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# CRSE · Concerned Residents of Southeast

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**From:** "Lynne Eckardt" <[midfarm@bestweb.net](mailto:midfarm@bestweb.net)>

**Date:** Fri Sep 10, 2004 7:09 pm

**Subject:** Southeast Town Board Recap 9/9/04

Hi All,

Below please find my recap for the Town Board Regular Meeting last night. As I usually do I'll only include what may be of interest to CRSE members.

As always the sarcastic, unnecessary comments are my own. And the end of this meeting really ticked me off- so you may want to skip them altogether. In theory, official minutes will be available on September 23rd.

As are almost all the Regular Meetings it was brief. Probably the most interesting part was the 'Q and A' under new business. Early on I was going to give 'Best Actress in a Supporting Role' to Councilwoman Mitts but Town Clerk, Ruth Mazzei, had a great come-from-behind run by the meeting's thrilling conclusion.

And Mayor Cesar had his usual brilliant cameo. He seems to have become a 'stock character' at all Town Board meeting.

Read on...

### PUBLIC HEARING:

#### "Right Turn Only" Sodom Road/Old Milltown Road

Only John Cesar commented on this. He felt that the new signage would be helpful in ensuring safety. The Mayor brought enlarged, mounted photos to illustrate his point.

#### 4. Motion setting Meeting Dates:

9/16/04      7:30 Civic Center      Work Session

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10/5/04	5:00 Town Hall	Special Meeting
10/7/04	7:30 Lakeview Manor	Special Meeting
10/14/04	7:30 Civic Center	Work Session
10/21/04	7:30 Civic Center	Regular Meeting

Ms. Mitts asked why there was a Special Meeting on October 5th at 5:00 PM. Supervisor Dunford explained that this is when the budget must be presented to the Town Clerk publicly.

**5. Public Hearing set for October 7th at 7:30 at Lakeview Manor: Draft Zoning Ordinance**

4-0 (Mr. Bonanno absent)

**7 . Resolution- Declare Lead Agency- Zoning Amendments**

The Board declared itself Lead Agency by a vote of 4-0.

**8. Resolution- Southeast Honor Roll**

By a vote of 4-0 the Board voted to approve the Honor Roll design by John Folchetti. If private funds can not be raised the Town reserves the right to choose a less expensive design.

**9. Resolution- Establishment of Performance Bond, Starr Ridge Equestrian Center**

A bond in the amount of \$570,400 was set. Passed 4-0

**10. Resolution- Establishment of a Performance Bond, Brewster Transit Mix**

A bond in the amount of \$207,500 was set. Passed 4-0

**11. Resolution- Main Street Grant/Village of Brewster**

The Board supports this grant application and has committed \$6250 for a 'streetscape' project should the grant be awarded. Passed 4-0.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Councilwoman Mitts said that the new Town Website should be up and running within two weeks. Supervisor Dunford thanked Lorraine for all her hard work and the speed in which these updates have been made.

Cathy Croft asked Ms. Mitts if Town Board minutes would be available on line. Ms. Mitts said that she had already answered this question many times, and that, yes, minutes would be posted.

Ms. Croft also asked if individual Board members would have e-mail. Ms. Mitts replied that, at this point, there would not be e-mail but possibly later.

Ms. Croft then announced that CRSE felt that it would be in the public's best interest to have access to official draft minutes sooner rather than later so that CRSE would be posting them on our updated Website. Town Clerk Mazzei took issue with this and said that there had been a 'problem' with posting minutes in one upstate town. Ms. Mazzei was concerned about possible 'alterations' made to the minutes. This was debated for a few minutes.

Councilman Johnson asked if the minutes would be in 'Word' or PDF form. Brian Alberghini answered PDF.

I asked about FOILING procedure. At a recent Board Meeting this issue had been raised and the Board promised to place it on an upcoming agenda to set consistent Town Policy. Supervisor Dunford said that a consistent policy would be set.

I asked about the recent County/Town agreement allotting \$60,000 from the town and \$60,000 from the County for 'additional police presence' in the Town of Southeast and the Village.

Supervisor Dunford explained that the Town's night security firm was retiring so that the Town needed to find a replacement. This job entails checking Southeast properties throughout the Town and Village from 4:00 PM until 8:00 AM. Since many of the Town properties are in the village this will provide Brewster with added coverage with no expense to the Village.

I asked how much the retiring firm cost and Supervisor Dunford replied in the vicinity of \$35,000 without overtime.

Mayor Cesar said that this was great and thanked the Town.

## **COMMENTS:**

### **PUBLIC HEARING:**

Again, let me first say that I really enjoy Mayor Cesar. He is a character and it has been said that there's no more dangerous place than getting between the Mayor and a camera. I'm beginning to believe it. The completely garbled and unnecessary presentation on Sodom Road, complete with visual aids was a little embarrassing. Supervisor Dunford politely but firmly cut the Mayor off mid-sentence. Hats off to our Supervisor.

#### **4. Motion setting Meeting Dates:**

This is when Councilwoman Mitts' acting skills went into overdrive. With raised eyebrows and feigned surprise she asked the Supervisor why such an odd time and day for a Special Meeting. Hmmm, maybe she thought that the Town wanted to quash yet another attempt at a 'Neighborhood Ward System' or just sneak something in under the radar.

This was a surprising reaction for someone who had no qualms about two such irregular meetings less than a year ago.

#### **8. Southeast Honor Roll:**

The Board seemed more gracious about the proposal on this go-round. And it makes sense that if the money just isn't there for the proposed project the Board will then have to choose a less expensive design.

#### **11. Main Street Grant/Village of Brewster:**

It was nice to see the Town's support of this grant and money put aside for the 'Street Scape' project.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

Well, this is where the fun really began.

Councilwoman Mitts dropped the Miss Congeniality ball when she told Cathy Croft that she had answered the 'Posting of Minutes' question many times before. Well, yeah, she's answered it (as have other members of the Board) problem is, it's been answered differently on several occasions. Sometimes yes, sometimes no, and sometimes maybe. Anyhow, the attitude verged on testy.

Town Clerk Mazzei stunned audience members with a virtuoso performance. Like a dog with a bone Ms. Mazzei argued a point (on the legality of posting FOILed minutes) to death. Suggesting that 'alterations could be made' wasn't too complimentary either. As I'm wont to say, she hit rock bottom and then kept on digging. Check it out when aired on Suscom.

I did mention that if inaccurate minutes were posted on the CRSE website it would be simple to contact any of our Board Members via e-mail to suggest corrections.

**Sheriff's Patrol:**

My head's still reeling re. the new Sheriff's patrol. After reading Mr. Bondi's speech I had no idea that the new patrol was simply to take over an existing security-detail job. Why this added expense should be passed on (not to just Southeast taxpayers but all of Putnam) is beyond me. \$120,000 for a job that had been done for \$35,000 (plus overtime- I've FOILED for the correct amount today) seems remarkable. Has there been a crime wave we've missed? I mean, what's the deal.

I did so enjoy Supervisor Dunford's asking me whether I had anything 'against security'. Jeese, why not ask if I'm against patriotism while you're at it. Because haven't the two become almost synonymous.

No, Mr. Dunford, I'm not against 'security' but I am against Town Board actions taken that spend revenue, when they've never been discussed publicly or put out to bid. Sure, this patrol may be better for the Town- it's definitely better for the Village, but it would have been more appropriate to open it up for public discussion first.

Oh, and about that inconsistant FOILING procedure...This has been an ongoing problem since January. Fix it. A little more open, accessible government would go a long way right about now.

As always feel free to e-mail me with any questions or comments that you may have. Remember our new updated website is: [www.crse.org](http://www.crse.org)

Have a great weekend.

With Best Regards,  
Lynne Eckardt

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