Dunford not knowing that Ross Allen was the applicant... well, suffice it to say, Mr. Dunford's a really smart guy and knows more about what goes on in Southeast than almost

anyone. Besides the Board had just schmoozed Mr. Allen at a Work Session a week earlier (7/13/06).

I'm guessing that the Board knew passing the 100% buffer disturbance in Salmon's Daily Brook would set a disastrous precedent. I mean how would the Board then be able to deny any wetlands permit- especially to least favored developers? But approving High Meadow (AKA 'Low Swamp') is truly pathetic. And I don't think it's any co-incidence that both pieces are owned by the same developer- especially one who caused 'mass amnesia' on Thursday night. In what could be described as a 'huff' Mrs. Mitts informed me, in no uncertain terms, that she never looks at the applicant but only the project. Oh really? Try telling this to Mr. Camarda.

Penella Wetlands Permit:

Fields Lane, wetlands, soon to be 80% warehouse/20% office. Enough said.

Garbage Contract:

If you blinked you missed it. No roll call vote- nothing. Under New Business Susan Coyle asked if AWS would be allowed to rebid she said "Can Lynne Eckardt say 'I told you so?'" To which the Supervisor replied 'I'm sure she will when she writes about it.'

Nah, I'm not interested in revenge. I'm interested in having above-board companies do business with the Town of Southeast. As far as I'm concerned the \$1.5 million we awarded AWS last year possibly helped fund racketeering, price fixing, mail fraud and over 100 other indictable offences for almost an entire year.

Hopefully we'll sever all ties this go-round. Errrrrr, perhaps sever is the wrong word to use...

Peach Lake Sewer District:

This topic is always sure to please as we get to watch the Board play 'duck and cover' with the always able Susan Coyle and other concerned and articulate Starr Ridge Manor residents. Here's the drill.

- a) The Town Board promises never, ever to do 'fill-in-the-blank' again. (in this case Supervisor Dunford had stated that PLEC would never again be the only Community Group represented.)
- b) The Board breaks that specific promise. (They met with PLEC president David Bruen and Hahn Engineering)
- c) The Board covers their a## by disassembling (Oh, that 'meeting'- well, that wasn't really a 'meeting'... oh, and by the way, minutes were taken at the non-meeting.)

This is like dealing with your six year old but unfortunately you can't send them to their room.

Blue Cards/Immigration:

Ugh. I just hate tackling this one.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but it seems to me that if someone is in this country legally, can prove SE residency and can pay the appropriate fees they get to use Lake Tonetta. Period. I have to wonder why we're suddenly concerned with proof of 'residency' and the possible forging of NYSEG bills now but we weren't last year.

Bras on the beach? Hmmmmm, I'm guessing we'll see an uptick in male attendance- seriously, if we don't already have one, a dress code for all Town Parks may be in order.

Landfill:

Well, 20 years later and we're inching ever closer. My guess is that no work will begin in '06. I think the capping estimate is going to be astronomical and I just can't wait to hear the spin during 'Election '07'.

Town held Conservation Easements:

Ingenious!

In a brand new twist we're now the proud owners of less than one acre of conservation easements. These are on the 'Triple J' subdivision- you know, the one where the barn was torn down, the one jointly owned, at one point, by Jay Hogan, former law partner to Mr. Stephens with an office just down the hall.

Ah, but I digress. One parcel is about a half acre and the other slightly over a tenth. While I'm often slow on the uptake Town Counsel Willis Stephens' explanation of making sure the landowner wouldn't have any 'activity' in these areas seemed kind of lame. Why not just deed restrict? And why put an easement in place after over a year of approvals? Further, one could have difficulty building in these areas without a variance.

I asked if this solution might become trendy? To which Mr. Stephens said- you never know... and Supervisor Dunford advised me to 'get out my crystal ball'. Always good at taking direction I windxed said orb and this is what I see. Although foggy, I had a vision of Rick O'Rourke asking the Town Board to hold the 10 acre conservation easement on 'The Meadows'. You remember, the one that no one wants...

Sheriff's Dedicated Patrol:

I don't know what's most appalling here. That the town really didn't know that the dedicated patrol of SE town facilities had been terminated or that they knew and they just didn't care.

A brief history. We used to pay less than \$35,000 a year to a private security company to patrol town properties. But it's late October '05 and the incumbents need that splashy photo-op on the eve of elections. As an added bonus it shows how much they really, really care about the village. By the way, for you trivia nuts the splashy photo-op of '03 was the official name change of the Brewster North train station. Anyhow, last year a partnership between the Town and County was formed (to the tune of \$120,000) to fund this dedicated sheriff's patrol. At some point the County backed out so we're left holding the \$60,000 bag.

Patrols begin (while we're still paying the old firm) and it's then discovered that there's no dedicated car on this patrol. Trouble shooting ensues and we finally get what we're promised. The problem is, when you do the rather simplistic math, 60K will only cover about half a year. What financial genius missed this?

Now I doubt our facilities are in grave jeopardy but I detest poor planning and broken promises. I'm also hearing that the money sent is still in the County's General Fund- or maybe not this exact money but a figure that coincidentally matches it.

Of course, Sheriff Don Smith's name was also thrown into the mix- spoken reverentially and in hushed tones. Scheesh, when I spoke to him a few weeks ago the Sheriff kept trying to tell me that the dedicated part-time patrol was really full time. Huh? I like Don Smith but, note to the sheriff, 'God blessing' me doesn't make me believe you or make me go away.

There really never is a dull moment...

That's it from my desk. Again sorry for the length. Please feel free to e-mail me with any questions or comments that you may have.

With Best Regards,
Lynne Eckardt

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Lynne Eckardt
[lynneeckardt](#)

Jul 22, 2006
5:26 pm



[Re: SE Town Board Meeting 7/20/06](#)

I would like to take this opportunity to comment on Lynne's recap of the July Town Board Meeting and in particular two projects on Welfare RD. I am writing ...

Brian Alberghini
[aghini_99](#)

Jul 27, 2006
5:26 pm



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