

SE Town Board Work Session Recap 5/1/08

Hi All,

Last Thursday evening I attended a Town Board 'Work Session'...or was it a 'Special Meeting' before a 'Work Session'... wait, wait, I think it was actually a 'Special Session' plus a 'Work Session'. Yeah, in an all new low, but in a veritable showcase of open government, we were actually treated to on-line behind the scenes agenda bickering. This was great.

The Never-Ending Agenda Debacle:

To Recap: It all started with a two item 'Old Guard' agenda. Next the Supervisor sent out his own 16 item agenda. Then a fight ensued over whether deadlines had been met and whether the new agenda should be used. Then the 'Old Guard' blue (errr... make that **RED**) penciled the Supervisor's agenda down to a more manageable 5. At the meeting the Supervisor simply ignored all of the above and made up his own. I was five minutes late so missed the agenda brouhaha. Damn. Hopefully some lucky 10509 reader was there, can and can share the gory details. All and all a ridiculous waste of time. In future I'd suggest that if Supervisor Rights wants to play third world dictator he shouldn't bother with any agenda at all. It just p*sses off the public who may be attending the meetings under false pretenses.

Hard to select the low point of this meeting. Councilman Gross was MIA so there was a different two-against-two dynamic. Basically it comes down to Johnson and Rights going mano a mano. Sure, there was the usual backbiting that has been honed to a fine art. But I guess my favorite segment came when these guys were actually able to argue over mini-American flags requested by veterans. Now, *that's* dedication.

The Blowing-My-Own-Horn award was won handily by Supervisor Rights. He managed to take credit for Volunteer Park (but *not* the shoddy dugouts), improvements to Lakeview Manor and the clean-up of Dykeman's. Whew, he's a busy, busy guy. Rights even came armed with a prop- in this case an agenda from 1996. Hey, those *were* the days...at least they had reliable agendas back then and you could take great comfort in knowing everything had been decided on and choreographed to within an inch of it's life. Of course you couldn't make a peep. Oh right... it sucked back then too. Anyhow, Rights then proceeded to read off items that still had not been addressed in over a decade. This is when Christine Puccini completely lost it and let Rights have it. She gives great attitude and, as an added bonus, makes me look like Miss Manners. But more on that later...

In a clean sweep, the Eddie Haskell Memorial Trophy was also won by Supervisor Rights. This coveted award is presented to the most pandering and disingenuous Town Board member so Rights' demolition riff on Dykemans clinched the deal here.

As always my tired, tired disclaimer gets inserted here. The off-color, out of line, totally biased and unsettling comments are only my own take on the tawdry sideshow Southeast has become. They reflect no organization of which I am a member.

Town Board Work Session:

Putnam Precision Route 6 East- Peder Scott Engineer

Mr. Scott made his presentation to the Board. He explained that due to security the building could not have windows- but will frame for them. Scott said that the project had been approved by the ARB.

I asked if the landscaping in the drawing was accurate as to size. Mr. Scott answered yes that all trees would be a 3" caliper.

Executive Park: Near Unilock- across from Board of Elections/DMV

This was not on the agenda. Both Councilmen Honeck and Johnson were not pleased that they weren't notified re this addition.

Harold Lepler showed architectural renderings of the proposed 33,000 project. He explained that the building would be about 75% warehouse 25% office and would need a special permit. It was also explained that the project had been previously approved. As there are setback issues Mr. Lepler said that

the project might need a variance (which the Town Board could waive). In addition he said the Planning Board was fine with the proposal without a variance.

There will be no outside storage- 69 parking spaces, 2 loading docks. Tenant will be an Electronics manufacturing firm. The site will not be operational 24 hours a day. Can not be seen from 312, not on a ridgeline. I asked if there would be a Public Hearing on the Special Permit. Yes. I asked that a variance be sought through application to the ZBA. Mr. Lepler assured the TB that this was not necessary. I asked Lepler when the original approvals had been granted. Ans. Some time in the 90's. I asked if the landscaping in the rendering was accurate as to immediate planting. Ans. No, but the trees will be 3" caliper and the evergreens (Arborvitaes) 25'.

Flags for Veterans:

Ron Lipschitz made a presentation asking the TB for additional money to purchase small flags to pass out on Flag Day, July 4th and Founder's Day. Councilman Johnson suggested the Board vote \$2000 from contingency in the budget to help veteran's projects for the remainder of the year. Supervisor Rights said that voting \$100 over would actually cover the \$500 flag purchase. The \$1200 chair purchase was brought up. Rights said that it could be returned and that he hadn't ordered it.

The Board decided that they could make the funding available by May 15th so that the flags could be ordered.

Electronic Documentation:

Ron Hund from accounting asked for money to purchase software which would aid in electronic storage. Documents (including vouchers) could then be scanned and would be easier to retrieve. The Board suggested that a municipality (in this case Rochester) that uses the software be called for references. Money for this purchase would come out of contingency- will be voted on May 15th.

Employee Hours:

Supervisor Rights feels that the town's summer hours are not user friendly and that Town Hall should be open longer on Fridays. Councilman Johnson was against this. Christine Piccini asked if extended hours had been considered. Rights thought that they should be.

Sheriff's Contract:

Adjustments will be needed on the contract. Johnson did not want an addendum. There was discussion over leaving the Supervisor with the right to 'redeploy assets'. Johnson thought it should be the entire Town Board. Specifics still need to be ironed out. Sheriff will also need to approve.

Volunteer Park:

Supervisor Rights gave an overview and the adult field will be ready by Memorial Day. Dugouts still lying on field. More discussion on how they were poorly constructed. Rights and Yee want to have the contractor meet with the Town Engineer and Highway Superintendent at a Town Board meeting.

Recreation Committee:

Councilman Johnson wants to reconstitute the Recreation Committee. Rights said that he and the Recreation Director (Ray Knox) were not in favor of this. Johnson pointed out that since there is \$3 million in Rec funds a reformed committee could look into a pool and sprinkler park. Fred Delfay (former recreation board member) said that despite the vote the town needed a rec Center. He was also skeptical that Ray Know was against forming a new committee. Mr. Delfay said he didn't have to put up with this crap and that all this circus needed was a tent.

Dykemans/ Lakeview Manor/ 1996 Agenda:

Rights read from a 1996 agenda to illustrate how little has been accomplished by the 'Old Guard'. The landfill, Dykemans and Lakeview Manor were mentioned.

Supervisor Rights then announced that two demolition permits had been issued to the Marin family for two houses in Dykemans. Councilman Johnson mentioned that the houses had been purchased in January of this year. I said that I thought it was disingenuous for Rights to take credit for any improvements in Dykemans as the land in question was now tied up in an estate and until he could give us a timetable on a 'clean-up' his having much to do with any progress made was simply untrue.

Christine Piccini took issue re. Lakeview Manor as some renovations had been done in the '90's. She called Rights a liar for inferring otherwise. Rights said that she was rude and out of line.

COMMENTS:

Putnam Precision:

I found this one fascinating as Rights went from Dr. Jekell to Mr. Hyde in exactly two weeks. What Rights had originally wanted 'colonialized' is now on his fast track for approval. I'm figuring that since this company manufactures top-secret/security stuff for the government that maybe Rights is thinking he'll be able to get a quid pro quo ray-gun out of the deal. Maybe even a really, really cool one that glows in the dark and makes a super-keen whooshing noise when it vaporizes enemies.

I also noted that the trees have gone from a 2-2.5" caliper to 3". I think that extra .5 inch is to shut me up but I still don't believe that the renderings are accurate. Oh, and for the record I understand that Mr. Scott was telling a teeny-weenie fib re. being totally approved by the ARB. In fact he has to go back in front of them. Peder, Peder, Peder...

Executive Park:

Interestingly Honeck and Johnson seemed jack-lighted by this item. Apparently no one had told them that Lepler was on the agenda. So the reaction was a little like catching your eighth grade boyfriend at the movies with another chick but trying to maintain your cool. Which, by the way, never, ever works.

Of course if looks could kill I'd be a smoldering pile of ashes right now. Mr. Lepler seemed less than pleased by my recommendation that he go before the ZBA for a variance. But honestly, this project was approved in the '90's (probably over 10 years ago- he wasn't sure when... I'll bet) so why Lepler thinks he should get a free pass on the variance is beyond me. After all the building could have been reconfigured to comply with the new regs. Also, it still needs a special permit so it's not like it's some incredible Fortune 500 opportunity that's slipping through our fingers. Once more and with feeling... it's 75% warehouse/25% office. Yawn.

Note to self: Make sure that Lepler is spelled correctly throughout this particular recap.

Flags for Veterans:

I figured this for a complete 'rah,rah', my country right-or-wrong, flag pin in the lapel, no-brainer... But, nope, fur was flying over ordering enough pint-sized flags to pass out on various and sundry holidays. In a complete non sequitur, even the executive lounge reared its overpriced and now high-profile-mustard-colored head.

Poor Ron Lipschitz looked like he was watching tennis in the final rounds of the US Open as Rights and Johnson went at it tooth and nail. It became Patriot V. Fiscal Conservative as the case unfolded. Frankly, bringing in the \$1200+ executive lounge was a stroke of genius. Because you can't really claim fiscal responsibility after you've ordered an over-priced chair to sit your flannel-covered *ss in, bang a cheesy gavel and then hand down dictatorial decrees about how great you are.

Employee Hours:

I have to give this one to Rights as I've b*tched about limited office hours for years. I don't think it serves the public when Joe and Joan Blow have to work at least 80 hours a week to pay their taxes which in turn allows public employees shorter hours than they have- and maybe even a pension in the offing. I believe strongly that town offices should be open one night a week or a Saturday morning. I'm fine with summer hours as long as employees alternate so there is some coverage for all day Friday.

Hold on.... I just realized that no one in their right mind would make the Route 22 trek to Temple Beth Dunford late on a Friday during the summer. Scratch that.

Sheriff's Contract:

My favorite part here was the term 'redeploy assets'. I have no idea what this actually means but it sounded so important and militar-esque. So... D. Michael. I mean, who wouldn't be impressed? Redeploy assets!#\$%^&* On the plus side, this makes for a great Scrabble word.

Volunteer Park:

Well, we continue to drag the bucket to the cesspool re the dugouts. Hey gents... here's a novel idea. Why don't we quit the chronic haranguing and try to get this nightmare solved. Finally, (although we've heard this all before) it appears that the contractor will appear before the Board for his very own verbal waterboarding.

I wish we'd just install a dunking stool and do this in a civilized fashion.

Recreation Committee:

Another real head scratcher.

Despite my opposition to the Rec Center plans last year this was one of the hardest working and most effective Boards the town has ever appointed. So why the relentless push-back from Rights I've not a clue.

Mr. Delfay did not endear himself to the Supervisor as he doubted that Rec Director Knox was against the reconstitution plan, Delfay said that despite the vote the town absolutely needed a rec center, and stormed out muttering the now immortal words, "All this circus needs is a tent."

Lakeview Manor/Dykemans:

Never content to let sleeping dogs lie Rights went into Dykemans overdrive. With only a trumpet fanfare missing he again announced that demolition permits had been issued for two buildings in the area. Since he also announced this two weeks ago and I knew that the Marin Estate is far from settled I was concerned that no one could legally authorize a demolition and that if the Town did sign off on a permit we could be sued by the remaining heirs. Some digging was done and it turns out that these two buildings were purchased by Carla Marin in January.

Nevertheless Rights almost broke an arm patting himself on the back. I said I thought him disingenuous and that if the Dykeman's cleanup was going to continue how about giving the public a timetable. It was no dice as Rights kept up the self-aggrandizement by mentioning all the SOS crowning achievements in the first 100 days in office.

I think we can all assume that conflict resolution isn't among them.

Rights had mentioned Lakeview Manor improvements (inferring that they were just starting on them now) which is when Piccini saw red. Piccini pointed out that improvements had been done back in the 90's and that Rights was lying by his inference that they hadn't been. The fake walnut gavel got an uber-workout as Rights tried to get Christine to simmer down which only served to p*ss her off more. When Rights trotted out the fact that Christine is a Village Trustee and her behavior wasn't appropriate this only added more fuel to the already out of control fire. I'd look for this exchange on YouTube. It was a classic Springer moment with only the 'F' word and hair-pulling missing.

It was then announced that the Brewster Revitalization meeting will be held on May 14th at Temple Beth Dunford. I'd reserve seats now as there's the possibility of having Piccini and Rights on the same dais-and, believe me, no one wants to miss out on this rematch.

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

With Best Regards,
Lynne Eckardt