

April Notes from the Town Supervisor

The 2017 Caroline Assessment Review Meeting is set for Thursday, May 11, 3-6 pm at the Town Hall. This is an opportunity to have your questions answered about property assessments. If you feel that your property is overvalued, please bring supporting evidence. Thanks to Len Pogorzala and Alan Karasin for volunteering to help answer questions. A representative of the Tompkins County Assessment Department and County Representative Dan Klein will also be present.

The Town Board reviewed a draft Memorandum of Understanding between Tompkins County and the Towns of Ithaca, Danby, Dryden, and Caroline to develop vision plans for a proposed extension of the South Hill Recreation Way. The town hall was filled with many people opposed to the proposal, as well as a few in support. A petition in support of the trail proposal was also submitted to the Town Board with about 300 signatures, the majority of them from Caroline residents. The Town Board listened until all were heard. Among the points raised by opponents were that Tompkins County already has an abundance of trails, ownership of the abandoned rail bed is in question, the trail would be too expensive to build and maintain, and the trail would infringe on the privacy of rural lifestyles in Caroline. Supporters were in favor of a safe, direct corridor for non-motorized transit between Brooktondale and Ithaca. The Town Board decided that we would need resolution of disputed land ownership before deciding whether to move forward with developing a non-binding proposal for the proposed project. We also decided, at the urging of opponents, to postpone the April 23rd community meeting for information and discussion about this proposal. We will continue to keep the public informed about the proposed project and the town board's deliberations.

The Town Board considered the Proposed Moratorium on Actions Subject to the Town's Site Plan and Subdivision Review local laws. The purpose of this moratorium is to safeguard the public interest as we study and consider amendments to promote water and energy conservation, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. This initiative was triggered by recent greenhouse-gas reduction goals set by the County and the State, the Town's commitment to sustainability, and recent development of recommendations to protect water quality and quantity by the Town's Aquifer Protection Advisory Committee. Several people provided the Town Board feedback. Some felt that a moratorium on review of larger-scale developments was an unnecessary infringement on property rights, it would discourage development, and that there was no financial benefit. Others thought it was worthwhile in promoting the public good with minimal costs. The Town Board made a minor edit to clarify language and will next be considering the Moratorium for a vote in light of the perspectives offered at our May 10 Town Board meeting.