

SE Town Board Special Meeting Recap 10/4/07

Hi All,

Last Thursday night I attended a Town Board Special Meeting and Work Session. The tentative budget (I was told not yet available to the public) was presented and then three Public Hearings were held.

Oh, and regarding the budget... I have it on pretty good authority that the \$2.1 million Open Space purchase/bond ups the ante a little on our town taxes for '08. This makes sense given the budget weighed in last year at about \$8.8 million. Frankly, I wouldn't be quite so bitter if we hadn't purchased *commercial* property *abutting* Route 84. And speaking of harebrained schemes adding insult to injury... there's that proposed 44% increase on our County taxes... All in all not a good year to be a Putnam County resident.

There were a few surprises during the special meeting. Bids were awarded for the new Court Facility- funny, but I thought that work had started several weeks ago- I guess just demolition. And a 'Clerk of the Works' was appointed. Apparently this is like a general contractor who oversees all renovations. Anyhow, this job was awarded to Robert Conlin and is not to exceed \$20 grand. Funny again, as Mr. Conlin is already employed by the town. But then perhaps this is a 'parting gift'...

For my money, the most interesting bit of the meeting was the Board's seeming reversal on the SLS (Supervised Life Styles) request to hook into the Brewster Heights Sewer District. Given the capacity of the Brewster Heights Waste Water Treatment Plant and the Middle Branch quality of water of late this came as a real surprise. More on that later as well.

As always the complete drivel both above and below is only my slightly horrified take on life in Southeast. My opinions are my own and reflect no organization to which I am tied.

SPECIAL MEETING:

2008 Budget Presentation to the Town Board:

The tentative budget was handed out to each Board Member.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Release of Performance Bond- Vail's Grove Golf Course:

\$8400 to -0-. There were no comments or questions.

Release of Performance Bond- Eagle's Ridge Condo

\$54,500 to -0-. There were no questions or comments.

Stop Sign on Minor Road and Bearberry Lane:

The Town Engineer and Highway Superintendent did not feel that this was a good use of a stop sign. Stop signs may not be used as a 'speed control' device. Highway Superintendent, Jim Lawlor, suggested purchasing one of the roadside machines that tracks speed limits. They run around \$6000 and have proved helpful in some areas.

A resident spoke and said that he felt Minor Road needed two stop signs. One at the Bearberry intersection and one at Moss Drive. I mentioned that many in Tonetta Heights had requested stop signs as the cross roads are used as cut-through. Again, because stop signs are not supposed to be used as 'speed control' devices this solution has not been used in most areas.

There will be a 10 day comment period.

1. Award bids for New Court Facility:

Bids were awarded although no amounts were given. 4-0

2. Appointment of Clerk of the Works- New Court Facility:

Robert Conlin was appointed. Councilman Johnson said he had never heard of this position but said it sounded like a general contractor. The amount of the clerk's position is not to exceed \$20,000.

WORK SESSION:**SLS Health- Sewer Hook Up:**

Supervised Lifestyles is on the corner of Bloomer Road and Route 6- across from the Putnam County Savings Bank.

Michael Levine (Special Districts Manager) gave an update. He said that after studying a year's worth of data the capacity of the Brewster Heights District remains at 150,000 gallons per day and that the average flow is 125,000 GPD. He said that the plant had experienced flows of up to 140,000 per day but since Supervised Lifestyles would only generate 4000 GPD that the plant could handle it. He also said that if SLS exceeded this estimate that the Putnam County Board of Health would deal with the problem. The Board and Mr. Levine thought that 4000 GPD could be allocated to SLS.

The Elks Club:

The Board informally discussed the fact that the Elks Club wanted a waiver on the Route 22 Moratorium. Since the Special Meeting was still open the Board decided to set a Public Hearing for October 18th.

COMMENTS/OPINIONS:**Bearberry/Minor Stop Sign:**

Due to the increased traffic and the use of back roads as short cuts over the past several years I know that there are many neighborhoods in Southeast where residents would like stop signs installed. And I understand Highway Superintendent Lawlor's reluctance to do so, as where does it all end? Hmmmmm, maybe like Connecticut where you can't drive three feet without hitting multiple stop signs.

Awarded Court Bids:

I've FOILED for these and will let you know when I receive them.

Clerk of the Works:

Gosh, even Councilman Johnson seemed perplexed here. While I'm sure a good GC could save time and money I'm not sure of Mr. Conlin's qualifications... although I understand he's been awarded a lot of painting contracts about town and I think he may have done the demolition work inside the old Temple.

I had also heard that originally there was to be a big push to get the courthouse done by late November. I believe that date was chosen to ensure a terrific 'Look! We're nearly done!' photo-op for Councilwoman Mitts right before Election Day. Of course that was back when it was assumed she'd win the primary. Running on just the Independence line there's probably not gonna be a whole lot of pressure for a Mitts' ribbon cutting.

Supervised Lifestyles:

Well, the TB said that they needed a year to review this and lo and behold I went back over old recaps and on October 5th of '06 SLS was in front of the Board asking for Brewster Heights WWTP hook-up privileges.

Under consideration is a 44 Bed facility with 85 gallons per day allotted per bed. This brings the magic number to 3740 with additional gallons thrown in for administration and staff bumping it to 4000. Still, hitting the number of 140,000 GPD several times over the past year when the maximum allowed is 150,000 makes me a little queasy. Because I believe that it's the municipality that has to pay the 'overflow' fines- and they can be substantial.

I assume that SLS will be using water out of the Middle Branch which is another concern. I understand that there have been high manganese readings within the past few months and although the problem has been properly treated this doesn't bode well for additional users.

Although admittedly arbitrary, one of my problems with SLS was their recent lawsuit against a father who felt his son had received poor treatment at another Southeast SLS facility and thus spent time picketing that treatment center. Of course I admit to having this thing about the first amendment almost to the point of obsession. By the way, the father did win Round 1 in court. Mazel tov.

Anyhow, it will be interesting to see how this application proceeds through the planning process. A 44 bed facility perched over the already impaired Middle Branch doesn't exactly sound like a trip to Hollywood.

Elk's Club:

There has been a lot of b*tching about this application- and rightfully so. It appears that the application got hung-up in the Town Clerk's office which cost the Elk's valuable time in the planning process. Interestingly, while the Elks have had to jump though flaming hoops regarding the Route 22 Moratorium Mr. Lepler's building at Clocktower Commons has flown through the process- even bypassing a step. Funny how that works. Hey, and just for fun, you may want to check out the 'Unite Southeast' Team's financial disclosures.

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

With Best Regards,
Lynne Eckardt