

Caroline Town Board Meeting July 23, 2012 - Minutes

Attendance:

Don Barber, Supervisor
Dominic Frongillo, Councilmember
Linda Adams, Councilmember
Aaron Snow, Councilmember
Irene Weiser, Councilmember

Recording

Secretary: Christine Wilbur, Deputy Town Clerk

Also present: four members of the public

At 7:05 PM Supervisor Barber led the Pledge Allegiance to the Flag

Supervisor Barber reported the purpose of this meeting is to introduce the final version of the Local Law to prohibit gas exploration and extraction in the Town of Caroline, and to set the date for a public hearing, which is the next step in the process.

He then read a prepared statement:

“With Fed giving Green light to gas extraction- exempting from env. laws

With State poised to issue permits where Marcellus is >2000 ft deep

Stage has been set for O&G industry to move into town

Since Town have the right of Home Rule, Town Boards are the last and only place for the civil society to determine whether or not it wants gas exploration and extraction to occur in its neighborhoods.

By doing nothing, gas exploration will happen.

By enacting a Ban, gas extraction will not – yet many of the impacts of the influx of the gas industry to our region will still impact our community.

Therefore, it is fitting and proper that the Caroline TB develop a local law prohibiting gas exploration and extraction and provide the community the opportunity to voice their opinions on the only two options available.

Time is of the essence for our community to make its decision and I introduce this Local Law to the Caroline Town Board for your consideration as to whether or not and if so, when to hear public comments.”

Ms. Adams suggested there is a third option, which is working with the landowners in the areas of mitigation and prevention as much as possible. Discussion followed and other board members were unclear about what that action would be.

At this time, Mr. Barber offered a resolution to hold a public hearing at the Brooktondale Community Center on August 16, 2012 from 7-9:30 PM to hear public commentary on the Local law to effect a prohibition within the Town of Caroline of Natural Gas and Petroleum Exploration and Extraction Activities, the Underground Storage of natural Gas, and the Disposal of Natural Gas or Petroleum Extraction, Exploration, and Production Wastes.

Mr. Frongillo seconded the resolution.

Ms. Adams does not feel the public has had sufficient opportunity to make comments or respond and react to the Board's deliberations, as the work sessions were not officially recorded. She feels that no public record being made had an impact participation.

Ms. Weiser spoke of County Legislator, Frank Proto, who reported at the last Board meeting and relayed how the County handles the site plan review process – they have public meetings at the beginning and the end that are recorded, and work sessions in between that are not recorded, as a cost saving measure. In addition, no action is taken during the work sessions. The public also has always had the opportunity to send questions, concerns and comments to the Board by mail, and e-mail to the Town Clerk, and were notified and encouraged to attend any and all the meetings

Mr. Barber feels that the public meeting held in Speedsville with the Town Attorney, the Question & Answer session at the Caroline Center Church, and three working sessions – as well as the work at regular Town Board meetings, has gone above and beyond the Board's obligation for public input on this issue.

Ms. Adams believes the ban is the most important law in the history of the Town of Caroline and feels it should be given more time for public input and deliberation, and that all should be captured in a public record.

Mr. Frongillo feels the process is structured closely to what we did for the moratorium, and feels if there were substantial changes, then he would see the need for further public information sessions.

Ms. Adams feels the ban is much more substantial than a moratorium, and it is our obligation to have an information meeting where a public record is made.

Mr. Barber believes this is what the public hearing will provide and is proud of the process that has been followed.

Mr. Snow feels the public is well informed and educated on this topic.

At this time, a vote was called for and was as follows:

Adopted: Barber: Aye Frongillo: Aye Adams: Nay Snow: Aye Weiser: Aye

The public hearing will be held on August 16, 2012 at the Brooktondale Community Center from 7 PM – 9:30 PM at which time it will be determined if the public hearing is closed or if there is a need for another public hearing. The Board will not take a vote at this meeting, but may set a date for a meeting to take a vote on the local law.

Residents can submit additional questions that can be put on the website for frequently asked questions. They can be e-mailed to the Town Clerk.

Adjourn: Hearing no further business, Mr. Barber made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Frongillo. Carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Wilbur, Deputy Town Clerk