

Caroline Town Board Meeting Minutes of February 2, 2010

The Town Board agenda meeting held on Tuesday, February 2, 2010 at the Caroline Town Hall was called to order at 7:07 p.m. by Supervisor Don Barber.

Attendance:

Don Barber, Supervisor
Dominic Frongillo, Councilman
Linda Adams, Councilwoman
Toby McDonald, Councilman
Pete Hoyt, Councilman

Recording

Secretary: Marilou Harrington, Town Clerk

Also present: Molly Adams, Bruce Murray, Caleb and Nicole Scott, Cindy Whitaker and Dan Krall

Privilege of the Floor

Jay Franklin, Director of Tompkins county Finance Department

Jay spoke about property assessment process and how the tax monies are used in Tompkins County. Tompkins County is the only county in New York State that currently meets the goal of the 2007-2008 Centralized Property Administration Program for the function. The goal of the program is to achieve common treatment (including a common level of assessment/equalization rate of %100) for all parcels in a county, which will benefit taxpayers in the following

ways:

- Transparency- It will make it simpler for taxpayers to understand
- Equity- All properties based on the same formula
- Efficiency- Is the lowest cost given for the level serve

Tompkins County has one appraiser and one office staff person per 5000 parcels assessed. The staff members may change their areas of assessment every few years, but all receive the same training in assessing properties.

TC assesses properties at 100% fair market value. So typically fair market value and the equalization rate are one in the same in TC. Each Town or county assess differently though. For example the Town of Richford assess at 50% tax. There is no set standards set for these other municipalities. Since Tompkins County is the only county who bases the assessment on 100% other communities who have not been reassessed for 100 to 150 years throw off the equalization rate. Those houses assessed at a portion of the 100% fair market value can show little or no equity in their home. See information packets for additional information; attachment 1.

Linda expressed concern about the value of property leased to the oil companies. Jay said he hasn't seen any significant change at this time. It is possible in the future it may increase value on vacant property while it may decrease value on property with a home. He would be surprised to see some of these changes in the near future.

Jay is open for additional conversation and input from the Town's. He is also planning a meeting with area Town Clerks/ Tax Collector's on what improvements they would like implemented or problems they see at work that need to be addressed.

Exemptions- new limit the State allowance; STAR B, ENHANCED STAR, Disability and Senior and Military discounts.. Forms must be in the assessment office by March 1st.

Stephanie Hoyt- Presented two plans she drew for the parking lot for the new annex and historic Town Hall buildings. Both plans included green vegetation, including a flower and vegetable garden. The plans had sidewalks that went from one side of the building and around the building, and with a play ground with monkey bars and a jungle gym. In particularly impressive and striking was a rock walk (flag stones) that lead from both sides of the (annex) building and met in the middle to take you to the front doorway of the new annex building. One plan also included a pond that may have been fed by the existing water fountain. Stephanie included two different ideas for a gazebo in her drawings. The plans were thoughtful and well planned out. Molly Adams

asked Stephanie if this was a youth group plan but the plans were completely Stephanie's drawings and ideas. See attachments 2 and 3

Reports

Dominic Frongillo, Town Board

E-mail- listserv- Who can post to it, and what kind of information could/would be sent. Don was worried about political liability, that it was necessary to have an overseer to make sure people follow various guidelines.

The Town Board discussed hiring an individual/host to run the listserv with pay estimated at \$20 set-up and \$5 dollars a month. Toby mentioned the person hosting the site should definitely be structured mind, not post material just because they agreed with the person's opinion. The board agreed that the host must be political neutral in their overseeing of the listserv.

Don suggested for the reason of objectivity he would like to see someone hired that is not from the Town of Caroline. Toby agreed that you needed someone structured who could put their personal opinions aside.

Linda mentioned Towpath?, a software that was created to do these type of projects. It is set up by not for profit group and they use modules, for example for e-mails and listservs. It was set-up/ created because every Township runs into these kinds of issues. Once you get into Towpaths you have access to other types of modules too. (Linda had looked into a module for the Storm Water Coalition.)

Critical environmental-maps recommendation –issue report to planning board and then the town board

Dominic was approached by a group *Design Connect* which are engineering, city planning, etc., students, who are researching micro hydro energy in the Six mile Creek and using the research that the Trail Committee produced. Dominic recommended they work with town of Ithaca or if Dryden.

Toby doesn't think it is a good idea to upset people again, considering the previous response to the Trail Committee. He said if the people ask for this research to be done that is fine but if it is not their idea and some group is pushing for it then he is against it..

Linda thought hydro power might be interesting but thought the group should work with Ithaca or Dryden. Don said one of the problems is they may not get in to the 6 mile creek anyway because of the DEC..

Pete does not want the Town Board have anything to do with this project, and the fact that Dominic was approached he definitely doesn't want it perceived that the Town Board was behind this project.

NYSERDA Grant funding- 24 million available, 3 million in this area- which is not available to big cities. The board discussed how the grant worked and the need of the monies; what projects would it help with at the Town barns and the historic Town Hall.

NYSERDA Consultant- Dryden offered to host Caroline. The board discussed if the having a consultant would be feasible or cost more in time then he/she would be worth.

Peter Hoyt, Town Board

Pete asked about when we would be making a commitment to the parking lot project and when the community would have their input. Don said the plans would be discussed next week in more detail and that a decision should be made shortly there after with the public input.

Don Barber, Town Board Supervisor

Highway Superintendents Meeting next Thursday February 18th, 9:00am at Royal Court about road construction and local laws.

Department of Labor- Don is supposed to receive a copy of letter from the Department of labor stating the Town of Caroline is in violation of the NYS law for work place violence. Adopt a work place violence policy which involves interviewing all Town employees and find out any place that they feel threatened with violence of any kind. It is more a matter of process, getting a template for the law is pretty easy and the Town doesn't have to write it formally (because the Town of Caroline is too small) but we do have to go through the process. The Town has 30 days to give the dept of labor an updated policy of all the rules we will follow to prevent work place violence. The policy we currently have doesn't cover all the necessary requirements. After we have identified the

risks (by interviewing Town employees) we have to put in policy how we are going to mitigate them. It might be helpful to go to other Town's and review the policies they have implemented.

Handyman – Ask for references from the three applicants. To make the appointment at the next board meeting February 9th, 2010.

Cindy Whitaker, Town Highway Superintendent

Labor board made an unannounced visit and talked about the need for MSDS sheets for everything including cans, etc , then she discussed the template of the law; work place violence- mitigation measures. Items that were not covered in the handbook (which had changed a year or two ago). To interview individual town employees and discuss their concerns and where they feel uncomfortable or confronted with work place violence. The town does have a work place violence policy in place but Cindy was told that the current one is insufficient.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of Agenda Meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Barber and seconded by Mr. Hoyt to accept the minutes of January 5, 2010 as submitted by the town clerk.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Frongillo: Aye; Adams: Aye; McDonald: Aye; Hoyt: Aye

Minutes of Business Meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Barber and seconded by Mr. Hoyt to accept the minutes of January 12, 2010 as submitted by the town clerk.

Adopted Barber: Aye; Frongillo: Aye; Adams: Aye; McDonald: Aye; Hoyt: Aye

Town Business

Scott-Land Yard- Caleb and Nicole Scott, presented 2 diagrams of the new parking area for the new annex building and the historic town hall. One of the key aspects that had been taken into consideration is the “historical” green space in front of the buildings, one looking at an open view from the west and one more to the east near the bus stop. Pete was looking at the parking area to be placed more west, which Nicole said is a possibility. Things to take in to consideration is where the septic and septic lines run and how close they would be to the new parking area. Another consideration was having a drive through parking area for the highway department (being able to plow, etc) and for emergency vehicles. Also having two “dead end parking lots with no drive through would cause problems for people turning around in a tight space. Sidewalks would be kept to a minimum, and also with consideration for the highway department Cindy Whitaker mention high sidewalks and burms would make it harder to plow and find places to put the snow. Other discussions included keeping the artesian well in the same place or moving it only minimally, but possibly lifting the spout and placing drainage rocks underneath. See copies of the two plan attachment 3 and 4

Building keys- The Town Clerk handed out keys to the Town Board to the new annex building and to the historic building.

Google calendar- Discussion with the Town Clerk and the Town board about a Google calendar for scheduling meetings. The idea is to schedule the meetings on the calendar by the court and various boards so there is no conflict.

Historic Building Meeting Room- the board discussed policy about what groups could use the historic Town Hall for meetings. They decided instead of putting policy in place at this time to limit any particular private type of group that they would wait to see if it became an issue where there were conflicts with other public meetings. Pete mentioned that keeping the place clean was a priority and that groups should be responsible for cleaning up after themselves.

Caller ID- Discussion with the board about having caller ID for the Town clerk's office. Linda expressed concerns along with Pete about people's perception. Dominic and Toby asked why this was a board issue, and should the board micro manage the clerk's office. The cost would be about \$60.00 a year and the Clerk has it in

her budget if she chooses to use it.

Agenda Items

- Handyman
 - Energy conservation
 - Association of Towns
 - Listserv
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Adjourn

On a motion by Dominic Frongillo, and seconded by Pete Hoyt, the meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marilou Harrington, Town Clerk