

Caroline Town Board Agenda Meeting Minutes of June 1, 2021

The Caroline Town Board Agenda Meeting was held electronically via Zoom teleconference beginning at 7:24p.m. hosted by Supervisor Mark Witmer

Attendance:

Supervisor Mark Witmer
Councilmember John Fracchia
Councilmember Tim Murray
Councilmember Cal Snow
Councilmember Katherine Goldberg

Recording Secretary:

Jessica L. Townsend, Town Clerk

Privilege-of-the-Floor

Bill Podulka – Struck by Bruce’s remarks during the Public Hearing regarding public input. Acknowledged spotty internet access to the Board Meetings but shared other ways that residents can be engaged including public access to Wi-Fi at the Town Hall. The Town now has a hybrid system installed in the Historic Town Hall so that people can join in-person and virtually when open-meetings resume. Encouraged the Board to figure out a way to let the public know they are being heard.

Supr. Witmer – The Board did receive a Petition to hold any non-essential resolutions and local laws. First question was “what is considered a non-essential resolution.” It is important to understand what the Open Meetings Law is and that is to observe the work of the Town Board. People are invited and welcomed to talk with Board members and there are various ways to do that: visit the town hall, send an email, mail a letter, call, and talk directly with him. If you are having trouble connecting, he does want to hear from you.

Clm. Murray – Town has been operating under the guidance and recommendations by the Governor and by Law. Has tried their very best to make them as accessible as possible in the past year+. Now has the proper equipment to extend hybrid meetings into the future. They are currently working to figure out how to hold public meetings when the order is lifted and asked for patience while they work through it. Health and safety come first.

Supr. Witmer – There is County meeting tomorrow to discuss Government Operations and how they are considering how to transition back to in-person meetings. He sent a letter to Anna Kellis urging for modifications to Open Meetings Law to allow Board Members to continue to attend meetings remotely.

Discussion on the Public Hearing

Supr. Witmer – Don Barber sent a note to the Board inquiring about how the Board came to a 14-month Extension, if that length of time is necessary, and urged the restrictions be modified on what activities are subject to a Moratorium. Supr. Witmer explained the need of adequate time to consider a very important step in guiding the future of the Town. Considers this to be a monumental time in guiding the future of the town. Town Attorney recommended 14-months from his experience in this area. The Law is structured that it will retire when the Zoning Commission is completed.

Clm. Murray – Reminded everyone that there is a waiver provision in the Moratorium Law. There could be situations where it would be appropriate for the Board to consider a waiver.

Resolutions

Resolution 106 of 2021. Adoption of the Moratorium Extension

A motion was made by Supervisor Witmer and seconded by Councilmember Murray as follows:
Resolved, the Caroline Town Board hereby adopts the Modifying and Extending the Existing Moratorium Upon Land Use Development Reviews and Approvals and Commercial, Retail, Business, and Industrial Land Development Actions as written.

Passed: Witmer: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Snow: Nay; Murray: Aye; Goldberg: Aye

Committee Reports

John Fracchia, Councilmember – Town Attorney is reviewing the contract with LaBerge Group regarding the 1st Phase in the new highway barn planning. Attorney is currently marking the document and will offer a counter proposal. The question of them evaluating a 3rd site was inadvisable because of the Phases they have aligned.

Cal Snow, Councilmember – Hwy – Misc. items were sold \$56,000. Hwy. employee, Les Dean is being recognized for his 52 years of service with the Town. Next Monday the crew starts work on the washout on Central Chapel Rd.

Tim Murray, Councilmember – Zoning Commission met last Tuesday with the new Planner, next meeting is next Tuesday June 8th at 7:30p.m. Some discussion about what the status of the Planning Board is and if it makes sense to add the 3 remaining members to the Zoning Commission. Believes the Commission would benefit from the extensive experience of the Planning board members. Further discussion on the matter continued and it was agreed that Supr. Witmer speak to the Zoning Chair and make a recommendation at next week's meeting, if needed.

Recent communications with the Justices regarding data that was requested by the Board last year. Judge Reinbolt disagreed with this and thought it to be unethical. There have been disagreements on who can access Court and Town records and shared space. Justices have asked to come speak to the Board next week. Clm. Murray recommends that he as Court liaison, Supr. Witmer, the Town Attorney, the Justices, and the Supervising Judge meet and get clarity on shared space and discuss the parameters of the law. Clm. Fracchia and Clm. Goldberg wish to be part of that discussion. Clm. Murray recommended a Special Meeting be called to give it the focus of the meeting and was unanimously agreed. Supr. Witmer will check with the Town Attorney to verify if this will be an Executive Session or a public meeting.

Katherine Goldberg, Councilmember – Planning Board update – Has completed the Solar Site Review Law and the Battery Storage Law and has nothing currently pressing to be worked on. Agreed that the Planning Board members would be beneficial to the Commission.

Supr. Witmer – Hwy. Supt. Bob Spencer had sent a request for a new Loader purchase and asked for a yes or no answer tonight. Believes it to be a justifiable purchase at this time but still would like to see a purchase schedule before making any decisions on new purchases. The new Loader is \$188,000 with a trade-in of \$36,000 on the current Loader. Supr. Witmer presented a spreadsheet that he has been working on to calculate an Annual Replacement Budget that includes replacement cost, resale value, and annual life cycle cost. This was used just for a visual exercise only; the numbers used are not specific. He

further recommended a Capital Planning Committee to help Bob and the Board with future Planning. Supr. Witmer would have liked to know what the current maintenance costs of the Loader are. Clm. Goldberg asked if they have enough information to decide tonight. Further questions regarding the purchase of a new One-Ton truck this year and how much funds, if any, would need to be used in Reserves. After further discussion, it was recommended that they get the numbers from Bob before next week's meeting and vote at the Business Meeting and was unanimously agreed.

Approval of Minutes

The Business Meeting Minutes of May 12, 2021 and the Public Hearing Minutes of May 19, 2021 as submitted by Town Clerk, Jessica Townsend was unanimously approved.

Agenda items for June 9th Business Meeting

Discussion on Zoning/Planning Board members
Discussion and Vote on Purchase of New Loader
Resolution to contract with Community Planning & Environmental Associates for planning services
Discussion of in-person meetings
Readdress the recent Petition regarding in-person meetings.

A motion to adjourn by Supervisor Witmer and seconded by Councilmember Fracchia and carried unanimously at 8:37 p.m.

---Adjourn the meeting ---

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica L. Townsend, Town Clerk