

Caroline Town Board Meeting Minutes of April 4, 2017

The Town Board Agenda meeting held on April 4, 2017 at the Caroline Town Hall was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Supervisor Mark Witmer.

Attendance:

Mark Witmer, Supervisor
John Fracchia, Councilmember - Absent
Irene Weiser, Councilmember
Gary Reinbolt, Councilmember
Cal Snow, Councilmember

Recording

Secretary: Rebecca Jordan, Deputy Town Clerk

Also present: 21 members of the public were present

Mr. Witmer started the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Privilege of the Floor

Barbara Perrone – Connect to active community. In favor of extension of South Hill Recreation way. In Support of Moratorium for protection of water.

Scott VanGaasbeck – see Attachment 1 below

Rebecca Phillips – Opposes trail. Landowners have the most to lose.

Katherine Goldberg – Supports trail. Supports a trail meeting.

Eddie Spaulding – Opposes trail. Supports value of privacy.

Bob Spaulding – Opposes trail. Opposed to Moratorium, doesn't see the point. Perceives it as unfriendly

Scott Dean – Opposes trail. Activities are already getting ugly as far as people putting up signs, people camping on properties.

Scott VanGaasbeck presented the following letter on behalf of Kathleen Boyd – see Attachment 2 below

Reports

Cindy Whittaker – N Landon Road 9' Pipe replacement project. Approximate cost; \$23,000.

Gary Reinbolt, Town Board – No Report

John Fracchia, Town Board – No Report

Cal Snow, Town Board – No Report

Irene Weiser, Town Board – No Updates

Town Business

Agenda Items for Business Meeting:

- Board Vote on proposed Moratorium on Actions subject to Site Plan Review or Subdivision Review
- Discussion of draft MOU for Danby, Dryden, Ithaca, Caroline, and Tompkins County to Develop Visions Plans for Proposed S. Hill Rec Way Trail Extension (No Action)
- Resolution Adopting Updated Caroline Stormwater Protection Plan
- Public hearing permissive referendum for equip fund (Gradall)
- Resolution Authorizing 284 Highway Agreement for N Landon Rd
- Approval of minutes of February 7, February 15, March 7, April 4

---Adjourn the meeting ---

A motion made by Mr. Witmer and seconded by Irene Weiser to adjourn at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca Jordan, Deputy Town Clerk

Attachment 1

4/4/17

To the Caroline Town Board

Crystal and I have won our case against Tompkins County, as of yesterday Judge Rumsey found in our favor on all counts and ordered the County to release all drafts of the proposed NYSEG license agreement as well as some other documents by this coming Monday. The Judge appears to share our concern that Ed Marx deleted emails because he ordered an independent, certified search of all his email accounts and the County's backup system as well to look for deleted emails. That will take 3 weeks.

Landowners negotiations with NYSEG over ownership of the right of way is progressing, with several developments in the last week that significantly strengthen our argument that the railroad sold NYSEG at most an easement, not ownership. NYSEG has yet to dispute our ownership claim, and we hope to be able to correct any deeds to reflect this once we have agreed on the nature of any easements. This will take some time, months most likely because of the enormously complicated titles.

Assuming the County complies with the Judge's order we will soon know what Ed Marx was so intent on keeping secret. Obviously, it is likely to be in the landowners' favor, and it is likely this Recreation Way project will not happen.

This would be a good time to begin to come together as a community around things we can agree on, and heal the distrust and disappointment created over the last 9 years. Why then, are petitioners aggressively trying to get signatures by misleading people that it is the County that needs to be convinced to build a trail? Why was a parent and occasional teacher approaching people in the lobby of my daughter's elementary school trying to get them to sign, and being not-so-nice if they refused? Why was the new

owner of Brookton's market misled that this was not a controversial issue when he was asked to place a petition there? A friend who teaches at the high school was giving an exam when he was interrupted by a petitioner, and when he said he did not support the trail, he had a hard time getting the petitioner to go away? The behavior by the people pushing for this recreation trail has been consistent from the beginning: dishonesty, disrespect for the residents of our valley who would be affected, and a disregard for the good of our community.

I want the members of the Town Board to know how much we appreciate the way you have listened and held off from any action while the facts come to light. This would be a good time to put an end to the whole thing to send a clear message to the public, to avoid further damage to our community.

Sincerely,

Scott Van Gaasbeck

Attachment 2

April 4, 2017

Town of Caroline Board:

At the February 22, 2017 Town Board Business Meeting, at the request of many constituents, the Board agreed to schedule a meeting specifically to discuss issues related to the proposed South Hill Recreation Way Extension. On March 21, in response to an inquiry about the status of the meeting, Town Supervisor Mark Whitmer stated in an email that he was “working with Danby to schedule an informational meeting.” Today, a full six weeks since February 22, Mark informed the Coddington Land Stewards listserv that a meeting has been tentatively scheduled for Sunday, April 23 (time to be determined), at the Brooktondale Community Center.

Presuming that “working with Danby” refers to officials of the Town of Danby, I am puzzled as to why officials of another town are being included in this meeting. We (the constituents) requested to meet with our Caroline Town Board, not officials of other towns. We did request that affected RESIDENTS from the other towns be notified of the meeting; but to my recollection, this meeting was to be an opportunity for affected residents to review the proposed trail extension and the Caroline Natural Areas and Trails Committee Report (2008 Trail Report) with our elected Town Board members.

That Mark is considering this meeting to be an “informational” meeting is simply astounding. The concerned residents have seen the proposal. We’ve seen the websites. We’ve attended public meetings. We’ve perused the 2008 Trail Report. An “informational” meeting was already held by the County. I repeat, this meeting was to be an opportunity for affected residents to review the proposed trail extension and the 2008 Trail Report with our elected Town Board members.

Since this meeting should be a working meeting, not an informational meeting, it should be held at the Town Hall, not a community center.

In conclusion, I respectfully request that the meeting agreed to on February 22 be promptly confirmed, that it be a thorough review of the issues with the Town Board members and affected residents, that affected residents of other towns be notified, and that it be held at the Caroline Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted by fax

Kathleen Boyd

149 Middaugh Rd, Brooktondale

Respectfully submitted by fax, to be distributed to all five Board members, read out loud during the Privilege of the Floor, and entered into the record of this meeting that I submitted this statement.