

Town Board Minutes
June 8, 2009

At a regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Cambridge, duly called and held the 8th day of June 2009 at the Town Hall, the following were present:

Supervisor JoAnn Trinkle
Councilwoman Carol Imhof
Councilman Ted Berndt
Councilman Joel Nichols
Councilman Frank Ziehm

Others present: Town Clerk Sally Eddy, Highway Supt. Eric Shaw, Code Enforcement Officer LaVerne Davis, Lou Imhof, Ashleigh Farrell, William Watkins, Gerald Skiff, Dan Schmitt, Terry Hamilton & son, Dick Battistoni, Maureen Bersaw, Henry Peabody, Alex & Rani Bass, Cassie Fedler

Supervisor Trinkle called the meeting to order and immediately led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Minutes

Councilwoman Carol Imhof motioned, Seconded by Councilman Frank Ziehm, to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the May 11, 2009 meeting and approve them as mailed by the Town Clerk.

Vote: 5 – Ayes 0 – Noes

Supervisor's Report

1. Supervisor Trinkle stated she is doing better and slowly making progress from her recent fall in which she broke her shoulder and cracked her pelvis.
2. The monthly financial reports were reviewed and commented upon. Supervisor Trinkle commented that the town has received its first mortgage tax check for the year in the amount of \$17,324.09. It's higher than it was last year at this time.

Motion by Councilman Berndt, Seconded by Councilman Ziehm

Resolved, that the Town Board of the Town of Cambridge does hereby accept the General and Highway Financial Reports for the month of May 2009.

Vote: 5 – Ayes 0 – Noes

3. Last month, Gerald Skiff brought to the Board's attention that CTI-AgriCycle composting site had a contract with NYS to take cafeteria waste and recyclable cups & plates generated from the Empire State Plaza. He was concerned about the material that was going to be brought in and equally concerned that the Board wasn't aware of it. The next day Super. Trinkle called DEC to confirm the contract. She was told it's a trial contract and can be broken at any time by either party. Approximately 1- 4 tons of waste are expected to be delivered to the site weekly. Mr. Skiff and Henry Peabody have since visited the facility. They reported their findings at privilege of the floor.
4. Supervisor Trinkle thanked the town officials who participated in the Memorial Day Parade. She was not able to be there due to her injuries.

Town Board Report

Councilman Ted Berndt had no new update from Senator Little's office regarding high speed internet for the town.

In addition, Councilman Berndt invited everyone to the dedication of the Avenue B Park in the Village of Cambridge on Sunday, June 14 at 5:30 PM. The park will be named to honor former Mayor and resident Robert Durrin.

Town Clerk

Clerk Sally Eddy reported she has received the new Linux based operating system for the DECALS (Department of Environmental Conservation Automated Licensing System). The Internet Service Provider is Local Net, a dial up connection. It seem to be working quite well.

Planning Board

Secretary Sally Eddy reported the Planning Board met June 4 and addressed the following matters:

1. Gerald Moppert who owns a 7.5 acre parcel on Cobble Road, was granted Preliminary Approval for a .78 acre subdivision containing an existing house, shed and garage to sell to the current renter. Approval also included a deeded strip to Mr. Moppert to enable him to access his adjacent property. Currently, he uses a right-of-way between himself and his neighbor. The majority of the parcel is classified wetlands and all the "hard ground" is included in the subdivision and the access strip. There can be no future development of that parcel.
2. Held a public hearing and granted Final Approval to Don Jepson for a 18.66 acre subdivision on Stump Church Road. He is separating his house and some land from his mother's property. Both residences were originally together on a total of 59.5 acres.
3. Held a public hearing and granted final Approval to Tadd Smith for an 8.68 acre subdivision on Stevenson Rd. Tadd's brothers, Brett and Kenneth Smith, own 32.5 acre parcel on Stevenson Rd and they want to convey an 8.68 acre lot to Tadd to build a residence thereon.
4. Mary Lennon owns 82. 5 acres north and south Gillis Road. She came to seek board approval to separate the portion south of the road from the total property. She prefers to sell it as a whole piece consisting of 43 acres. However, it there is no buyer, she is proposing to divide it into two lots consisting of 24.77 acres and 17.94 acres. A survey has already been done and, after reviewing the map, the board concluded that, if she does sell the parcel as two lots, the smaller lot will require some modification.

Highway Superintendent

1. A number of roads were graded and magnesium chloride applied. The remaining roads will be done when the weather allows.
2. Gannon Road was spray patched. More will be done this month.
3. We paved 1.5 miles of Turnpike Road and 1.1 miles of King Road using CHIPS money. The paper work has been sent to the State for payment.
4. A section of Gannon Road was ditched and a worn out culvert was replaced. A section of Center Cambridge Road was also ditched.
5. Mowing of road sides has begun and will continue throughout the summer.
6. The clean-up of brush and debris from the ice storm has been completed.
7. Phase 1 & 2 of FEMA and SEMO reimbursement money for damages and expenses associated with the ice storm this past winter is expected to be \$61,000.
8. Tomorrow, the department will be helping the Village of Cambridge pave their parking lot.
9. Mr. Shaw thanked the board for the opportunity to attend Highway School at Ithaca College on June 1 – 3. He commented it was very informative and distributed a written report which he read aloud.

Town Board Minutes
June 8, 2009

No Code Enforcement Report

Assessor's Report was given under Unfinished Business

No Communications

Unfinished Business

Assessor Mary Ellen Hill-Pierce was present to answer questions regarding a town-wide reassessment. When the last reassessment was completed in 2007 the board then agreed to do updates every three years. Since a considerable amount of money was spent to do the revaluation, the board thought it prudent to strive to keep the tax roll at 100%. Currently, it has dropped to 91%. When Mr. Maxwell did the revaluation, he used 3 prior years of sales up to July 1, 2006 and the current tax roll is based upon those values when the market was high.

The current economic crisis and the corrections already done to the tax roll this year because of discovered miscalculations will have an impact upon the taxpayers. Taking those two things into consideration, does the board still want to pursue a reassessment ? That was the question the board was pondering.

Assessor Hill-Pierce said that if a reassessment had been done this year (2009) the values in the town would have increased 9% and village values 13% since the values are based on the housing sales from July 2007 – June 2008. Properties for that time period sold for more than they were assessed. Because of the way the system works, it takes a year or two before the housing slump is reflected in the property values. She commented that annual reassessments as opposed to triennial are another way to go. By keeping the roll at a constant 100%, the property owner gets the full value for exemptions such as STAR, Ag Assessments and Veterans. Otherwise, as the equalization rate drops, so do the value of the exemptions. Also, there is less overall impact to the property owner if it's done every year and a consistent assessment is maintained. Ms. Hill-Pierce said the cost to do a reassessment is included in her salary. The town would bear the expense of mailings. The town would get a reimbursement from the state of \$5.00 per parcel. Assessor Hill-Pierce stated that Senator Betty Little is working on a bill to make it mandatory to reassess at least every three years.

Ms. Hill-Pierce will return to the July meeting to find out the board's decision.

Councilman Nichols stated he hates property taxes and thinks the system should be abolished. But if we have to pay them, then they should be equitable. He favors annual reassessment as the means to establish an equitable tax roll.

Councilman Nichols commented that the town has not adopted the Cold War Veterans Exemption. Other towns have as well as the county. He asked Ms. Hill-Pierce is she could produce data that would show the impact the exemption would have on town taxes?

In another matter, Assessor Hill-Pierce stated she does not have on file the new property cards from the Village of Cambridge that are the same as the property cards Mike Maxwell used for the town when he did the revaluation. The ones on file are from 1989. She was under the impression that the town paid the Village

for those cards at the time of the reveal. She has contacted Village Assessor Bill McCarty and he confirmed that he has the same record cards as the town. He advised her to write to the Village concerning the matter. The board stated the town did pay the Village a sum of money for assessment information. The subject will be looked into to ascertain what exactly the town received from the village.

New Business

Supervisor Trinkle asked the board for their opinion about financial assistance to Lake Lauderdale Park in order to increase the days that the park is open. When the county was going to close the two public parks, Lauderdale and Hulett's Landing, by eliminating all funding from the budget, there was such a public outcry that partial funding was restored. Because of partial funding, the days of operation have been reduced. The Towns of Jackson, Salem and White Creek have all made donations. After some discussion, the board agreed the park was an important part of the local area and, during these hard economic times it's a nearby place that families can use without traveling far distances. There is strong community support for the parks.

Other sources of revenue will come from \$1.00 per car parking fee, \$20.00 season parking pass, \$400 fee to rent the pavilion or \$2.00 per person for smaller parties under the pavilion.

Motion by Councilman Nichols, Seconded by Councilman Ziehm

Be It Resolved, that the Town Board of the Town of Cambridge does hereby agree to donate \$1000 to Lake Lauderdale Park for the purpose of extending its hours of operation to the public.

Supervisor Trinkle – Aye

Councilman Berndt – Aye

Councilwoman Imhof- Aye

Councilman Ziehm – Aye

Councilman Nichols – Aye

County Report

1. Supervisor Trinkle reported that the county is working on the budget and continues to look for areas where positions can be cut.
2. In an effort to bring an awareness to recycling, Assemblyman Tony Jordan and Public Works Supt. Willy Grimmke have put out a challenge to the transfer stations that they will each work one day at the station that has the highest percentage of increase in recycling.
3. There has been a discussion with three high speed internet companies about bringing their services to Washington, Warren and Hamilton counties. However, there is a projected cost of \$40,000 just to have the whole process analyzed.

Privilege of the Floor

Resident Dan Schmitt, owner of Oak Hill Farms, stated the talk about doing a reassessment of the town is food for thought. Mr. Schmitt commented these are hard times and people have to pay a lot in taxes. There doesn't seem to be a \$0 based increase budget mentality and it's time when people have to begin to work better together. He does not agree with the methodology used to arrive at property values and said the system is flawed. He distributed a copy of a memo to the Town Board from Thomas G. Griffen, Esq. which states that the methodology used to value land in the Town is problematic. Mr. Schmitt asked Mr. Griffen to write the opinion in support of the RP524 complaint Mr. Schmitt filed with the Board of Assessment Review regarding his Oak Hill property.

William Watkins asked Assessor Mary Ellen Hill-Pierce several questions pertaining to assessments.

Town Board Minutes
June 8, 2009

Gerald Skiff offered a report concerning his visit to CTI-Agricycle Composting facility on Belle Road. He said he went to the site the day after the last board meeting and the employees gave him a cordial and friendly tour and allowed him access to any part of the facility he wanted to see. He was shown a material spread on a field that was the result of 6- 8 years of composting. The compost was dark black and rich in color. It looked and smelled like dirt. Grass with a good root system was growing in the compost. Henry Peabody also visited the site and agreed with Mr. Skiff's findings.

William Watkins and Alex Bass stated they were not only concerned about the state contract with CTI-Agricycle but with early morning deliveries coming to the facility when no one was on duty to inspect the load. What's in the truck?

They complained the plant is not operating within hours. Mr. Watkins said he has spoken to DEC and Bob Wilmot, Supervisor of the facility, and they both are agreeable to establish definite hours of operation.

Mr. Watkins asked Highway Superintendent Eric Shaw if Belle Road was deteriorating faster than any other road due to the truck traffic to the site?

Mr. Shaw said it was not.

The following bills were presented for audit and approved for payment:

General # 85 – 106 \$16,933.66

Highway # 63 – 76 \$14,428.77

There being no further business before the board the meeting was moved and carried to adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally B. Eddy
Town Clerk