

## SE Town Board Recap: 3/22/07

Hi All,

I'm much too late with this recap but this tends to be a busy time of year. And I suppose I could have let it slide but this one's just too priceless to pass up.

On Thursday, March 22 the Southeast Town Board held their regular meeting. This baby was jam packed with goodies ranging from: 'SURPRISE! We're spending \$2.1 million of your money on open space that most of the 'Open Space Committee' knew almost nothing about" to a fabulously diabolical 'get-a-load-of-this-lamo-excuse' on why we can't possibly cap the landfill. Thus the always coveted Chutzpa award goes to the Town Board for their pretzel logic on "Whose garbage is this anyway?".

I also enjoyed the 'added' agenda items that had to be known about well in advance and the all-new 'preemptive strike' wherein the Town Board anticipates what the audience might ask and answers the question in advance. This made for great theater and reminded me of Johnny Carson's 'Amazing Kreskin' routine.

As always the over-the-top recap is nothing more than my jaded, snippy opinion and reflects no groups to which I belong.

### **AGENDA:**

#### **Special Presentation:**

There was a special presentation by Mrs. Schlobohm's fifth grade class regarding Lake Tonetta's water quality and how the carp will effect it. This is part of the MS-4 outreach program.

- 1) Review of minutes-** February 15, 2007 Regular Meeting  
February 22, 2007 Special Meeting

Deferred

#### **2) Correspondence:**

Reading waived- 3-0

#### **3) Approval of Voucher List**

\$972,190

Approved 3-0

- 4) Motion Setting Meeting Dates:** April 12, 2007 7:30 Civic Center Work Session  
April 19, 2007 7:30 Civic Center Regular Meeting

Approved 3-0

#### **5) Motion Calling for the Following Public Hearings:**

April 19, 2007 Civic Center  
7:30 PM Pegasus Therapeutic Riding  
7:31 PM Zoning Amendments to Chapter 138

Approved 3-0

#### **6) Motion Approving Budget Transfers**

Approved 3-0

#### **7) Resolution To Adopt Lead Agency status re: Proposed Zoning Amendments to Chapter 138**

This was an unlisted action. Approved 3-0

**8) Motion Authorizing the Supervisor to Refer Proposed Zoning Amendments to Chapter 138 to the Planning Board and Putnam County Pursuant to 239(m)**

Authorized 3-0

**9) Motion to Award Landscape Contract**

To Colonial Town Landscaping located in Patterson

Passed 3-0

**10) Resolution to Amend Local Law- Root Avenue Signage**

Passed 3-0

**11) Resolution- Trust for Public Land, Putnam County Executive and Town of Southeast re. UJA Property**

This authorizes the Town to spend \$2.1 million on 166 acres of property north of Tilly Foster Farm.

Passed 3-0

**12) Resolution to Approve the Purchase of a New Front End Loader for up to \$115,000**

The old machine had broken. This item was not on the agenda.

Passed 3-0

**13) Resolution to Aid 5 families in Fieldstone Pond with their Assessments**

This resolution will be forwarded to the State Assembly and Senate. It is to aid five families whose condominiums burnt to the ground last March. This item was not on the agenda.

Passed 3-0

**14) A discussion re posting Police stats on the Town's Website.**

Discussed- not on the agenda

**New Business:**

The Board had decided to answer questions that seem to be raised every month: These questions included the Sheriff's Patrol and Landfill.

**Sheriff's Contract:**

Still under negotiation

**Landfill:**

Problems arose when the Board had to start dealing with two outside agencies back in 2003. Both the MTA and DEC. The Town Board feels that the MTA may have polluted their own property thus the Town Board will not start remediation until the issue is resolved.

**Meeting with North Salem:**

There will be a joint meeting with North Salem re. an Inter-municipal Agreement. The meeting will be held on April 10th at 7:30 at Vail's Grove.

**Town Spring/Earth Day Clean-up:**

There will be a town and village clean-up on April 14th.

**Wetlands Inspector:**

The Board hasn't made any decision and may call the top two contenders back for another interview.

**Open Space/Humane Society:**

The question was asked how the Humane Society fit into the open space purchase. The Humane Society will purchase 10 acres from the Town of Southeast for the new facility. The purchase will not be funded by tax payers. There are no plans to develop the remainder of the property for the first five years.

**Critical Environmental Area at Lake Tonetta:**

Bob Zubrycki asked if the Board was considering the designation of this status for the Great Cedar Swamp. The Board said that they were.

**New Policy on Videotaping:**

I asked about a change in policy re. camera angles. In the past the videographer had focused on both the Town Board and the questioner. Now the camera stays focused on only the Town Board thus the disembodied voice of the questioner becomes difficult to follow.

The Board admitted that they had changed policy. Councilman Paul Johnson said he liked the new policy better. Councilwoman Mitts and Supervisor Dunford said they didn't care one way or the other. The Board said they would discuss it and vote on the policy.

**Westchester Tractor:**

I brought in a February flyer sent by Westchester Tractor. Westchester Tractor had received a variance from the ZBA who ruled that the business was not retail and was convinced that WT would not be servicing equipment on site. But the flyer boasted 14 'service bays' and assorted equipment for sale.

Supervisor Dunford asked that I bring the flyer into him.

**Open Space Acquisition:**

I asked if the town would be considering other parcels of land for open space since there are a few large parcels available. Ans. Yes.

**Assemblyman Ball:**

Assemblyman Ball asked that the Town Board work more closely with him (and to feel free to call him) on items like the Fieldstone Pond assessments since there wasn't much time to enact the legislation needed. The Board said that they weren't familiar with the Assembly calendar.

Councilwoman Mitts passed out copies of the proposed Zoning Regulations.

**Comments/Opinion:**

**8) Motion Authorizing the Supervisor to Refer Proposed Zoning Amendments to Chapter 138 to the Planning Board and Putnam County Pursuant to 239(m)**

I love this one. Through the grapevine I understand that although this referral to the Planning Board was authorized no one thought to actually get the proposed regs to the Planning Board. Perfect.

**11) UJA Property:**

In one of Putnam County's worst kept secrets we've all seen this one coming for ages. The only surprise here was that the purchase and (insert trumpet fanfare here) the announcement couldn't be held off until closer to the election this November.

Although nothing can be built for the first five years, say ball fields or a rec. center, all bets are off after that. And interestingly, the property's price has fluctuated from \$1.8 million to \$2.2 million in the last several months.

Apparently Supervisor Dunford (and I understand Councilman Johnson) believe that this property is already off the tax rolls- it's not. I believe that town, county and school taxes currently add up to over \$29,000. Am I bitter? You bet. There are some other great parcels on the market that don't abut a highway. On the other hand, this land is supposed to be easily developed so I suppose we should be thankful we may escape more residential development.

**Sheriff's Contract:**

Nothing new here except the 'preemptive strike'. That, and, of course the fact that Sheriff Smith was supposed to come before the Board last November. Never happened.

**Landfill:**

This may have been the high point of the evening. The hubris here was truly avant-garde. The Town now won't cap the dump until it's determined 'whose garbage' is on Metro North's property.

Just how do we determine this? Here's my suggestion: Let's all agree that all old ticket stubs, train schedules, railroad ties, recently discarded beverage cans and suspicious looking, slightly battered briefcases belong to the MTA. Fair enough. In return, we'll take all the rusted appliances, old batteries, barc-o-loungers, stained mattresses and other assorted toxic waste.

Ugh... I smell a lawsuit- and, really, we haven't spent enough on legal fees re our twenty year old uncapped landfill.

**Clean-Up Day:**

Nice to see that the Town and Village have coordinated this event.

**Critical Environmental Area:**

Poor Bob Zubrycki- every few months he comes to a meeting to ask the same question. And every time he receives the same answer. Since our Master Plan suggested that this area be so designated I don't really get the hold-up. On the other hand, and in an amazing coincidence, the always debonair Mr. Lepler owns a large piece of property being developed close by.

**Videotaping:**

Honestly, couldn't we give the tiresome little games a rest.

It used to be that the camera would pan from questioner to Board. But at some point (and I have no idea when as there was no official public policy change made) the camera focuses solely on the Board. On the plus side, the Board can no longer cough loudly, shuffle papers, roll their eyes, chat amongst themselves or, in effect, be quite as rude as they often used to be.

On the down side I'm told the televised meetings resemble a bad séance as disembodied questions seem to emanate out of nowhere. When I asked about this change my favorite reply came from Councilman-I-love-to-see-just-me-Johnson who thinks the new policy is peachy. To their credit, both Councilwoman Mitts and Supervisor Dunford said that they would revisit the policy change.

If it's too difficult for the camera to pan the audience and Board perhaps the speaker could have a spot up front. Even our Assemblyman, the always dreamy and uber-telegenic Mr. Ball, remained outside of camera range during this meeting. What a waste.

**Westchester Tractor:**

This falls squarely into the 'I told you so' category. As predictable as rain (or now snow) in April it turns out that even though Westchester Tractor swore up and down that they wouldn't service equipment on site and even though they weren't a retail operation we now have 14 service bays and a full page of equipment for sale in their February mailing.

Supervisor Dunford said that he'd like to see the flyer. But, really, what's the town gonna do about this now? I'm guessing that WC generates a ton of sales tax revenue (you know- even though it's not retail) so that a strictly 'hands off' policy will prevail.

It's not even that I object so much to this particular business- it's more the constant 'wink, wink', here's your variance, 'nudge, nudge', here's your 'special permit'- oh, and feel free to build on the ridgeline while you're at it, that I so loathe. Look, it happened with Ace Endico so why should anyone be surprised on the same Lepler project.

By the way I'd like to thank Councilwoman Mitts for handing out the proposed zoning regulations at the end of the meeting. It was both professional and accommodating.

That's it from my desk. As always please feel free to e-mail me with any questions or comments you might have.

With best Regards,  
Lynne Eckardt