

Caroline Town Board Agenda Meeting Minutes of May 5, 2020

The Town Board Agenda Meeting was held electronically via Zoom teleconference on May 5, 2020 beginning at 7:04 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

Also Present: 16 members of the public

Public Hearing on Proposed Moratorium

Supervisor Witmer opened with the following statement:

Welcome to the Caroline Town Board's May 5th, 2020 Agenda Meeting.

This meeting is being recorded and will be posted along with meeting minutes on the Town Website.

First, we will reopen the Public Hearing on the proposed Local Law Providing for a Moratorium on Actions Subject to Site Plan or Subdivision Review for a Period of One-hundred Eighty (180) Days.

The Town Board has proposed this local law as a measure of due diligence given that the Town's Comprehensive Plan has been under rigorous review and revision after multiple public meetings and a town-wide survey over the past few years and is projected to be completed by late summer or fall. This will enable the Town Board to evaluate the existing development guidance tools of the Town in light of the updated Comprehensive Plan to determine whether we wish to consider modified or additional land use regulations. The draft Moratorium is a pause, not a prohibition, on developments subject to Site Plan and Subdivision Review to ensure that we do our best to protect the vision and future of Caroline.

This Public Hearing is for the Town Board to receive comments and information. We will be listening tonight to inform our deliberations; we will not be responding. This is a draft law for which we are still considering information and recommendations from our attorney and the public. If there are modifications, those will be provided to the public with sufficient notice prior to bringing it to a vote. We will not be voting on this proposal at tonight's meeting. We plan to hold this Public Hearing open until our May 13 meeting and may vote on the moratorium law

then if no substantive changes are made; if such changes are made, we will schedule a new Public Hearing for public review and comment prior to a vote.

The Town's Planning Board is responsible for advising and supporting the Town Board on planning issues and initiatives. Comments regarding changes in town laws, changes to the town's comprehensive plan, or general thoughts on planning for the Town of Caroline are best directed to the Planning Board.

The Town's Review Board reviews development applications subject to the Town's Subdivision and Site Plan Review Laws. Comments regarding specific projects under review are best directed to the Review Board.

If you wish to address the board, please raise your blue Zoom hand (click on Participants on your control bar, then you will see the hand raise option at the bottom of your Participants window). Councilman Fracchia will unmute and call on speakers in sequence. We ask that speakers limit their comments to no more than three minutes and maintain respectful discourse. You can also submit comments in writing to the Town Clerk: clerk@townofcaroline.org. Petitions and all comments received to date have been posted at the town website in the Moratorium Folder, under the Current Topics Tab.

We will now open the Public Hearing for public comment.

Public Comments on proposed Moratorium

Ken Miller – Has read the letters that have been submitted to the board regarding the proposed Moratorium for commercial development. He believes that some of the people that signed the petition were mis-lead based on the opening paragraph of the petition. He also states that based on the Town's current Comprehensive Plan, the proposed commercial building is within the boundaries of the Plan and he asks that the town board does not vote in favor of a Moratorium.

Privilege-of-the-Floor

None

Additions or Deletions

Supervisor Witmer added that the town board enter Executive Session at the end of tonight's meeting to discuss and deliberate upon confidential advice from counsel, and potentially engage with counsel for additional advice, upon legal matters upon which multiple, direct, and credible threats of proposed, imminent litigation have been made.

Discussion of proposed Moratorium Local Law

Councilmember Tim Murray impressed by the overwhelming response of speakers during last week's Public Hearing and the number of signatures on the Petition for the proposed Moratorium for commercial development. He estimates around 470 of those signatures were by Town of Caroline residents. He is inclined to take this very seriously after much consideration. Supervisor Witmer similarly is impressed

with the number of people who have submitted letters and have shown support of a Moratorium. He is confident that the Planning Board is in final stages of the updated Comprehensive Plan and that the revisions will include the shared visions of town residents. He gives his support of the Moratorium and emphasizes that a Moratorium would be a pause and not a prohibition. Councilmember Fracchia would like to hear more information during Executive Session and Councilmember Snow would like to hear feedback from the town's attorney.

Committee Reports

Irene Weiser, Councilmember – Broadband update – Has spoken to Lee Haeefele regarding the areas of town that are without broadband service. These areas were to be covered by Charter and are not. Next step is to find old maps given by Charter and then ask NYS to step in and hopes this will push Charter to expand to those areas that were to be given broadband access.

John Fracchia, Councilmember – There have been recent conversations among the Highway Department taskforce and there may be other potential building sites identified for the new highway barns. Would like to discuss this further with board members during Executive Session.

Cal Snow, Councilmember – Asked about repairing the fence along the spring at the town hall. Supervisor Witmer is waiting for the Town Hall grounds improvements to move into the next phase. The town board will discuss those plans at next week's Business Meeting. A brief discussion regarding the streetlights. Supervisor Witmer will get more information regarding having an expert evaluate our streetlights and give recommendations on where more may be needed or where they are not necessary.

Tim Murray, Councilmember – The Planning Board is making progress with the first draft of the revised Comprehensive Plan. He anticipates they will have a draft to the public this summer. Discussion regarding contractual services for the creation of overlay maps needed by the Planning Board. These maps will contain agriculture production and housing development growth. Resolution to be offered later in tonight's meeting.

Brooke Greenhouse, Code Enforcement Officer – Offered construction and landscaping information for those with projects underway at this time. Currently NYS has a PAUSE Order. There is very little construction or landscaping related matters that can happen until the Order is lifted. Only one worker per job site is allowed. Encourages residents to call or email him for clarification on current or upcoming projects.

Resolution 83 of 2020

Authorizing Contractual Services for Planning Board from Karen Edelstein and Jim Houghton.

A motion was made by Supervisor Mark Witmer and seconded by Councilmember Irene Weiser authorizing the contractual services for the Planning Board

Whereas, Tompkins County Planning and Sustainability personnel who have been providing information and maps for the Planning Board's update of the Comprehensive plan have been furloughed, therefore be it

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board authorizes contractual services from Karen Edelstein and Jim Houghton for digital mapping services needs of the Planning Board for their work on the update of Caroline's Comprehensive Plan.

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Adopted: Witmer: Aye; Fracchia: Aye; Weiser: Aye; Snow: Aye; Murray: Aye

Review of Minutes of April 15 & April 28, 2020

The town board accepted and approved the minutes of the April 15, 2020 Business Meeting and April 28, 2020 Public Hearing as submitted by Town Clerk, Jessica Townsend

Agenda items for May 13 Business Meeting

Discussion and possible vote on Moratorium for Commercial Development

NYSERDA Stretch Code presented by Terry Carroll and Lou Vogel

Discussion on Town Hall improvements project plans

Executive Session was called by a motion made by Supervisor Mark Witmer and seconded by Councilmember John Fracchia to discuss and deliberate upon confidential advice from counsel, and potentially engage with counsel for additional advice, upon legal matters upon which multiple, direct, and credible threats of proposed, imminent litigation have been made and was carried unanimously at 8:03 p.m. Executive Session ended at 9:25 and the meeting was adjourned.

----Adjourn ----

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica L. Townsend, Town Clerk