

TOWN OF PLATTEKILL
REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING
&
PUBLIC HEARING – MORATORIUM ON GROUND-SOLAR FACILITIES

August 3, 2016

Time: 7:00 PM

SALUTE TO FLAG

Supervisor Croce opened the meeting with a salute to the American Flag.

ROLL CALL

The following Town Board Members were present:

Supervisor Croce
Councilman Putnam
Councilman Farrelly
Councilwoman Delgado
Councilman DePew

PUBLIC HEARING – PROPOSED LOCAL LAW FOR GROUND SOLAR MORATORIUM

Supervisor Croce explained that he was opening the meeting this evening with a public hearing on a proposed local law entitled “Imposing A Moratorium On The Establishment Of Ground Solar Energy Facilities Within The Town Of Plattekill”. He read the public notice that was published in the Town Newspaper and sent to all adjacent Towns. He explained that this proposed local law was for ground mounted solar facilities and did not include private homes putting solar panels on their roofs.

* Supervisor Croce made a motion that the Plattekill Town Board takes Lead Agency on this proposed Local Law for a moratorium on ground solar energy facilities.

Councilwoman Delgado seconded.

On the vote: all ayes.

Supervisor Croce stated that he has been working with members of the Planning Board on this proposed local law and in doing research on this type of law, it is considered a Type 2 Action under Section 617.5 C 30 of the DEC SEQR Handbook which refers to the adoption of a moratorium on land development or construction.

Supervisor Croce then read the entire local law which would set up a moratorium on the construction of ground solar energy facilities for a period of 9 months.

Supervisor Croce asked if anyone had any comments or questions on the proposed local law.

Mr. Mark Reynolds, a local newspaper reporter, asked if the Town currently had any applications for these types of facilities already before the Planning or Zoning Boards?

Supervisor Croce stated no, the Town has not received any applications as yet, but he has received some e-mails in regards to this type of facility. He further explained that the reason they wanted to put this moratorium in place was so that the Town Board can have the time to research these types of

facilities to make sure that residents are protected. He stated that if one of these facilities was built, what would happen if the business folded after a few years? What happens to the facility and solar panels? What happens if the facility is decommissioned or their lease to use the property expires? Also, we are very pro-agriculture, so do we want to see our fields going to solar panels instead? There is a lot of research to be done.

Supervisor Croce asked if there were any other comments or questions from the public?

There were no further comments or questions.

Supervisor Croce stated that this proposed local law had been sent to the County Planning Board for their comments, but the Town Board has not received them as yet. He stated that he would suggest leaving the Public Hearing open until those comments are received.

* Supervisor Croce made a motion to leave the Public Hearing, on the proposed local law for a moratorium on ground solar energy facilities, open until the Town Board receives the County Planning Board comments.

Councilwoman Delgado seconded. On the vote: all ayes.

Time: 7:15 PM.

REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

* Supervisor Croce made a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the June 20, 2016 Regular Town Board Meeting.

Councilwoman Delgado seconded.

On the vote: all ayes.

* Supervisor Croce made a motion to accept the minutes from the June 20, 2016 Regular Town Board Meeting.

Councilman Putnam seconded.

On the vote: all ayes.

ADDITIONS

Supervisor Croce stated that he had one addition for the evening's agenda:

1. Clintondale Fire Dept. – 90th Anniversary:

Supervisor Croce stated that the Clintondale Fire Dept. was holding an event this Saturday, August 6, 2016, at 4:00 PM to celebrate their 90th Anniversary. He stated that they were looking for a head count to estimate how much food to cook. He asked if any of the Town Board members were planning on attending?

Councilman Putnam stated that there were people attending from the Plattekill Fire Dept. that he belonged to and the Town Clerk stated that she had already let them know that she was planning to be there.

Supervisor Croce stated that he was also planning on attending and if anyone else was going, they should call Mrs. Anson and let her know. They were planning to have food and games for adults and children and they would also be showing a movie to start around 8:30 PM. The public is also invited to attend.

Councilman DePew stated that he had two additions for the evening's agenda:

2. Zombie Properties – Foreclosure's on Properties:

Councilman DePew stated that he had read an article in the magazine that the Town Board receives from the Association of Towns on what they are calling "Zombie Properties". These are properties that have either been foreclosed on by mortgage companies or residents have just abandoned them and moved out of state. He stated that he read that one Town in Monroe County had adopted a local law to try to deal with the situation and he called them to obtain a copy. He gave each Town Board member a copy of the local law and suggested that they read it to see if maybe our Town should adopt something similar.

Councilman Farrelly stated that the Town Board had discussed the possibility of the Town hiring someone to fix the house or mow the lawn and then we would add the cost to the property tax bill.

Councilman DePew stated yes, we talked about that, however if the people walked away, they are not paying the tax bill either.

Supervisor Croce stated that he also read the article in the Association of Towns magazine and he also called the Town of Greece to look into what law they had adopted. The law states that if a bank is foreclosing on a property, they would have to notify the Town in a certain number of days or they would be fined. Also, they would have to put a ten thousand dollar bond, with the Town, to cover the upkeep of the property. Supervisor Croce stated that he was not sure how we would do this or if this is legal to do this.

Councilman Farrelly asked how this Town was getting away with requiring these new regulations?

Councilman DePew stated that this if the first Town to adopt this law, so we will have to see if anyone objects. It is a new law and he felt it was worth it for the Town Board to take a look at it.

Councilman Putnam stated that some of the properties are rental properties.

Councilwoman Delgado stated that in that case, the owner of the property is responsible and should be ticketed.

Councilman DePew stated that the Town Board has discussed this in the past. The owner may be far away and it was his opinion that the Town should have the contact information for owners of rental properties. He stated again that he just felt this new law was worth looking at to maybe get an idea of how we can better deal with the situation of empty houses throughout Town.

3. Building a Community Facility At Town Park:

Councilman DePew stated that what he wanted to propose is probably way-out-there, but he would like to develop the area, at the Town Park, where the old Stune House was, on the corner of Rt. 32 and Patura Rd., for a large community building. He stated that he would like to see a facility with a large room, that maybe could be sectioned off into smaller rooms, for use by the community.

Councilman Putnam asked if he meant a large meeting room?

Councilman DePew stated yes, and maybe a stage area. We would have to look at different ideas. It would be a community building that the recreation dept. could use and other organizations as well.

Supervisor Croce stated that there has been talk about making some type of clam-shell stage at the Park. He stated that he was just not sure where we would get the funding to do this.

Councilman DePew stated that he would just like to see some research done on this through the winter and then maybe we can do something in the spring.

Councilman Farrelly stated that he felt it was a good idea, except that we are not sitting on a pile of cash.

Councilwoman Delgado stated that she would like to look at maybe building off of the existing pavilion. There would already be water and a septic there. We could do a walk-way from the pavilion to an additional building.

Supervisor Croce stated that he thought this was a good idea, but we already have issues with renting out the pavilion that need to be addressed. He stated that he was thinking about suggesting a plan during budget season to try to alleviate some of those problems that we have been having at the pavilion. The Highway Superintendent has been going up there on the weekends to try to clean up for the people renting the pavilion. We need to hire someone to make sure it is kept clean. We used to hire someone to do that on the weekends and he feels this should be done again.

Councilman DePew stated that he agreed there should be some policing going on up there on the weekends.

There was a short discussion that if people are paying to rent the pavilion, there should be someone going up there to make sure the facility is clean for them when they arrive.

The Town Board agreed that this was something that will need to be discussed at future meetings and if they were to hire someone for a few hours on the weekend, it would need to be added into the budget for next year.

Sale of Building on Rt.32

Supervisor Croce asked if there was anything new on the situation with the Library purchasing the building on Rt. 32?

Councilwoman Delgado stated that she was working on draft bullets in regards to what the Town needs from the Library Trustees and they are doing the same for what they want from the Town.

Councilman DePew stated that the Town needs to see if this is advantageous for us to do. He stated that as soon as we receive the bullets from them, we will set up a meeting.

PUBLIC INPUT

Ms. Valerie Smith stated that she seems to remember reading about a "Zombie Property Law" and that there was a challenge in court involving it.

Councilman DePew stated that he has not heard of any challenge in court yet and right now, we are just doing research on this matter.

Councilman Putnam stated that he was not sure how the bank can be held responsible and how we can fine them \$5,000.00.

Supervisor Croce stated that he believes the Village of Walden is also working on some type of law like this. There was an article in the local newspaper about a home that was abandoned and there was a pool in the back yard. These situations are popping up everywhere.

There were no further comments from the public.

* Supervisor Croce made a motion to close the Public Input section of the meeting at 7:49 PM.

Councilman Farrelly seconded.

On the vote: all ayes.

SECTION 1 – GASB-34 (INVENTORY OF TOWN FACILITIES)

Supervisor Croce stated that he has spoken with the company that will be doing the inventory for the Town and they will be starting on Sept. 12, 2016.

There was some discussion on how the bar codes would work if the Town does not have a bar code reader?

It was discussed that the bar code would have numbers and the item that is bar coded would be entered into the computer system with that bar code number attached. The Supervisor's Secretary will have the program and be able to add and delete items as we purchase new ones and eliminate old ones.

Councilman DePew stated that he was not for spending any money on this system without having a policy and procedure in place so that it is kept up in the future.

Supervisor Croce stated that his secretary can run this system on her computer and will have the time to make sure that it is kept up-to-date.

Councilman DePew stated that he would like to see this put in writing. He stated that he just felt that they need to identify who is going to be responsible.

Supervisor Croce stated that he might be able to come up with a policy and procedure, but until we see the software and how it works, this is difficult to do. Right now he is saying he is sure that his secretary can do it because she makes all the purchase orders and knows what is being purchased and/or eliminated.

Councilman DePew stated that he agrees the department heads can be given a list of what is in the inventory, however he felt that there should be two other people who will double-check the lists and make sure that what is on the list, is what is actually there. He stated that this should be integrated into job positions.

Supervisor Croce stated that once this inventory is completed, the Town will have 60 days that we can call to get assistance. He can have his secretary run reports to make sure she knows how to run the program for an inventory check in the future.

Councilman Putnam suggested that we could actually run an inventory check and let the department heads do a check on what has been recorded for their departments within the 60 day period to make sure that we know how to do an inventory in the future.

The Town Board agreed this would be a good idea as we can also check the accuracy of the original inventory.

SECTION 2 – CORNERSTONE PHONE COMPANY

Supervisor Croce introduced Mrs. Kate Dietrich, a representative from the Cornerstone Phone Company, which is currently the phone company used by the Town facilities.

Mrs. Dietrich gave the Town Board a summary of the equipment that the Town currently has with her company. She stated that two years ago, the Town Board upgraded the phone system and changed some of the copper lines to cable lines. There were a few copper lines dedicated to the alarm systems and one copper line was bundled with other cable lines so that if the cable lines went out, they could be re-routed to the one copper line which would still work. She stated that if it was possible to move a few more lines off the copper lines, there could be a better savings. She stated that they could bundle up to 10 lines on a circuit for \$150.00.

There was discussion on leaving the alarms on copper lines and bundling five to seven lines. There was also discussion that a fax machine could share the line with the alarm system.

Supervisor Croce brought up that currently, if one of our lines goes down, we can call and get that line to rollover to another line.

Mrs. Dietrich stated yes, but there is also the option that if the cable goes out, we can send a line to any other phone line, even a cell number.

Councilman DePew stated that we usually sign a contract agreement with Cornerstone for one or two years.

Supervisor Croce stated that he remembers signing a three year agreement, but it doesn't really matter because we have the option to change at any time.

Mrs. Dietrich stated yes.

There was more discussion on the copper lines and that the Town currently has 6 copper lines. It was also noted that any lines outside the Town Hall system, such as the phone at the Senior Center, would have to be copper lines.

The Town Board had no further questions.

The Town Board thanked Mrs. Dietrich for coming in this evening.

There was more discussion on what lines could be changed.

Supervisor Croce stated that the only lines that could be changed through Cornerstone would be the Highway Dept., 883-5910 and the fax line in his office, 883-5941.

Councilman DePew stated that he felt the infrastructure in the Town Hall was in need of up grading. Also, in looking at the full picture, he stated that he would still like to get prices from Verizon for the copper lines.

Supervisor Croce stated that he did not understand what Councilman DePew was talking about in regards to the Town Hall infrastructure. The current phone system is fairly new and we do not have any problems with the phone system.

Councilman DePew stated that the Highway Superintendent had mentioned to him that there were issues with the phone system.

Supervisor Croce stated that he did not know of any issues with the phone system.

Councilman DePew stated again that he would like to wait to make any decisions. He would still like to get costs for the copper lines from Verizon.

* Councilman Putnam made a motion that if the Town Board does not have the price quotes from Verizon by the next regular Town Board Meeting, we will make a decision anyway.

Councilwoman Delgado seconded.

On the vote: all ayes.

SECTION 3 – VOUCHERS

* Councilman DePew made a motion to pay the Voucher Detail Report dated 8/2/2016, which includes: the General Fund amount of \$63,349.10, the Highway Fund amount of \$31,764.89, the Capital Projects amount of \$7,720.00, the Clintondale Light District amount of \$663.02, the Modena Light District amount of \$1,178.31 and the Trust & Agency amount of \$3,262.00 for a total amount of \$107,937.32 recognizing that the Audit Committee has reviewed the claims and found them acceptable for payment.

Councilwoman Delgado seconded.

On the vote: all ayes.

SECTION 4 – ADJOURNMENT

* Councilman DePew made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 PM.

Councilman Putnam seconded.

On the vote: all ayes.