

Caroline Town Board Agenda Meeting Minutes of April 7, 2020

The Town Board Agenda Meeting was held electronically via Zoom teleconference on April 7, 2020 beginning at 7:09 p.m. hosted by Supervisor Mark Witmer co-hosted by Councilmember John Fracchia

Attendance:

Supervisor Mark Witmer
Councilmember John Fracchia
Councilmember Irene Weiser
Councilmember Cal Snow
Councilmember Tim Murray

Recording Secretary:

Jessica L. Townsend, Town Clerk

Privilege-of-the-Floor

Resident Alexandra Spencer – Thanked the town board for their consideration of the Moratorium on Commercial Development. She is in favor of a Moratorium on Commercial Development.

Realtor Bob Gage/GBT Realty – Offered his knowledge of this potential commercial building having around 9,000 sq ft store and at the time of application, there is/was no zoning or other law obstructing this consideration.

Resident Katherine Goldberg-Forrest – Believes this is a perfect example of why we need a comprehensive plan in place. Is in favor of a Moratorium on Commercial Development while the Planning Board works to finalize the Plan.

Resident Rita Rosenberg – Offered her appreciation to the board for making this a priority on today's agenda.

Receipt of Petition Requesting a Moratorium on Commercial Development

Supervisor Witmer recognized that the town board has received a petition signed by many residents requesting a moratorium until after the completion of the Comprehensive Plan. Councilmember Tim Murray stated that the Planning Board is nearing the completion of the Plan and believes the Planning Board may have a draft of the plan available in June 2020 – with hopes to have a final available in the Fall. He recommends having this discussion on the agenda for next week's business meeting. Supervisor Witmer added – given the prospect of a significant commercial building could be coming, he is strongly in favor of a moratorium. It is a pause, not a prohibition. Councilmember Weiser proposed a resolution to support the moratorium local law for next week's meeting. Councilmember Fracchia appreciates members of the community coming out to support this. Councilmember Snow cautioned that the board be careful of how this is projected – not all residents are opposed to this idea. The town board further discussed meeting with town's attorney and the Planning Board in order to get updates of the Comprehensive Plan and how to proceed.

Discussion of COVID-19 local outreach

The town board members discussed ways to keep the community informed and up to date on resources they may need. Councilmember Weiser strongly recommends community members use 211 for any information or resource they are seeking. 211 and Tompkins County Health Dept have the best knowledge and capabilities to help. There were suggestions of sending info out through mail to all residents or to make yard signs. Code Officer, Brooke Greenhouse added that there is a lot of confusion out there and strongly recommends getting as much info out to people however possible. With information changing every day, a mailing may not be the best way to go. Residents can go to the town website at www.townof-caroline.org for more information.

Committee Reports

Irene Weiser, Councilmember – Update on broadband – coverage remains unresolved. She has heard from several residents during this pandemic that are not able to have access for their children to do schoolwork, or for themselves working from home. She will keep pressing on this issue and plans to bring this to the attention of Congressman Reed during discussions this week. Emergency Services Update – There was a fire in Brooktondale over the weekend. It was an apartment rental unit – there are 6 residents being housed in Best Western.

John Fracchia, Councilmember – Attended JYC committee last month – they will be meeting again soon.

Cal Snow, Councilmember – Highway crew has only been coming in for emergency on-calls during this time. Highway Superintendent is concerned about falling behind - he would like to bring the crew back in sometime in the next week or two. Highway is essential work; they will be following guidelines and safety measures that are in effect. Councilmember Murray offered support of a conservative policy.

Tim Murray, Councilmember – Planning Board will be arranging ways to meet and continue to work on the Comprehensive Plan.

Dan Klein, Tompkins County Representative (Absent- report by email)- The County legislature will be voting on resolution to ask NY State to go to all mail ballots for the upcoming elections. The Tompkins County Board of Elections has told us that the logistics of going postal are formidable, and they don't actually feel confident that that they could handle it. We added into the resolution a request that NYS provide us with the resources we would need to pull this off. Regardless of what we want or don't want in Tompkins County, it will be a statewide decision.

There will be a public hearing for airport bonding on May 5 at 5:30. We will be borrowing \$3 million for one year. This is still part of the big airport renovation project. There are some funding sources we are still hoping will come in which we can apply to the project, so this one-year bond is for cash-flow purposes.

The public hearing for the Agricultural District changes will be May 19 at 5:30.

Approval of Minutes

The town board accepted and approved the minutes of the March 11, 2020 Business Meeting as submitted by Town Clerk, Jessica Townsend

Agenda items for March 11 Business Meeting

Resolution for Moratorium on Commercial Development

Resolution on Tompkins County Living Wage

Discussion on Tompkins County Health Consortium bylaws

Review and discuss Association of Town budget impacts

----Adjourn the meeting ----

The meeting adjourned by Supervisor Mark Witmer at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica L. Townsend, Town Clerk