

**TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF LIBERTY
120 NORTH MAIN STREET, LIBERTY, NY 12754**

**November 2, 2009
Public Hearing
Infirmary Road Sewer**

At a Public Hearing of the Town Board of the Town of Liberty held on November 2, 2009 at 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall, 120 North Main Street, Liberty, New York to hear oral and written comments from concerned citizens on the 2010 Town of Liberty Preliminary Budget of the Infirmary Road Sewer District.

Supervisor Schmidt called the Public Hearing to order at 5:30 p.m.

No one wished to be heard and no written comments were received.

On a motion by Councilperson Thomas Hasbrouck, seconded by Councilperson Lynn Killian and carried, the Town Board adjourned the hearing at 5:34 p.m.

**Loomis Sewer District/Loomis Sewer District Extension
Public Hearing
November 2, 2009**

At a Public Hearing of the Town Board of the Town of Liberty held on November 2, 2009 at 5:35 p.m. at Town Hall, 120 North Main Street, Liberty, New York to hear oral and written comments from concerned citizens on the 2010 Town of Liberty Preliminary Budget of the Loomis Sewer District and the Loomis Sewer District Extension.

Supervisor Schmidt called the Public Hearing to order at 5:35 p.m.

No one wished to be heard and no written comments were received.

On a motion by Councilperson Lynn Killian, seconded by Councilperson Thomas Hasbrouck and carried, the Town Board adjourned the hearing at 5:39 p.m.

**Swan Lake- Briscoe Rd. Consolidated Sewer District
Public Hearing
November 2, 2009**

At a Public Hearing of the Town Board of the Town of Liberty held on November 2, 2009 at 5:40 p.m. at Town Hall, 120 North Main Street, Liberty, New York to hear oral and written comments from concerned citizens on the 2010 Town of Liberty Preliminary Budget of the Swan Lake-Briscoe Rd. Consolidated Sewer District.

Supervisor Schmidt called the Public Hearing to order at 5:40 p.m.

No one wished to be heard and no written comments were received.

On a motion by Councilperson Thomas Hasbrouck, seconded by Councilperson Maurice Gerry and carried, the Town Board adjourned the hearing at 5:44 p.m.

**Youngs Hill Sewer District
Public Hearing
November 2, 2009**

At a Public Hearing of the Town Board of the Town of Liberty held on November 2, 2009 at 5:45 p.m. at Town Hall, 120 North Main Street, Liberty, New York to hear oral and written comments from concerned citizens on the 2010 Town of Liberty Preliminary Budget of the Youngs Hill Sewer District.

Supervisor Schmidt called the Public Hearing to order at 5:45 p.m.

No one wished to be heard and no written comments were received.

On a motion by Councilperson Thomas Hasbrouck, seconded by Councilperson Lynn Killian and carried, the Town Board adjourned the hearing at 5:49 p.m.

**Town of Liberty Preliminary Budget
Public Hearing
November 2, 2009**

At a Public Hearing of the Town Board of the Town of Liberty held on November 2, 2009 at 5:50 p.m. at Town Hall, 120 North Main Street, Liberty, New York to hear oral and written comments from concerned citizens on the 2010 Town of Liberty Preliminary Budget.

Supervisor Schmidt called the Public Hearing to order at 5:50 p.m.

The following letters were received:

Nancy Levine

"To the Board;

Only my son's wedding could keep me away from the meeting at which you propose to cut the budget of the Community Development Corporation.

One only has to read the newsletters sent out by the CDC to see how much this organization, under the leadership of Heinrich Strauch, accomplishes with limited funds and manpower. From one end of Liberty to the other, its many accomplishments are apparent, from the new senior housing, to the sidewalks, to the bike trail, and beyond.

Although Swan Lake was not mentioned in the last newsletter, Heinrich should have taken credit for the many improvements in our hamlet, because without his help, only a fraction of what has been done would have been possible. From the very beginning, he has been instrumental in our achievements. Heinrich is the one who brought in Cornell to do a study, and secured grants from Sullivan Renaissance due to his excellent project summations, budget projections and presentations. He has also helped many other individuals and organizations in their quest for funding through Sullivan Renaissance. For the last four years, Heinrich has guided us through the C Category process, helping us to win the Golden Feather in one year and the Silver Feather in another. He has taken us through the numerous and tedious steps to make it possible to be reimbursed for the grant, and the amount of work that was required for this endeavor alone is noteworthy.

More important than the visual aspects is the feeling of community that the CDC has managed to bring to Liberty. The flea market, harvest festivals, the flags, and the artwork displayed in the vacant stores shows that someone at least cares about what is happening in Liberty. This is something that our town sorely lacked for decades, and Heinrich has managed to bring back a sense of community spirit. It would be nice to think that volunteers would continue what he has started, but no one knows better than I that although people have good intentions, when it comes down to it, there are very few who actually show up.

I am cognizant of the many problems that the town board faces in having to come up with a budget that is satisfactory to the constituents. No one wants to see an increase in taxes, especially when we are paying so much already. Cutting the budget of the CDC, however, will return Liberty to the dark days of several years ago, when little was done to promote community development in the many ways the CDC had done. I think it is a mistake, and I hope that the board will fully support the Liberty CDC."

Sincerely,
Nancy Levine

Alan Goodman, President of the CDC
Dear Members of the Town Board:

"I am the current President of the Liberty CDC's Board of Directors and have been a member of the board since our inception in 2005. I am unable to attend this evening's meeting, but do want to have my statement read and made part of the public comment session with regards to the Town's proposed reduction in funding of the Liberty CDC in the 2010 budget.

The Town's proposed cut of 50% is too severe and jeopardized the future activities of the CDC. As the Board knows, the Town's annual contribution is part of a funding mechanism that includes the Village of Liberty and the Gerry Foundation. If the Town's 50% funding cut ripples through, the CDC's future is uncertain.

The CDC has made measurable and significant progress in its attempts to reduce its reliance on funding from its founders: Since 2007, we have increased outside revenue

and reduce the funding contribution from the Town from \$35,000 to \$25,000 – a reduction of almost 30%. We intend to continue on this path, but to make up for 50% will severely limit our ability to deliver programmatic results as the focus of activities will be on fundraising; especially from sources that provide operational funds, which excludes the majority of State and Federal grants.

The Liberty CDC has actively participated in various efforts that – while not highly visible – have important long-term implications, e.g. as a member of the Sullivan-Wawarsing R.E.A.P. Board, as part of the Communities that Care team, the Greater Liberty Chamber of Commerce Board, the Town/Village Comprehensive Plan Committee, the Town Zoning revision task force, the Sullivan County Partnership for Economic Development, and the Sullivan County Visitors Association. Frequently, the CDC is the sole representative from Liberty in these organizations.

Since 2005, the CDC has made measurable and visible progress in its core areas of operation: economic development, housing development, beautification and youth development. Most of these achievements were made in close cooperation with our partners in the community and should be viewed as team results – after all, that is the nature of community development.

Just a few examples of specific results:

In economic development, we have – on behalf of the Village of Liberty as the formal grant recipient – managed the Micro-Enterprise program and assisted 9 local businesses with their start-up or expansion plans. Out of these 9 businesses, 7 continue to operate and thrive in this challenging economic environment – a much better success rate than the NYS average for these programs (approx. 50%). In addition, the CDC provided technical assistance to 20+ local businesses and guided them through the process of obtaining financial assistance from a variety of sources. These businesses create tax revenue and jobs for our community.

In addition, the CDC has partnered with the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce, Sullivan Renaissance and Workforce Development to improve the support structure for small businesses in the county: we have secured a \$150,000 commitment from the IDA to develop a Small Business Development Center in Liberty and we are pursuing additional funding sources to put this project on sound financial footing.

In terms of housing development, Liberty Commons has begun marketing its first housing units and applications are coming in for the 24 senior and 48 family housing opportunities. The Liberty CDC is a partner and community sponsor for this project. We have assisted the developers through the planning and permit process, and we are working with them in promoting these new housing opportunities. In the end, approximately 200 people will move into affordable quality housing units, and the Town and Village will receive additional tax revenue from a parcel that was previously undeveloped. More importantly for the long-term, we expect that market pressure will force landlords in the community to upgrade their frequently substandard housing for Low and Middle Income families and this would contribute greatly to a more attractive 'downtown', where the majority of LMI housing options are located. The CDC has

already begun to partner with County Planning to provide financial assistance for cooperation landlords to undertake housing rehabilitation projects.

In terms of community beautification, the Mill Street Gateway project and Swan Lake are the prominent examples. The Mill Street Gateway project involved 10 participating property owners along Mill Street and parts of South Main Street, More than 25 local business and community volunteers were involved to deliver a \$100,000 ready to be used. On a smaller scale, the CDC has served as the administrative partner for Liberty Bike Trail and the Peace Pole Project in their Sullivan Renaissance projects. We also worked as a community coordinator with the DOT during their Route 52 reconstruction project.

With regard to Youth development, the CDC has developed a close working relationship with the Liberty School District. The proposed Skate Park, having gone through various reiterations and redesigns, now seems on tract to be built in spring 2010, and the CDC took the lead to assemble a Liberty task force to realize the Liberty Boys & Girls Club by January 2010.

As we go into 2010, we are already working on several projects to address issues we consider critical for Liberty:

A community planning session has been organized for November 13, facilitated by the County's Planning Commissioner, to identify joint priorities and establish community projects for 2010 and beyond.

We completed a \$200,000 grant proposal to assist Town and Village code enforcement officers in their efforts to inventory existing housing conditions and make code enforcement more effective without additional resources.

We are continuing to apply for funding to realize the Small Business Development Center.

We are preparing grant applications for economic development programs based on the newly released NYS Office of Community Renewal funding opportunities.

We are researching funding opportunities for already identified infrastructure projects.

The Town of Liberty's adopted comprehensive Plan has the Liberty Community Development Corporation designated as being the major provider of professional expertise to help carry out the goals established by a broad cross section of Town stakeholders. Heinrich Strauch, our executive director is our only paid employee. He is truly recognized by our Federal, State, County and Regional representatives as being the "go to person" when it comes to economic development for the Town and Village. A cut to our budget as you are proposing will place limitations on what work he can concentrate on and in the end it will have a far greater negative economic impact to our community than keeping our current funding level.

I look forward to continued successes for the Town, Village and residents of Liberty and know that responsible funding and budgeting by all of our partners will make that possible."

Thank you for your consideration.
Alan Goodman

A letter from Jeremy Gorelick

Dear Members of the Town Board:

"It has come to my attention that the Town Board of the Town of Liberty is considering a fifty percent reduction in funding to the Liberty Community Development Corporation (the CDC), a non-profit organization operating on a limited budget for the exclusive benefit of the improvement of the greater Liberty area.

As a business owner in the Town of Liberty and member of the CDC, I strongly encourage the Town Board to reconsider its decision. Over the past several years, the CDC has initiated and successfully accomplished the following key objectives that make the Town of Liberty a more inviting place to do business:

- Counseling for new and existing small businesses
- Management and allocation of Microenterprise funds through state and federal agencies
- Assistance in application for grants for housing subsidies for lower-income housing
- Collaboration with other key agencies to develop an economic incubator program for developing business
- Beautification of Mani Street in the heart of the Village

In addition, Liberty has a powerful voice on the regional, state and federal level through the representation and advocacy of the CDC.

Please reconsider whether the reduction of funding to the CDC will be effective in future planning for economic growth and development of Liberty."

Thank you.
Sincerely,
Jeremy Gorelick
Mineral Springs, Inc.
White Sulphur Springs

To the Liberty Town Board:

I have been receiving emails soliciting opposition to the Board's proposal to cut funding to the Liberty CDC.

I agree with the cut, though.

Indeed I believe that the Board is entitled to question whether the CDC should have any public funding at all, especially out of an overstretched municipal budget.

The most recent Form 990 which I have been able to obtain from the internet - although it's from 2007 - shows CDC gross income of about \$200,000 of which \$68,000 is the salary to the executive director and \$38,000 is salaries to others. Thus, including payroll taxes and benefits, compensating themselves is the CDC's principal expenditure.

I daresay that \$68,000 salary is quite above the income of your average constituent, who is required to fund this largesse.

CDC's defenders cite (in their proposed form letter opposing the subsidy cut, a few copies of which you may have been receiving) as its accomplishments - 1. Counseling for new and existing small businesses 2. Management and allocation of Microenterprise funds through state and federal agencies 3. Assistance in application for grants for housing subsidies for lower-income housing 4. Collaboration with other key agencies to develop an economic incubator program for developing businesses 5. Beautification of Main Street in the heart of the Village 6. In addition, Liberty has a powerful voice on the regional, state and federal level through the representation and advocacy of the CDC.

First of all, it's not obvious what is it that CDC actually does (besides have meetings and talk) under these categories. What, for example, does "managing" and "allocating" microenterprise funds really entail, and what has it accomplished? What is "collaborating with other key [sic] agencies .

. . ." and why isn't that, by definition, a duplication the efforts of the two other agencies? Where's the "incubator?" And wouldn't an "incubator" (#4) already include "counseling . . . businesses" (#1)?

Another measure of CDC's efficacy is its own 2004-2010 "Action Plan," still published on its website <http://www.liberty-cdc.org/5yearplan.htm>. There, too, CDC undertook little in the way of tangible or measurable goals. Its principal tasks were to "Develop. . ." or "Identify . . ." or "Collaborate with . . ." to "Devise a strategy for. . ." and the "Work with"

The Board will readily know whether the CDC (with all the taxpayer support received over several years) has delivered on its promises to achieve - . cooperative marketing, advertising, and merchandising programs for Main Street businesses .
. a revolving loan fund /CDFI for small businesses.
. a comprehensive program for entrepreneur development, in cooperation with SCCC and Cornell University . action plans to create 1-2 shovel-ready commercial sites within the Town of Liberty . value-added economic activities related to local agricultural sector.
. development opportunities related to Bethel Woods and the county's arts community, . economic development programs related to cultural-, eco-, and agri-tourism . design, construction, and programming phase of the improvement initiatives for Griebel Memorial Park and the connected parking lot zone parallel to Main Street .

- . Operating as a community information center during the DOT's refurbishment project on Liberty 's main traffic artery (Mill Street & South Main Street).
- . an urban design plan for Swan Lake
- . a new zoning ordinance and design guidelines to direct the future physical development of the Village and Town . develop additional Youth workforce development programs . create pathway to college program through mentoring, experiential learning [sic] , and scholarship efforts . specialized training and career development programs for workers and managers . a youth skate park . Youth Voices, a community board of young community activists.
- . a Youth Store in Liberty
- . expanded access to educational/recreational/cultural programs of the Frost Valley Y . a full service youth center serving area youth and young adults . a catalogue of housing inventory for rehab projects and 5-10 future projects with technical assistance from ROI.
- . additional grants related to housing development/new construction . Designs and plans for a mixed-income, mixed-finance residential community to create housing alternatives for residents in low-quality housing units.
- . Cultivated on-going relationships with commercial housing developers . A strategy for upgrading the housing provided to families living on the upper floors of Main Street's mixed-use buildings

These achievements are not obvious upon looking up and down Main Street.

These doubts cast no aspersions on CDC or its members' good faith and perhaps even their diligent efforts, even though the insiders are too richly compensated with taxpayer money for our taste. (Think TARP!) But even "best efforts" need eventually to produce tangible results.

Most of these activities - even if they were done - are clerical, bureaucratic, academic and duplicative of the efforts of others, including the County Planning Department and Community College (also taxpayer-funded).

Moreover, in a time of economic contraction, most of these expansionary visions, however noble they may be, are out of touch with the times.

CDC's website boasts of at least 80 members. They include some of the most well-connected and well-heeled members of this community (and, indeed, the whole world), who are wholly capable of funding its activities themselves, with such voluntary public support as they might attract for their visionary studies.

The justification (such as it is) for a taxpayer subsidy for a group like this to provide "seed money" (assuming - contrary to fact - that the organizers did not have more than sufficient start-up capital of their own).

Those seeds should have been planted by now, and it is time to see whether they've taken root to make CDC self-sufficient. Taxpayer subsidy should not be perennial, lest it become permanent "corporate welfare."

Some of your constituents will contribute voluntarily to CDC - because they can and they do see its achievements. Others won't - because they can't or

they don't. Many simply need to spend their money from their own kitchen table, not to be taxed away and doled out from your Board's table.

Especially in today's economic climate, you should allow your constituents to set their own priorities with their own money.

(I'd even urge you to apply that test to every line of the budget.)

Navillus.

"It has come to my attention that the Town Board of the Town of Liberty is considering a fifty percent reduction in funding to the Liberty Community Development Corporation (the CDC), a non-profit organization operating on a limited budget for the exclusive benefit of the improvement of the greater Liberty area.

Letter from Roberta Byron-Lockwood

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In addition, Liberty has a powerful voice on the regional, state and federal level through the representation and advocacy of the CDC.

Please reconsider whether the reduction of funding to the CDC will be effective in future planning for economic growth and development of Liberty."

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Roberta Byron-Lockwood

President /CEO (Sullivan County Visitor's Association)

Jodi Goodman, Sullivan County Legislator

Mrs. Goodman advised that as a County Legislator she knows how difficult it can be to do a budget. She advised that we need to look at the budget process and see where

one can get revenue from, because without revenue we may as well shut down the Town, the Village and the County. Mrs. Goodman advised that the CDC was working to build a base to help make our budget better. She advised that we should probably be giving them more money. She advised that when she read that the CDC should be self sufficient by now and shouldn't need any more money she advised that the Town, the Village and the County are seeking grants and additional funding. Mrs. Goodman advised that the CDC has been very valuable and that not many people have been with it since its inception in 2005 but her and her family has been.

Glen Pontier, Director Sullivan Renaissance

Mr. Pontier stated that he is the Director of Sullivan Renaissance and he works for the Gerry Foundation, which is one of the sources that funds the CDC , a group which also puts a lot of money into the Town of Liberty and the Village of Liberty. He advised that Swan Lake was one of the places that they worked a lot in. They did the parks, the street lights, the sidewalks that are being planned. He advised that they also worked a long time in the Village of Liberty, stating they were the first recipients of the Golden Feather Award, a state grant, in the amount of \$50,000. They work all over Sullivan County and one can see a lot of the improvements that have been made visually and some places economically, such as Kauneonga Lake and Roscoe. He advised that every place they go they work with partners and that is the way it is done. They don't go anywhere they are not invited or not wanted or where there isn't staff or partners to work with. Mr. Pontier stated that the most effective places they have worked with is the Liberty CDC and the Bethel LDC. These are the ones that function and that they can function with and are now a model and are talking with the people in Jeffersonville and Roscoe about how they can start comparable or similar organizations to do what Liberty is already doing. Mr. Pontier stated that he couldn't say enough about working with the CDC.

Charlie Barbuti

- Member of the CDC
- Village business owner
- \$12,500 is only 2/10th of 1%
- Getting your monies worth
- Would like the board to change its mind

Heinrich Strauch

- Director of the CDC
- Would like the board to reconsider its proposed cut of contributions to the CDC
- Would put the future of the CDC in jeopardy
- 50% cut would be difficult to absorb

Roberta Lockwood

- President of the Sullivan County Visitors Association
- Very involved with the CDC
- Reconsider cut to CDC, vital to the Community

Etta Barbanti

Department Head Mtg.
November 2, 2009 Continued

- CDC has gone beyond the call of duty

Warren Switzer

- When something works well you do not cut it
- Heinrich attends all meetings as CDC representative

Joan Stoddard

- Would be a mistake to cut funding

Nick Piatek

- Would not have been able to do the bike trail without the CDC

Corinne McGuire

- Used to walk around Town and asked who was responsible for this or that and it always came back to Heinrich and the CDC
- Afraid if Town cuts funding her constituents would follow suit

Diane Brady

- Fully supports the CDC

Alan Wright

- CDC has demonstrated that it is vital for our community

Anne Hart

- Fool hearted to cut organization dedicated to economic development

Sue Hamlin

- CDC created because of a need for economic development, need still exists

Jim Gorden

- CDC has done a lot of good the last couple of years

Lillian Stettner

- Supports the CDC
- Would like it to be self sufficient

Councilperson Maurice Gerry

- Very enlightening
- Respects the intelligence level of the people who spoke
- Cut is too big and would like to re-evaluate

Councilperson Lynn Killian

- Strongly supports the CDC and has since its inception
- Boost to our economy and a boost to the tax base
- Stands firm that we need to support the CDC
- Out of our minds to cut the CDC 50%

Department Head Mtg.
November 2, 2009 Continued

Legislator Jodi Goodman wanted to know why we didn't utilize the County Attorney for our Planning and Zoning issues.

Supervisor Schmidt advised that he served on the Town of Liberty Planning Board for twenty-five years and he learned that you need a lawyer.

Mrs. Goodman advised that it was something to look into.

On a motion by Councilperson Clarence Barber, seconded by Councilperson Thomas Hasbrouck and carried, the Town Board adjourned the hearing at 6:39 p.m.

Adjourn

On a motion by Councilperson Thomas Hasbrouck, seconded by Councilperson Clarence Barber and carried, the Town Board adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.