

Special Town Board Meeting with the Village of Chatham
April 14, 2016, 6:00 PM

PRESENT: Supervisor Maria Lull, Councilman Bob Balcom, Councilwoman Landra Haber, Councilman Henry Swartz, Councilman John Wapner, Assessor Clerk Julia Horst

OTHERS PRESENT: Village Mayor Tom Curran, State Representative Carl Ublacker, Town Justice James Borgia-Forster, Joanne DelRossi, Cynthia Bobseine, Mike Blasl with Friends of the Tracy, and others.

CALL TO ORDER: Curran called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 PM and explained the reason of the workshop to have a conversation to see what ideas could be put together for further discussion between the Village, Town, and other interested parties.

REPORT ON TRACY: Curran gave a history of the Tracy Memorial Village Hall and explained the Village and Friends of the Tracy's interest in restoring and preserving the building.

DISCUSSION: Lull introduced special guest Carl Ublacker, Land Use Training Specialist from the Department of State, who spoke about various State programs for assisting the Village and Town in their preservation of the Tracy. A time of questions and answers followed to clarify details regarding the available programs.

Lull stated that she spoke to Town Justice Jason Shaw about the legality of the original deed to see if there would be anything to prohibit the Village granting some ownership of the Tracy to the Town instead of the Town merely being a tenant. As Shaw did not see anything, Lull believed that the Village and Town should eventually hold joint ownership over the Tracy. Lull also expressed her personal appreciation for the Tracy and stated that while the Town employees was very comfortable at the Town Hall, the Board should consider consolidating with the Village long-term based on the State's efficiency initiatives, to save taxpayer money, and in order to be more convenient to residents. Curran noted that his desire is for taxes not to increase since Town of Ghent residents make up the majority of the Village and Ghent is not part of the project.

Further discussion was had with Ublacker about programs and consolidation options for the Town of Chatham, the Village of Chatham, the Town of Ghent, and the school districts. It was mentioned that the separate entities would need to conduct their own discussions regarding the feasibility of consolidating specific services, make certain compromises where necessary, and be very clear with the public which services would be consolidated. The topic of forming a committee was raised and Lull suggested putting up a survey on both websites for the public to provide their own opinions about issues in further meetings.

Lull provided her personal opinion that the Town had a good building and 100 acres of land to sell, since the gravel mine was finished and the Town did not need to be in the real estate investment business, so the money of the sale could go into the Town coffers to save taxpayers money. Swartz raised the issue that the Town's extra land provided adequate room for parking expansion, which could be a serious issue in the Village. Blasl asked about the salability of the Town's land, its buildability, and its possessing an area classified as a brownfield. The Board was not aware of a brownfield and additional discussion ensued about various options.

The Town and Village decided to form a committee by the next month and to set another meeting at the Tracy for May 18, Wednesday, at 7:00 PM to discuss further joint business.

ADJOURNMENT: Curran took leave at 6:56 PM in order to conduct Village Board meeting downstairs. The Town Board agreed to adjourn and thanked the Village for hosting the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by,
Julia Horst