

Caroline Town Board Business Meeting Minutes of June 10, 2020

The Town Board Business Meeting held electronically via Zoom teleconference on June 10, 2020 at 7:05 p.m. hosted by Supervisor Mark Witmer and co-hosted by Councilmember John Fracchia

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

Recording Secretary: Jessica L. Townsend, Town Clerk

Also Present: Tompkins County Legislator Representative, Dan Klein 15 members of the public attended via teleconference.

Supervisor Witmer opened with welcoming everybody to the Business Meeting. This meeting is being recorded and will be posted along with meeting minutes on the Town Website.

Public Hearing on the Moratorium on Actions Subject to Site Plan or Subdivision Review for a Period of One-hundred Eighty (180) days

Mr. Witmer opened the Public Hearing by stating that the most current petition has been put on the town website. Changes have been made to the text of the Moratorium Law to clarify the purpose and to simplify the Waiver provision.

Renate Ferro – Thanked the Town Board for considering the Moratorium Law. Reminded the town board that this was about the vision of the town and wants to support local businesses here. Hopes the board has listened to all the people that have spoken in support of a Moratorium and vote yes tonight.

Public Hearing closed at 7:11 p.m.

Privilege-of-the-Floor

Katherine Forrest-Goldberg – The following was read by Ms. Goldberg:

I want to take a moment to acknowledge and speak briefly about the painful moment that we all find ourselves in as humans living in America right now, since it is the context and backdrop to everything else. The moratorium is important, of course, but as I contemplate it in my own state of heartbreak, anger and most emotions in between, I feel compelled to speak out on this issue. With everything that's going on around us, I have found myself ever more grateful for this incredible place that we call home, but I have also begun to think more deeply about how racism lives in, and impacts our town, and how we can take intentional and proactive steps towards an antiracist agenda for the Town of Caroline. I realize that some may be thinking that we don't have a problem here, that our Caroline bubble is unaffected - and if that is the case, this response just represents the work that we all need to do. In my professional life, I am embedded in the recognition that identifying structures, policies, practices, norms, and values which allow racism to live in institutions is a critical step towards antiracist progress - over the past several days I have been thinking about that in the context of our town. I regret that I have

not done that sooner. I also started reading about the history of our town in relation to the earliest seeds of the institutional racism of the present - slavery. And I learned that we have quite an interesting history in that regard. I remember hearing something about a slave burial site marker at a meeting a while ago, but I did not know any of the history. It turns out that several early settlers of the Town of Caroline were from Virginia, bringing with them their slaves - I won't take any more time on the particulars of this here but I would encourage anyone interested to read more about this. Given all this, I would like to propose that the Town craft a statement of commitment to antiracist initiatives, to be posted on the town website. This would be a public demonstration of support for diversity & inclusion in our community. I am also advocating for the addition of language to the Comprehensive Plan in recognition of this as well - I will certainly discuss this with the Planning Board, but I wanted to mention this here, to publicly share my own blindspot in this area related to a document that I have been working on for almost 2 years, and admit I have not previously recognized or thought to take action on. It is easy to do. But we can do better. I would also like to propose that the Town share a list of antiracist resources on the town website - I have a link that I will email to the Board as an example and there are certainly many others circulating which we can use if that's preferred. I hope that as we move forward with all of our Town's agenda items we can continue to keep issues of Diversity & Inclusion at the forefront, even after this immediate and dramatic response that we are in the midst of fades.

Discussion and Vote to Adopt A Local Law Providing for a Moratorium on Actions Subject to Site Plan or Subdivision Review for a Period of One-hundred Eighty (180) days

Discussion: Councilmember Murray stated that the petition in support of a Moratorium currently has over 750 signatures with an estimate of 600 or more being those of Caroline residents. He has never seen anything like this in the Town. The first draft of the Comprehensive Plan should be ready for review in July with the final available sometime in late September. He approves of the revised language and seems reasonable to wait for the revised Comp Plan. Fully supports the Moratorium. Councilmember Fracchia thanked the community for their diligence and patience while they have taken the time to think this through. He has listened and also supports the Moratorium. Councilmember Weiser – in the midst of all the turmoil that everyone is going through, genuinely appreciates the passionate remarks by the public. Thanked the Planning Board for all their work and looks forward to seeing the draft Comp Plan. Is happy with the work they made with the Town Attorney and also supports this Moratorium. Supervisor Witmer states that he too appreciates and thanked everyone for coming forward and working with local government. He feels a duty to support the moratorium and in 150 years, he wants Caroline to reflect independence, wisdom and the vision of the residents of the town. Lastly, Councilmember Snow gave his thoughts and states that on advice of Counsel he does not support the Moratorium. Feels we should consider zoning in the future, but at the present time cannot support this.

Resolution 91 of 2020 – Local Law Providing for a Moratorium on Actions Subject to Site Plan or Subdivision Review for a Period of One-hundred Eighty (180) days

A motion made by Mr. Witmer and seconded by Irene Weiser

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board hereby supports a Local Law Providing for a Moratorium on Actions Subject to Site Plan or Subdivision Review for a Period of One-hundred Eighty (180) days

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

Reports

Mark Witmer, Town Supervisor – The Town Supervisor’s Report is as follows:

Correspondence of Note:

Speedsville General Store submitted on June 5 a 30-day advance notice of change to liquor license to allow consumption of beer and cider on the premises.

Discussion: Board members discussed waiving the 30-day notice.

Received letter from Nancy and Jim Belisle in support of FLLT initiative to protect Thomas Road wetlands.

Received Certificate of the Final Equalization Rate for the 2020 Assessment Roll of 100.00 (assessment = actual value).

Supervisor’s Report:

Request for Bids completed for Town Hall site improvements.

Received letter from NYSEG that the Public Service Commission has approved the sale of streetlight facilities to the Town providing 60-day time frame for completion of purchase.

NYPA meeting for updates and information on our LED streetlight conversion. 90% design expected by end of June. We will then have opportunity to suggest additions or deletions from our streetlight inventory, which would then be incorporated into the final plan. Public presentation will then occur.

TCCOG Emergency Services Planning Committee met on June 5. We will propose three initiatives for TCCOG to support rural emergency services: 1) advocacy at state level for a municipal funding model to support rural emergency response, 2) guidance to towns on updating Fire Protection Contracts to protect the Town and Fire Companies, 3) support for expanding and providing affordable EMS training.

First meeting for Hazard Mitigation Plan update scheduled for Friday, June 12.

Reopening plan and policies developed and provided to town departments. Distancing measures, of course, are in place. Visitors to town facilities must sign in, wear a mask, maintain 6-ft distance when possible, wash hands, and not gather in large groups in enclosed spaces. Working with Mr. Brooks to construct plexiglas barriers for service windows/desks.

Brooke Greenhouse, Code Officer – None.

Jessie Townsend, Town Clerk – The Office is now open to the public on Tuesdays and Thursday’s from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. until further notice. I will continue to work in the office and at home outside of those hours as needed.

Bobby Spencer, Highway Superintendent – The Highway Report is as follows:

Roadwork

Patching pot holes, ditching, grading gravel roads, fixing wash-outs from storm damage, roadside mowing

Capitol Highway Projects

Buffalo Road is ready for Asphalt (We are still waiting to get the final confirmation on CHIPS money)

Equipment

Truck 284 was sent to Syracuse to have rear springs replaced

Truck 367 (new pick-up) is going to Beam Mack for the snowplow installation

Miscellaneous

-Hauling in washed sand for winter when and where available.

-Working with DEC on a resolution for gravel and stream diversion in Shindagin Hollow.

-Working with Tompkins county soil & water regarding hydro seeding for roads that have been ditched so far.

-We have switched internet providers from Frontier to Spectrum at the highway barns

Discussion: Councilmember Weiser recommended that we do a price comparison to add Highway to the Town Hall phone tree. Supervisor Witmer will follow-up.

Irene Weiser, Councilmember – None

Cal Snow, Councilmember – Will work with Bobby and New York State DOT on their Assessment Report of Route 79 and Landon Rd. Feels that because of all of the comments recently made about the safety of that stretch of road, he wants to see if it requires a yellow flashing light or some other form of caution.

Tim Murray, Councilmember - None

Dan Klein, County Representative Report – Democratic Primary June 23rd. Absentee ballots have been sent through the mail, early voting starts on June 13th. Low income rent relief is available countywide. INHS applications start June 15. There is \$600,000 for low-income households. There are 4 households in Caroline will be in Foreclosure in six weeks: 76 McGrath Rd, vacant property on Level Green, vacant property on Ekroos Rd and 38 Flat Iron Rd. Numerous attempts have been made to contact the property owners and the County does try to work with property owners so that foreclosures are the last possible resort. Auctions to be held around the 1st of August on these properties. 90 county employees have been furloughed and they will also be offering an early retirement package to some. NYS may also have a bill in which any municipality can offer an early retirement package to employees. It's in very early stages but could be coming forward soon.

Wil Lawrence, Age-Friendly Community Report – Has been working on ways to implement community groups to help our Emergency Services throughout our area.

Presentation of request for bids for Town Hall site improvements

The RFP will be going out on Monday, June 15th. Councilmember Weiser suggested that the lawn restoration be included in the bid to ensure that it gets completed in the project and she also had questions regarding the new sidewalk and the pine trees along the Midline Road parking project. After some

discussion, Supervisor Witmer will discuss these items with the Engineer in order to get some clarifications.

Resolutions

Resolution 92 of 2020

Transfer from Contingency Line to Engineering Creeks

A Motion made by Mark Witmer and Seconded by Cal Snow to transfer \$2,100 from A1990.4 Contingency to A1440.405 Engineering Creeks to cover the cost of same.

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

Resolution 93 of 2020

General Fund Abstract

A motion was made by Mark Witmer and seconded by Councilmember Tim Murray to approve payment for the General Fund for \$14,663.57

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

Resolution 94 of 2020

Highway Fund Abstract

A motion was made by Mark Witmer and seconded by Councilmember John Fracchia to approve payment for the Highway Fund for \$23,774.91

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

Resolution 95 of 2018

Streetlight Fund Abstract

A motion was made by Mark Witmer and seconded by Councilmember Irene Weiser to approve payment for the Streetlight Fund voucher for \$543.25

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

Minutes

A motion was made by Mark Witmer and seconded by Irene Weiser to approve the Agenda Minutes of June 2, 2020 and the Special Meeting Minutes of June 5, 2020 as submitted by Town Clerk, Jessica Townsend

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

Supervisor Witmer lastly shared a few words about current events. "I appreciate John Fracchia's comments last week and Katherine Goldberg-Forrest's comments earlier this evening. We've been horrified by the brutal murder of yet another black person, George Floyd. Black lives are in danger.

Black lives matter. I cannot really know the reality that black persons and other minority groups live, but this has caused me to appreciate more acutely the anxieties and fears they face living in our culture. But I have hope. I am heartened by the worldwide public outrage. I am especially heartened by the massive uprising of young people. And I am heartened by the demand for change. This is Gay Pride month, which gives us cause to celebrate inclusiveness and diversity. I am so glad that we now recognize this by flying the rainbow flag at the town hall. It lifts my spirits to see it flying when I come in each day. Others have told me the same thing. I also want to amplify Katherine's sentiment about how wonderful it is to live in such a special place as Caroline, where we cherish diversity and appreciate each other."

A Motion to adjourn by Mark Witmer and seconded by Councilmember John Fracchia and carried unanimously at 8:50 p.m.

---Adjourn---

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica L. Townsend, Town Clerk