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From: "Lynne Eckardt" <midfarm@bestweb.net>
Date: Sat Dec 10, 2005 4:01 pm
Subject: SE Town Board Work Session 12/1/05

lynneeckardt
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As has been my custom for some time I have not included my comments. If you'd like to receive them simply shoot me an e-mail.
Best,
Lynne

Hi All,

I'm finally getting around to the Town Board meeting of December 1st. You know, the one I referred to as 'Torches and Pitchforks'. Several residents have taken issue with this characterization so before I continue let me explain...

Some of you may have noticed that I'm a 'torch and pitchfork' kind of gal myself. On occasion I've even been known to make waves thus when I use the expression it's not necessarily in a negative way.

In fact, although a fan of civility, I think shake-ups are often essential. And basically this meeting was a wake-up call for all of those in elected office. Residents, and especially parents with children in Garden Street School, are fed up with the day-laborer situation in the village. Many were frightened for their children, many were angry, and yes, there were racial overtones to several comments.

I'm not going to attempt to cover this meeting in depth. I'll mention some salient comments and then comment myself.

As always my remarks are my own irreverent take on life in Southeast. And as always they reflect no one else's opinion but my own. Please feel free to e-mail with any comments or questions you may have.

Agenda:
1. M. Burdick
This tenant is in a NB-1 zone (General Business) and needs a Special Permit. A public Hearing will be set on December 22.

2. Garden Street Parents:
A group of parents from the Blackberry Community (although there were parents from all over

Southeast in attendance) had asked to meet with the Town Board about their concerns regarding Town property abutting Garden Street School. There have been issues since an encampment was discovered there over a year ago. The Town had the property surveyed and the map was completed in September.

The site is very steep and heavily wooded. To erect a fence 3600 linear feet of fencing would be needed and would cost between $70,000 to $80,000.

One audience member mentioned seeing a drunken man handcuffed on Halloween. Someone asked, 'What is bringing these people to our community?' and then suggested that they 'Move to Dover.'

A woman stated that she was of Hispanic origin and that if the day laborers were black this problem would have been taken care of a long time ago.

Councilwoman Mitts observed that she is a Garden Street parent and she often sees '300 guys standing on Main Street.' She continued to explain Team Brewster and its efforts.

Former Mayor Cesar thought that the having the sheriff back full time would make a difference.

Mayor John Degnan felt it was important to focus on securing kids at school but went on to explain that enforcement of loitering laws has been struck down at the federal level.

One audience member asked what the difference between the Town and Village were. It was explained that both were separated incorporated municipalities.

The new SE Rental Registration law was explained and how it should result in less over-crowding.

Several complained that Zoning Code Enforcement officer, Ron Harper, had not been helpful when the over-crowding of local residences were reported. Both Pump House Road and Nichols Road were mentioned.

Several residents added that they enjoyed the Village and made an effort to shop and eat in Brewster whenever they could. One suggested that we 'take back the Village' by attending the Tree Lighting and other Village events.

Another resident mentioned that there could be a 'bounty' offered as an incentive for reporting overcrowded apartments or houses. Also asked was what penalties were in place for overcrowding. Councilwoman Mitts said that fines typically ran $250 per day.

I asked for a meeting (as did several others) where Sheriff Smith, Mayor Degnan, Supervisor Dunford and acting School Superintendent Sabetella would answer questions and try to find solutions to the pressing problems facing Garden Street, the Village and the Town.

Other members of the audience were insistent that a date be set. January 4th was chosen and the Garden Street School will be the venue.

3. Office of the Aging- Contract
$5000. Will be signed on December 22

4. Humane Society- Contract
Same as last year. To be signed on December 22

With Best Regards,
Lynne Eckardt

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