

Caroline Town Board Meeting Minutes of February 4, 2014

The Town Board Agenda meeting held on February 4, 2014 at the Caroline Town Hall was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor Don Barber.

Attendance:

Don Barber, Supervisor
Mr. John Fracchia, Councilmember
Irene Weiser, Councilmember
Mark Witmer, Councilmember

Recording

Secretary: Paulette Terwilliger; Town of Ithaca, Town Clerk

Also present: Tim Seely, Chris Payne, Greg Harrington, Peter Hoyt and Ben Boyton

Interviews for vacant Town Board position to be filled until the next election.

The Board asked each candidate to summarize their experience on boards or committees; why they were interested in the position; what strengths they thought they would bring to the Town and whether they would run in the upcoming election for a full term.

Tim Seely

Mr. Seely stated that he has previously served on the Town Board for one term and also the Youth Committee as well as filling in for Dominique for 3 months last year. He stated that during that fill-in period he realized that he missed being involved in Town business and he enjoys the fiscal responsibility and would like to serve on some committees for the Town.

Mr. Seely felt that he would bring good financial judgment and experience in bargaining unit negotiations to the table. He felt the most important issue facing the Town is fiscal viability moving into the future with the State mandates and benefits to meet the tax cap. NYS pays their towns very little and a lot of the costs are mandated and we have no control but something needs to be done with the best scenario being meeting somewhere in the middle with the State.

Mr. Seely stated that he would be interested in committees for youth, buildings and grounds and the Planning Board liaison and open to others that he may not know about at this time. He felt the time commitment would be about 4-5 hours a week with more time during the budget season months of September and October. He stated that he was open to running in the election but

would not commit to that at this time.

When asked about strategies for involving the community more, Mr. Seely responded that the current advertising and public notice strategy basically forcing people to pay attention is a good one and each board member should be reaching out to the community to learn what they are thinking about issues and in general.

Chris Payne

Mr. Payne stated that he is on the Health Planning Council for Tompkins County and works for Gannett Health at Cornell responsible for putting forth and presenting options for health care planning. He does financial analyses and projections for new programs or services or changes in current services. He was heavily involved in the total retrofit of the health building and services which was unique due to the lack of a clear funding source so it was very complex and challenging to get all those voices involved and understanding the outcome and securing the funding.

Mr. Payne thought his strength was in working with diverse groups of people and learning information from them needed to make decisions and facilitating different groups to hear and understand the same message.

Mr. Payne was interested in this temporary opening because the Watershed Committee has gone through a change of leadership recently and he would like to see continuity there in the liaison position to keep that committee moving forward.

Mr. Payne thought the main issue confronting the Town now is the property tax cap and fiscal issues which are going to take some creative work. He went on to say that he doesn't understand how the state mandates can take up almost all of the 2% without considering inflation and healthcare costs etc. He also thought that infrastructure and water issues are going to be big in the near future with erosion and aging infrastructure which will have to be addressed and there are no funds for that.

Mr. Payne stated that he honestly was not interested in running for office in November although he wouldn't rule it out 100% because if he were to serve for the 6 months he might find he would want to, but he did not anticipate that. He was willing to help out wherever needed and anticipated 5-6 hours a week and it would depend on the committees. He said he would definitely commit to getting the work done.

Greg Harrington

Mr. Harrington stated that he was a former town board member from 2000-2004 and currently on the Board of Fire Commissioners, the Emergency Management, Fire and EMS for the County and a number of other similar committees and groups. He added that it was quite a learning experience during his term to see how much goes into the running of a town and he learned you can't please everyone and when it comes to politics it can get heated. –

Mr. Harrington stated that in his activities on other committees and boards he's well known by some human services outlets and he would like to continue to get the information out to residents and also do another HUD Grant to help our residents with basics needs like plumbing and roofing etc.

Mr. Harrington thought his strength is being a lifelong resident and the number of people he knows and his desire to get things done. The problem is to get people out to the meetings so everyone knows what is going on so our diverse groups understand what is going on. He is a strong believer in community service and people should get involved. People get upset at the conclusion but never come during the discussions and that is frustrating.

Mr. Harrington was interested in the budget and believes in small town government because we know what we need and who we are and the State shouldn't be trying to get rid of local government. He thought we could never do anything about the 2% tax cap without doing something about the mandates we have. The budget drives everything and we need some preventative maintenance and having to hunt for grant money is frustrating and an incredible amount of time and it shouldn't be that hard. He is interested in emergency preparedness and

more generators around the town

Mr. Harrington said he would be interested in running in the coming election and interested in committees associated with highway, buildings, emergency response and budget. He thought maybe having meetings in Speedsville and or Brooktondale once in a while might get more people involved and that board members should go to their functions to try and get a feel for what they are thinking.

Privilege of the Floor

Peter Hoyt addressed the Board stating there are three good candidates but he came to speak in favor of Mr. Harrington being chosen. Mr. Hoyt thought a diversity of party would be good and would bring a different viewpoint in some cases and Mr. Harrington was fully qualified and willing to run in November for the sake of continuity.

Interview for Planning Board position

Ben Boynton

Mr. Boynton stated that he is involved with Habitat for Humanity and Chair of the Site Selection Committee and proud to say they have been very successful in developing an active group. Mr. Boynton stated that he is not fully up to speed on the Planning Board but he was interested in developing a vision for the town and hearing from residents about what they wanted. He was a proponent of building and fire codes to keep residents safe and would like to see our current laws, such as property maintenance, prohibiting old cars being removed, enforced or reviewed and taken of the books if they are not going to be enforced.

The Board thanked all the applicants for their time and interest in serving and expressed their hope that all 4 would continue to be involved whether they were chosen or not.

Reports**Cindy Whittaker, Highway Superintendent**

No report

Dan Klein, County Representative

No report

Irene Weiser, Town Board

TCCOG: We heard from Start-Up NY reps from Cornell. Gave brief overview of program that is partnership between State and primarily CUNY colleges to promote local economic development by partnerships between University and local community. Tax incentives for businesses established under this program – 10 yrs tax relief (including income tax!). University or local community to identify space where new businesses can set up. If that property on the tax rolls, it will stay on the tax rolls, but if not on tax rolls to begin with, the property remains non-taxable when new business occupies that space. Business cannot compete with existing local business. For more info or if Town has space available for this program contact mgo5@cornell.edu

I presented info re: Cleaner Greener NYSEDA award for developing a Home Energy Rating Disclosure Ordinance – Caroline plus Ulysses, Danby, Town and City of Ithaca sent in grant proposal. Dryden, Enfield, Lansing, Cayuga Heights, Village Lansing expressed interest.

I proposed a new standing committee on Sustainability - favorable response. Will bring formal resolution to Feb meeting.

Joe Mareane gave overview of Governor's Tax proposal; discussed how State mandates are causing >50% of property tax costs in Tompkins Co. Herb Engman suggested developing similar analysis for Towns – what are the State mandated costs that we assume?

CIT: Committee met and reviewed info on Microsoft 365 for Gov't re: security, amount of data storage for off-site back-up, email retention methods, and added value of up to date MS Office programs. Package is robust, cost effective, and no concerns that company will be around tomorrow as there were with other email archiving companies we reviewed. Meanwhile, Suzanne Etherington from State Archives suggests we consider Digital Towpath, a custom toolset made by a cooperative of small governments. I spoke to Jeanne Brown – the tools have advanced quite a bit since we looked at them a year ago and may suit our needs. (they didn't have email archive and just began records mgt when we spoke before) Will arrange for another webinar with committee – hopefully in Feb. sometime.

Aquifer Protection Cmte: Met 3 times in January – wanted to finish review of Germantown law for protecting water quantity to perhaps include in revised version of Site Plan Review Law. Had many questions re: Germantown law which we sent to Steve from NYRWA. Steve replied by email to many questions and conf call on Tuesday to discuss further. Steve had suggested including the water quantity protocol in SPRL – but as we thought about it, we'd want to include (or reference) not just water quantity but also water quality – so we'll just keep moving forward and figure out how to integrate the 2 laws when we're ready.

NYSERDA Planning Grant re: Home Energy Disclosure: As indicated above, the multi-municipal proposal to develop a home energy rating disclosure ordinance was awarded a NYSERDA grant. \$70,000 over 18 months to hire a project coordinator, technical consultant and attorney to develop a home energy rating disclosure ordinance and implementation plan that Towns can consider adopting. In addition to funds, the grant requires in-kind municipal effort equivalent to \$30,000. This is likely around 6 hrs per month per town (or perhaps less, depending on which other towns join our effort) I will be liaison to this committee and will introduce a resolution to that effect at our business meeting.

Mr. Fracchia, Town Board

Recreation Partnership: The partnership committee met for the first time this year on January

28, 2014.

- **Meeting Schedule:** The meeting schedule for 2014 was set. Meetings will be held at 5:00 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday in March, June, July, October and December. An additional meeting will be scheduled in July to begin planning for the budget.
- **Next Meeting:** An annual report will be available to liaisons in March and I will present it to the Board. This will provide data about 2013 and use of services by Caroline youth.
- **Fundraising Discussion:** There is continued need for new recreational equipment, bus passes and camp fees. There was some question about whether municipalities can engage in fundraising activities, but recognition that there is a need. The Ithaca Youth Bureau representative indicated that a “Send A Kid To Camp” campaign would be particularly beneficial. Discussed initial ideas about what types of fundraising to do (crowd sourcing, events, etc.) as well as acquiring a fiscal agent. Friends of the Ithaca Youth Bureau were raised as a possibility. Discussion will continue at next meeting.
- **Annual Work Plan Discussion:** Will occur at next meeting. Topics to include: fundraising, website development and possible collaborations with Friends of Ithaca Youth Bureau.
- **Staffing Changes:** One full-time and one part-time recreation staff vacancies have occurred. These positions work for IYB, but serve the recreation partnership. They were approved for posting and a candidate pool has been established. Finalists have been determined and interviews will commence shortly. The applicant pool was characterized as strong.
- **Upcoming Event:** IYB is sponsoring a speaker, Lee Alan Jones, on February 6, 7:00 p.m. at the Ithaca Youth Bureau. Mr. Jones will be speaking about serving youth.

Building and Grounds

- Meeting with Supervisor Barber on February 3, 2014 to discuss key duties, ongoing maintenance issues, assessments of properties, inventories, and projects in pipeline.

Emergency Services

- Meeting with Supervisor Barber on February 3, 2014 to discuss key duties, projects in pipeline, and key initiatives.

Mark Witmer, Town Board

Energy Independent Caroline (EIC)

He is still determining when the regular meetings will be but they did hold a solarize meeting and sent out the proposal for the unified solar permit to the code officer who was not excited about the extra work it would entail. He will meet with him this week to see if anything could be done to streamline the permitting process and understand his concerns. Resolution next month.

Youth Services

His understanding that there are new by-laws being drawn up and Mr. Barber gave him the history of youth services and the hurdles coming up.

Town Business; Don Barber, Town Supervisor

Reported that the Teamsters have notified us that we will be going to mediation. In the past we have used Coughlin & Gerhart and he will be moving a resolution at next week's meeting to authorize that.

Reported that he secured a 3-year, fixed rate on natural gas through HESS.

Reported that he received a contract from the County for the broadband project and will be moving a resolution forward to authorize his signing it.

Reported that he has received the All Hazards Mitigation Plan and it is filed with the Clerk in Correspondence for the Board's review and a resolution will need to be passed to approve and adopt it.

Reported that he had received an inquiry from Tobacco Free Tompkins asking our interest in establishing zones and receiving materials. The Board discussed it and decided that they were not interested in pursuing it at this time given the small number of parks and town owned property that would be applicable.

Reported that the Town qualifies as a living wage employer and he will be filling out the

appropriate paperwork for that.

Reported that he received a draft of the Time Warner Cable Franchise contract which he will scan and email to members. The number of houses on a street is reduced to 12 and the property tax is not taken out of the money they pay the town(s). This is the first draft and we will see how it goes. The good news is that a number of municipalities have banded together, including the City, so we have a strong bargaining position.

Reported that the first meeting regarding the Site Plan Review was held and there is a disconnect between what this really means and what people think and he would appreciate any help getting the word out. This is for over 10,000sqft of commercial so we are not talking about ANY businesses that are currently in the Town and definitely not lemonade stands. This is not zoning but rather protecting what everyone cares about; water, sewer, noise, etc. This will apply to projects worth over \$1,000,000 and will not affect local citizens but will affect big-box retailers or mega-developers who won't be living with the results of their developments.

Reported that he received the Special Use Permit application for the Clarity Connect cell tower. This is a very complicated contract and Blue Wing was the only response we received from our RFP to review it. They are very expensive and discussion followed on residents who could help review it also and shepherd it through the process.

Agenda items were reviewed for the regular meeting

Executive Session

Motion made by Irene Weiser, seconded by John Fracchia to enter into executive session to discuss the employment history of a particular person(s). Unanimous.

Motion made to reenter open meeting at 9:48 p.m. by John Fracchia, seconded by Mark Whitmer. Unanimous.

----Adjourn----

Motion to adjourn made by at 9:48 p.m. by Irene Weiser and seconded by Mark Whitmer; unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paulette Terwilliger: Town of Ithaca, Town Clerk