

## **VILLAGE OF ATHENS BOARD MEETING MINUTES – February 26, 2020**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Stephan Bradicich, Trustee Gail Lasher, Trustee Robert Scott, Trustee Amy Serrago and Trustee Dr. Joshua Lipsman.

Village Attorney Tal Rappleyea was also present.

*Pledge to the Flag.*

### **PUBLIC HEARING:**

The purpose of tonight's meeting is to consider adopting Local Law #1 of 2020 which would entail updating/increasing the sliding scale of maximum income limits and exemption percentages for both the Senior citizen and disabled tax exemptions.

New charts for the updated scales have been available in the Village Clerk's office and this update is recommended by the Greene County Legislature.

Mayor opens meeting to public comment.

No Public comments made.

### **CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING at 6:32PM.**

### **OPEN REGULAR MEETING**

The Mayor opened the Meeting with a period to receive public comment on the proposed C&D project at the former location of the Peckham building (present owner DBTL) located on N. Washington Street in the village of Athens.

The Mayor stated that the registration request was made in 2019. The village had not received notification. This piece of land is zoned as MUW (mixed use waterfront) which has no permitted uses. Therefore, any proposed use for that property would have to obtain a special use permit through the Planning Board and the Waterfront Advisory Committee. Current Village codes will be enforced for this process of reviewing proposed projects.

The Mayor also noted that he has asked the Village Attorney to write a letter of concern to Stevedoring Environmental, LLC. The Mayor has also asked for a very preliminary assessment from the current village engineer.

The Mayor noted that a sign in sheet for those that would like to comment this evening had been started. He will begin the meeting with those in attendance that had signed the sheet.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

1. *David Riley*

Mr. Riley stated that he was concerned that no one knew (VB) about this project coming.

He was also curious as to why they chose this spot? There are former cement plants that are empty south of Catskill. Why not use them?

He is also concerned that there is a softball field across the street from the proposed project.

2. *Nancy Poylo*

Concerned about Code Enforcement. Will he be involved? Will he be able to handle it?

The Village Attorney informed everyone that for projects as big as these escrow accounts for engineering and legal concerns are established in case issues arise.

3. *Derek Apa*

He is very concerned about this project but is happy to see that the village's current zoning and code seem to be strong and able to review the project thoroughly.

He is aware of these type of plants and noted that they smell and are noisy. He Also mentioned the increased truck traffic, bad air quality and the fact that it is opposite the softball field. Construction debris includes sheetrock which has carcinogens in it. Especially when crushed.

We need to protect our beautiful shoreline and if this project moves forward then we are moving in the wrong direction.

4. *Tim Scott*

What kind of debris and where does it come from that they don't want it in their backyard?

He stated that he is a trucker and knows that these trucks will be waiting outside the plant. Lining up down the street waiting to load and unload.

He also gave the statistics as to how many lbs of this debris will be transported and how many trucks a day.

5. *Jane Radford*

Residents and VB members should use this project as an opportunity to make sure that this never happens again in the future.

We should all be looking to the future of the village and know that we do not want projects such as this in our neighborhood. What kind of pollution are we going to have as a result of this?

We need to 'get on it and stay on it'.

6. *Susan Grilli*

There is a relationship between this project and Peckham but it is not clear what that relationship is.

Peckham is involved with this somehow. A lot involved with the use of the property.

7. *Joan Ross – resident of New Baltimore*

She is glad to see everyone attend this evening. Everyone needs to pay attention because once these companies get in they are not going to leave and they will not adhere to restrictions but rather just pay the fines and 'carry on'. They 'don't care'.

It has happened in New Baltimore.

8. *Robert Braine*

Inquired as to whether all 5 Village Board members are committed to stopping this project from going forward?

The Mayor stated that they are going to enforce the laws that are in place for the village and push for engineering studies.

Mr. Braine added that property values will decrease if this project goes forward. Cancer cases will increase. We need to keep this type of development out of our community. It is an existential threat.

9. *Jerry Bunting*

Informed everyone that the process underway is a lengthy process and the VB and residents must stay engaged in the process.

This application addresses the crisis in the city.

After reviewing a very minimal application it does not say how they will crush the debris.

The application also includes permitting for 70 trucks a day. These trucks will be loaded to the maximum on our roadways.

The public does have the right to input.

Stay engaged!

10. *Kye Carbone*

It is important now to have rules and laws in place and also have faith in our elected officials. Be confident.

11. *Carol Metz*

Noted that this was also a Town problem, Sleepy Hollow Lake problem and Cocksackie problem.

Everyone needs to be involved.

12. *Catherine Censor*

Noted that she is the founder and Chairperson of the Friends of Athens and is so happy to see all of the support tonight.

Wanted to inform everyone that there will be a meeting at the Firehouse on March 1, 2020 at 1:00PM to discuss this project further with Keep it Green. Please come.

13. *Donald Gardener*

Excited to see all of the energy in the room tonight. Thank you for your dedication.

14. *Diana Abadie*

Informed everyone that she works with "Keep it Green" and it is important not to blame the VB for what is happening. Most communities have no idea what is going on until the process is well underway.

A similar situation occurred in Germantown. A dump was being proposed and the municipality knew nothing about it.

'Not knowing about these projects' happens everywhere. Organizations like 'Keep it Green' and 'Scenic Hudson' watch for situations/applications such as this and make municipalities/communities aware of what's proposed.

15. *Andrea Smallwood*

It is good that the Village Board is becoming lead agency on this project.

The village should get the DEC, coastal zone and state department involved to protect the village. A coastal zone assessment form will need to be filled out as well.

There are several layers of protection already in place.

There is so little information available on the permit application.

16. *Nancy Palmateer*

Is there anyway that residents can keep current and get information as it comes along.

VB members noted the village website, village newsletter and village board meetings.

17. *Ronald Puhalski*

There is so much going on along the river now. We need a way to keep all of the projects straight and be informed or updated on the various applications and their status.

18. *Michael Black*

Industrial polluters target poor areas. We are thankful for have the LWRP in place and a VB that is being proactive. It is our duty to encourage the VB to take a stand.

We need to 'keep our feet to the fire and take a stand'.

#### **PUBLIC:**

1. *Connor Young and Kelsea West from Cornell Cooperative Extension* attended the meeting to discuss the 'Climate Smart Community Program' an affiliate of Cornell University.

The Village Board started the process, via Trustee Lipsman, to become a 'Clean Energy Community'. The next step will be to become a certified 'Climate Smart Community' by implementing programs and measures which will enable the village to become more attractive to grant funding opportunities.

The steering committee for the Comprehensive Plan will work alongside this program.

2. *Frank Pedatella, resident of the village*, attended the meeting for a number of reasons.

First of all, he has a continued interest in helping the village build the DPW garage. He would like the VB to form a committee and then re-bid the project. He will oversee it and the village would be the general contractor. He can do the job for a lot less.

Secondly, Mr. Pedatella also suggested that the Village buy the Elco property located on the south end of the village (route 385) on the river. He would like them to make a museum there for automobiles. He said the building is under-assessed. We can get legislation behind the idea and then a few companies and a few stores.

#### **RESOLUTIONS:**

1. Proposed Resolution Approving Minutes

BE IT RESOLVED, the Minutes from Village Board meeting held on February 12, 2020 be approved:

Offered by: Trustee Serrago

Seconded by: Trustee Lasher

Record of vote: All in favor

2. Proposed Resolution Approving Payment of Vouchers as Presented

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board approves payment of the vouchers as presented:

Offered by: Trustee Lasher

Seconded by: Trustee Serrago

Record of vote: All in favor

### 3. Proposed Resolution authorizing the Mayor to sign contract for Computel Consultants

WHEREAS, the Village Board has expressed interest in completing a utility audit from Computel Consultants and,

Computel Consultants requires a signed agreement stating that their fee, if they secure a refund, is 40% of the refund amount, otherwise there is no fee charged,

In order to receive the audit the Mayor must sign letters of authority to utility providers and consulting agreement for services,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Village Board agrees to the terms of the contract and authorizes the Mayor to sign the agreement for services with Computel Consultants paying them 40% of whatever refunds they have uncovered;

Offered by: Trustee Lipsman  
Seconded by: Trustee Serrago  
Record of vote: All in favor

### 4. Proposed Resolution Appointing Jennifer Moritz as Recreation Director

WHEREAS, Ms. Moritz did an outstanding job performing the duties of Recreation Director for the Village/Town of Athens Recreation Program in 2019 and she has expressed interest in continuing this appointment,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Village Board approves the Appointment of Jennifer Moritz as Recreation Director for the Summer 2020 program;

Offered by: Trustee Lasher  
Seconded by: Trustee Serrago  
Record of vote: All in favor

### **CORRESPONDENCE:**

1. Keith Rodan. Re: Crossroads Brewing.
2. Computel Consultants. Re: Agreement for services – NYCOM Utility Savings Audit Program.
3. Carol McBride- Town Assessor. Re: Resignation.
4. Iroquois Gas Transmission. Re: Docket # CP20-48-000

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Results of DPW building bidding. Formal results will be provided at the next VB meeting.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Update on Comprehensive Plan project. There will be a joint Village/Town meeting held on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at EJ Arthur Elementary School.

### **TOPICS DISCUSSED:**

Trustee Dr. Lipsman noted that he has been speaking with Delaware Engineering regarding infrastructure projects. Meeting with them this week.

VB also discussed plans for sidewalks on Brick Row. Director of DPW Anthony Proper stated that he does have the prices from a previous year – estimated cost is \$100,000.00.

Trustee Serrago is working on communications and secure email addresses for village officials and the police department.

Trustee Serrago noted that the Farmers Market Committee has been working on rules, regulations and Applications.

Trustee Lasher discussed the lease for the Cultural Center. Village Attorney will work on it.

Ms. Lasher also informed the VB that there was an accident on the one-way street down by the bank (Second Street). A vehicle going the wrong way caused the accident. The traffic ticket was thrown out of court. The signs are visible. Could this be a problem for the village?

Village Attorney stated that it could be a liability for village. Take pictures of the area.

Trustee Scott stated that he felt the signs were clearly visible as well. Driver should have been responsible for their actions. Clearly not paying attention.

Will follow through on why the ticket was thrown out.

AirBnB policies are still being reviewed from other communities.

The Mayor stated that he is still pursuing digging up the water valve from Sleepy Hollow water supply. There are no agreements in place yet but it may be important in the future.

Mayor Bradicich also noted that the Village has been awarded \$25,000.00 in intervenor funding for solar power projects located in close proximity to Sleepy Hollow Lake.

A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Scott, seconded by Trustee Lasher, all in favor, to enter into EXECUTIVE SESSION to discuss Personnel issues at 9:20PM.

A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Scott, seconded by Trustee Lasher, all in favor, to exit EXECUTIVE SESSION and resume regular work meeting at 9:30PM.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Offered by: Trustee Scott

Seconded by: Trustee Serrago

Record of vote: All in favor

9:30PM

Respectfully submitted by:

*Mary Jo Wynne*