

July Notes from the Supervisor

The 2017 New York State budget included a mandate for counties to develop shared services plans. County Administrator Joe Mareane has been leading a working group composed of Supervisors and Mayors that has been meeting every other week. We have now come up with six recommendations that will be presented to the Tompkins County Legislature: a “training academy” that would offer municipal trainings provided by TC3, a Service Modernization Plan that would use LaserFische software to modernize storage and access of records, a purchasing pool to seek purchase of lowest-cost contemporary financial software, a countywide mass notification system, a purchasing pool to convert streetlights to LEDs, and expansion of membership to the Health Consortium. The draft plan is available at the Tompkins County website: <http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/ctyadmin/sharedserviceinitiative#overlay-context=ctyadmin/sharedserviceinitiative>

The LED-conversion proposal is exciting because it makes so much sense as a pooled effort that will enable us to achieve large savings in purchasing and maintenance of LEDs, and curtailing of our municipal energy use. LED lights use about 75% less energy than conventional sodium fixtures and, because they last a long time, require much less money for maintenance. I was surprised to learn that Caroline has 79 streetlights. I was even more surprised when I calculated that 80-90% of our municipal electrical usage is from streetlights. LED conversion will drastically reduce this and also accomplish one of the High-Impact Action Items for NYSERDA’s Clean Energy Communities Program.

On July 12 I was invited to attend Governor Cuomo’s signing of the Industrial Hemp Production bill at Cornell. There were a lot of pot jokes. That’s because hemp is actually the same plant species as marijuana, but is a variety that does not have intoxicating effects. Unfortunately, this association led to the elimination of hemp as an agricultural crop in the 1970s as it was swept away with anti-drug legislation. This is unfortunate because hemp is incredibly useful as an agricultural product and it used to be an important crop. It is used to make clothing, paper, building materials, biofuels, pharmaceuticals, foods, and many more products (25,000 I was told). The United States is the largest consumer of hemp, but we don’t grow it. This bill is intended to unleash hemp agriculture by classifying it as an agricultural commodity, creating a seed-certification program, establishing “one-stop shopping” to provide information and facilitate navigation of process, and establishing an Industrial Hemp Working Group. It’s still early, but farms interested in exploring opportunities should contact NYS Dept. Ag & Markets. For more information: <https://esd.ny.gov/industrial-hemp>

We have four open positions open on the Planning Board and two on the Subdivision Review Board. Alex Jochym and Bill Podulka interviewed for the town’s Planning Board in July, and Charles Eldermire will interview in August. Their applications are posted at the town website. We plan on voting on candidates in August. We invite applications for either review board at any time. We also need Caroline representatives to the Joint Youth Commission and Recreational Partnership. For the *Volunteer Application Form* just click where indicated on the home page banner with multi-colored raised hands or scroll down at the Contacts tab.

Mr. Snow and I attended the county legislature meeting this past week to express the town board’s support for the Finger Lakes Land Trust’s request for \$15,000 from Tompkins County in support of their grant proposal to NYS Water Quality Improvement Program for a Conservation Easement for Lounsbery Farm. This will protect precious farmland, support local agriculture, and protect Six Mile Creek, and it is consistent with the vision of our 2006 Comprehensive Plan in maintaining the rural character of the town. The legislature unanimously approved the funding.

We have issued an RFP for painting the Historic Town Hall that can be found at the town website. Bids are due by August 9th. Thanks to Mr. Fracchia for his work in crafting the RFP.

Please note that the town website has information about the proposal to extend the South Hill Recreation Way Trail under "Current Topics." There's a lot of information, including an FAQ that provides a good overview of the proposal, as well as excellent maps.