

Special Meeting of the Town Board
August 9, 2012

At the Special Meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Cambridge, duly called and held the 9th day of August, 7:30 PM at the Town Hall, the following were present:

Supervisor William Watkins
Councilwoman Catherine Fedler
Councilman Robin McMurray
Councilman Gerald Skiff
Councilman Doug Ford

Others present: Town Clerk Heather Greenawalt, Billy Fredory, Ashleigh Morris (from the Eagle, Wendy Ford, Henry Peabody, Dick Battistoni, Rani Bass, Gerald Moppert, Bruce Rolleston, Don Jepson, Stuart Ziehm, Brian Gibney

Supervisor Watkins called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM and immediately led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The Supervisor introduced Darlene DeVoe she is a town grant planner for Fort Edward and she also sits on the Village Board which means that she also deals with budgets. She mentioned how in Fort Edward they started out with planning. When planning one must be careful and zoning is a very evil word to some people. She explained how the communities and the towns must pull together and take the time to create a plan to protect their towns. The common goal is to make sure that you have a vibrant community, that it is safe, there is community pride and you as the community know where you want to go.

A lot of times communities feel that the state regulations will protect them. They feel that if they don't pass their own zoning or own plan they are protected. Darlene DeVoe said that when she had spoke with Supervisor Watkins one of the concerns of the residents was a landfill coming to the area. She explained some of the cases that occurred in other towns where they thought that they had a plan and were protected but this was not so.

The first one that she used as an example was DEC vs. the Town of Platinkill they were arguing about who has the right to be in charge of the seeker process. The proposal was the Hudson Valley environmental sanitary landfill and most towns were not very happy that this was sent there way. The town said that, "No" they can't come to their town. In the Town Codes it stated that they were just administration and you pay the \$50.00 and they issue the permit. The town did not actually have anything in there laws saying that they were the authority.

The Town of Charlton put in there codes and zoning that no refuse dumps, deposit of rubbish or garbage and other waste shall be permitted in any district. 1 cubic yard or more of refuse generated is hereby declared a refuse dump. Prohibition against refuse dumps shall include all dumps and refusing dumping operations as defined her in. They have written and rewritten this but this one has actually held up and they have included junk cars also because they have had a problem with that also.

It is not always about what you have to do however it is about how to protect what you have. The Town must make sure that they are guiding themselves in the direction that

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they need, not what the state or developers want. Saratoga County Landfill issue was another example, Northumberland had a law restricting dumps but it lacked what it needed to stand up to the ones presuing the dump.

Darlene DeVoe went on to explain how the Village of Ft. Edward obtained over twelve million dollars in grant money in 5 years. She explained that they were able to obtain this money because they had a plan. With this money they were able to tackle this massive revitalization project for downtown Ft. Edward.

Supervisor Watkins mentioned to Miss DeVoe that the Town had already written the story of the town down in the previous plan of the Town. Having the history written down she stated is very important. The Supervisor also mentioned that Gerald Moppert from the Planning Board has created a chart on information from the Town, showing the sales and the houses built in the past 10 years. Darlene did mention things to think about when questioning the residents of the town. What are the five things that you like the most about Cambridge and what are the five things that you would like enhanced. Stay away from things that are wrong and try to identify the things that you have in common.

Councilman Skiff asked if the town would be able to get a grant without a plan in place. Darlene DeVoe stated that ten years ago it was easier to obtain a grant without a plan. However, today the government wants to see a plan in place so they know what your intentions are with the money received. It was suggested by Darlene DeVoe to decide on a priority project, something that is important to the town. It was suggested by the Supervisor that if the residents hadn't already, to read the first 49 pages of the Comprehensive Plan. The remaining part of the plan, the only part that was good was the portion that said they don't want zoning. It was also mentioned that the Town needed some form of high speed internet.

Councilwoman Fedler questioned if Junkyards and the Dumps can be controlled by the Local Law. Yes, it was suggested to research the fights of local legislation and also to be very specific similar to Charlton.

Darlene DeVoe also suggested to include everyone in the planning, students, senior, retail, Ag community, cyber nut, everyone that you possibly can. Layout maps and show what areas need to be protected, which might include historically significant and commercialized areas. The first step is for the Town Board to have a public meeting and have people stand up and state that they would like to be on this committee and why. It was suggested that no public officials sit in on this committee that the committee report every month to the Town Board. The Town has to do the planning themselves, this is your town and the residents know what you want. Councilwoman Fedler did suggest that maybe the board members alternate times attending the meetings of the committee and report back to the board every month. It was Councilwoman Fedlers feeling that the board must make the final decision so the board this way would have knowledge of what is going on with the progress.

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Supervisor Watkins suggested that the town first focus on dumps and junk yards. He asked the board if they were ready to move forward with forming a committee. Councilman Skiff was surprised at this suggestion. Councilman Skiff stated that he thought this meeting was only going to be on discussing dumps and junkyards. Not on creating a committee. He thought that the board was going to take this slowly. DeVoe suggested that a committee could be created and they could do a lot of the leg work in the researching dump and junk yard laws. When this task was completed the board could assign the next step. DeVoe cautioned how much the Town Board questions the committee because this could lead to problems. This after all is the residents that are making the plan.

It was suggested by many that they concentrate on the junk yards and the dumps. Then slowly work into establishing a committee and creating a plan for the town. Councilman Robin McMurray asked the residents for a show of hands for those in favor of moving forward with the law on junkyards and dumps. He then also asked how many were in favor of forming a committee for working on a plan for the Town of Cambridge. Both of these questions received an almost unanimous vote to move forward.

The board thanked Darlene DeVoe for her time, which she chose not to be compensated for. She thanked the residents for their interest. She said she had not seen interest like this in other towns she has worked in.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was moved and carried to adjournment at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Heather Greenawalt
Town Clerk/Town of Cambridge

<http://www.townofcambridgeny.org>