

**TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF LIBERTY
TOWN, PLANNING and ZONING BOARDS QUARTERLY MEETING
April 24, 2012**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Town Board:

Charles Barbuti, Supervisor
Maurice Gerry
Chris Austin
Dean Farrand

Planning Board:

Lynn Dowe, Chairman
Ray Kelly
John Van Etten
Denise Birmingham
Vincent McPhillips
Peter Stettner, Alternate
Lydia Rolle, Alternate

Zoning Board of Appeals:

Thomas Sprague
George Pellam
Donald Nichols
Peter Belgard
Robert Werlau, Alternate

ALSO PRESENT

Mark Van Etten, Building CEO

ABSENT

Thomas Hasbrouck=TB
Tracy Merklin=ZBA
Gene Burns, Alternate=ZBA

Charles Barbuti, Town Supervisor started by welcoming all Board members.

Councilperson Dean Farrand said that part of what they hoped to discuss at this meeting was the training offered to the Board members. We need to see more of what our Boards need, and not so much of what the County keeps repeating year after year. He also mentioned the PACE course that is required and that there needs to be some way to find out and keep track of who took the course. Lydia Rolle said that she just took the course and it was now on CD, with the answers at the end of the CD.

Councilperson Farrand said that better communication between all the Boards was another issue.

Councilperson Farrand also said that even though the conditions are listed in the approvals there needs to be better follow up when the Boards give a conditional approval.

Councilperson Farrand said they were creating committees to work on revisions to the zoning code. That the code now is from 1987. Planning Board Chairman Lynn Dowe said that the County Planning currently seems to push cluster development, which the Town does not want. He also mentioned that a lot of people were shocked when the zoning changes were made, which in turn has created some problems with residents, even though the changes were done with good intentions.

Councilperson Farrand said the Town Board planned to meet with each hamlet to have a look and see if the changes work, what way they do not work and that they hoped to be able to smooth the changes out.

Zoning member Don Nichols said that he thought it would be helpful to have comments not just from the Board members but from residents that are not part of the government to put things in perspective. Councilperson Farrand agreed. Mr. Nichols said that realtors might be good as they deal with issues on a daily basis and might have good input and thoughts and go a long way to help.

It was mentioned that the Town needs to strike a balance and not discourage business from coming into the area, that people won't come here if they find it too cumbersome.

Mr. Nichols said in trying to sell his village property, he gets a lot of phone calls but as soon as he is asked and then tell the caller how much the taxes are, they hang up. He also said he thought it would be a good idea if somehow the Town and Village Board could meet together and also gel zoning on the outer edges.

When tax incentives were asked for, IDA was suggested for business development.

Chairman Dowe said that we have resources for what works and what doesn't with some of the engineers that come to our meetings, like Glenn Smith, Randy Wasson and George Fulton for starters. We as a group could ask them what problems they see with our town.

Zoning Chairman Tom Sprague said that it seems we try to fix things but only end up patching.

Planning Board member Ray Kelly said he thought the 10 acre lot size would kill Parkville completely. That if subdivided the lots would have to be \$150,000 to \$200,000 before even starting to build and 2-family homes which could have been used to off-set some of the cost are not allowed.

Planning Board member Denise Birmingham said she agreed that 10 acre lots are too much. If someone has 100 acres that divides up into 10 lots, but if you kept the minimum to 3 acres lots, the person could subdivide out 3 lots to his 3 children and still have over 90 acres left.

Chairman Dowe said he agreed. Ten acre lots may kill the town since most people cannot afford 10 acres unless they farm. That 10 acre lots were difficult to maintain and that most would actually only mow maybe 3 acres of the 10 and then what would be it. He also said we have to remember whose land it was. Some families have been on the land for 5 and 6 generations and now we're telling them what they can have.

Planning Board member Peter Stettner said he was able to maintain his 50 acres with a wood lot just fine. His concern with subdivisions was water and septic. How the wells and septic were to be maintained.

Mr. Nichols said we don't live in Florida flat where you might have a 2 acre lot that's perfect throughout. Here you might have 1 acre that buildable out of a 5 acre lot.

Planning Board member Ray Kelly encouraged architectural design which should be better than determining project approval by use. It should be shown "what it looks like".

MEETING INTERRUPTED FOR A PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Supervisor Barbuit asked if anyone had any new ideas on how to get the information out to the public.

Lydia Rolle said that radio would be good and it was discussed for a few minutes about how many radio stations were in this area. It was determined that we have VOS and 3 radio stations. A suggestion was also made about using the Town website.

Supervisor Barbuti said that his office has put out a press release to all media recruiting for the proposed committees.

Planning Board member John Van Etten said that he's noticed recently that when a few projects from camps were sent to County Planning, it seems County Planning has started to consider what the camps are doing as segmentation. He believes that the Planning Board should ask for a long term/over-all plan to show what they want to do.

Supervisor Barbuit said he was to see that everyone was on the same page, but whose page is it? He said it was the Town Board's page, that the Town Board is the decider and that they would appreciate input.

Mr. Van Etten said that he's noticed that the public seems to have a difficult time understanding the procedure and that perhaps 2 paragraphs or so could be read before each public hearing so that the public knew what was going to occur. Another alternative would be to have the procedure for the meeting printed on the back of the agendas.

Ms. Rolle said she noted that Civics was no longer taught in school, and that could be some of the reason that people don't understand procedure.

It was also brought up that several members being so soft-spoken were hard to hear, either on tape or from the back of the room during meetings to the point where some of the public was under the impression that their concerns were not being met even though in fact they were, just not audible.

It was suggested that the legal notice for the public hearings be read before each meeting so that the public knew exactly what each hearing was for.

CEO Mark Van Etten said that with a lot of his building permit applications he does a lot of explaining to help the public complete the applications though he cannot do it for them. He said still a lot of the time he receives hand sketched plans or plans with no stamps that he cannot accept and takes more of the public's

time to remedy. He said in the case of summer camps, they are required to receive DEC & DOH approval for septic before applying for his building permits. He said that fire/safety inspections are very important. That due to the 2 most recent fires, NYS was now here looking at all big buildings, dry hydrants, etc.

Councilperson Maurice Gerry said there needs to be more communication with the community. He finds the Boards get blamed a lot for the taxes even though the tax rate does not come from the Boards, it's a State issue. He said that there are a lot of tax exempt properties in the Town and not just the summer residents.

It is well known that we have a most aggressive tax assessor who takes her position seriously.

Ms. Rolle said she was shocked at how many people in the Town are not online.

It was mentioned that an online presence is vital. The example was given about Roscoe being a small town of 15,000 residents, but yet received over 250,000 votes online to become "Trout Town USA". That's a perfect example of online influence.

The Town should make it easier to come to the Town of Liberty, want to come and generate revenue. We need to increase the tax base. We need revenue for sewer and water maintenance and repair just for one example.

Councilperson Chris Austin said it would be very beneficial to meet every quarter to communicate between Boards. For the Planning and Zoning Boards, they should keep track of any issues they come up with, give them to Nancy to place in a folder to be brought up at the next meeting.

Peter Belgard said that we needed cleaner code because of the law/rule of unintended consequences. That each time you do something there are always unintended consequences. He used the analogy of purchasing new towels because the old towels gave the bathroom a messy look. After the new towels were purchased, the old towels were not thrown out, but stored in the linen closet. The linen closet would no longer close completely thereby creating a messy look where the linen closet was. Unintended consequences.

Supervisor Barbuti then thanked all the Board members for attending and another meeting will be held in the near future.

Respectfully submitted,

Minutes prepared by Nancy Saucier, Planning Board Secretary
Minutes approved by Laurie Dutcher, Town Clerk