

TOWN BOARD MEETING
Special Meeting
November 25, 2013
6:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councilpersons: Kevin Armstrong, Leonard Govern, Patty Wood, Luis Rodriguez-Betancourt, Supervisor Bruce Dolph, Town Clerk Ronda Williams, Village Trustees: Theresa O’Leary, Allan Reynolds, Charles Gregory, David Breese, Mayor Edward Snow.

ABSENT: Village Clerk Jody Brown

OTHERS PRESENT: Lillian Brown– The Walton Reporter, Hwy, Supt., Walt Geidel, Village Highway Superintendent Roger Hoyt, Code Enforcement Officer Stephen Dutcher, Brittany Avery, Molly Oliver, Chad Hall, and Charlene Gregory

Supervisor Dolph opened the joint meeting at 6:04. He stated the topics for discussion: extended cell service, flood commission work, annexation of industrial park, delinquent tax foreclosures, and consolidation of DPW services.

1) The first topic open for discussion was the Extended Cell Service.

Supervisor Dolph stated that this topic was to have residents write letters to request additional cell companies to join our tower.

Trustee Breese questioned if we have Verizon in the area now? It was confirmed that there is a tower on Bear Spring Mountain but not certain that it is a Verizon tower.

Councilwoman Wood stated she received an overwhelming response on facebook.

Councilman Rodriguez-Betancourt stated he would like to do a mass mailing to hear from the Verizon users.

Trustee Breese stated that it is very difficult to contact Verizon since their layoff and deletion of on-line services. He suggested that we provide a corporate address to Verizon users so that they can contact them themselves.

It was agreed that residents could send their written complaints to the Town Hall which will be forward to Verizon or any other carrier requested.

2) Flood Commission

Supervisor Dolph stated that in his opinion, this was the best joint effort group. He stated that residents should see major changes come spring.

Mayor Snow stated that a lot of funding has come from the DEP and it is important that we continue to improve water quality. He stated that since the floodway has moved up from Water Street to Delaware, we need to focus on improving the Water Street area and continue with those changes.

Supervisor Dolph stated that Water Street could offer a great tourism location with access to fishing, canoeing, shopping and eating facilities. He added we need to make improvements to Water Street to help relocate the floodway off of Delaware Street.

Mayor Snow stated that the Kraft plant needs protecting as well and the improvement to Third Brook should help. There has been discussion on using the old railroad bed to help control water.

Trustee Reynolds pointed out that all of these improvements are to the DEP’s advantage.

Councilman Armstrong stated that all this mitigation work on Water Street is still not a given that it will change the flood maps. Supervisor Dolph stated, no, but with all the other work, it should certainly help.

Supervisor Dolph suggested approving the bids to proceed with the work on Third Brook since all the board members were present. Mayor Snow was advised by council

that they could not take action since this was not the Village's regular scheduled meeting.

Supervisor Dolph stated this is a study that needs to be acted on right away. He stated that there will be a Public Hearing in January.

Discussion took place on the procedure of the LAFMA and that grant money would be available to relocate willing business and or residents. Supervisor Dolph stated this was intended to keep the businesses within Walton but it was not a requirement that anyone had to relocate.

Trustee Reynolds stated this was like getting your feet wet to get the process started.

Discussion took place on the effects of the new flood insurance rates and what will be required from business owners or residents.

3) Annexation of the Industrial Park

Mayor Snow stated that he was concerned that if a business relocated to the Industrial Park that the Village would lose the tax revenue. He stated he would like to keep this revenue to help village residents with taxes.

Supervisor Dolph stated no one is asking anyone to move and if someone did we could try and work something out.

Trustee Reynolds questioned if the funding would cover the cost of the relocation?

Supervisor Dolph stated this was still in the early stages and would need to be worked out.

4) Delinquent Tax Foreclosures

Supervisor Dolph stated that the County has been approached by a couple of villages to take over their delinquent tax bills for collections. Supervisor Dolph stated that this would put a financial burden on the County.

Trustee Breese stated that even with an incentive program the village still has over \$120,000 in delinquent taxes.

Councilman Rodriguez-Betancourt questioned if the village has started foreclosure proceedings. Mayor Snow stated they have but this is costly.

Supervisor Dolph stated that the County is running a pilot program with the Village of Franklin in offering attorney services to start foreclosure proceedings.

Councilman Govern suggested accepting credit cards. Mayor Snow stated this seemed too much of a hassle. Town Clerk explained that the Town of Walton accepts credit cards at no cost to the town and would be happy to share the company information. Mayor Snow said they would look into it.

Trustee O'Leary stated that municipalities should be first for the County to collect before school districts. She stated schools should be dropped and municipalities be picked up.

5) Consolidation of DPW Services

Supervisor Dolph first thanked Highway Superintendents Walter Geidel and Roger Hoyt for their good working relationship. He suggested leaving things as they are for the two employees currently share equipment and help when needed.

Mayor Snow stated they have an unwritten agreement that is working.

Councilwoman Wood suggested the village become more involved with purchasing equipment from Federal Surplus. Trustee Reynolds stated you have to know what you are purchasing and if you can still get parts.

Highway Superintendent Geidel explained the Hydro-Seeder acquisition and how it is shared with other municipalities. He stated we have another 5 years of funded material for the seeder.

Supervisor Dolph questioned if there was anything else to come before the boards?

Trustee O'Leary stated she would like clarification on the proposed wind towers. She was under the impression that there were to be between 8 and 26 towers and why did "you" choose that area.

Councilman Armstrong explained that the Town of Walton did not choose the area. The company picks where the wind blows enough for a location.

Supervisor Dolph explained where the wind towers will be located and provided approximate distance to each tower from the school and residents.

Councilman Armstrong explained that the Town of Walton has zoning which allowing for wind towers with very strict regulation. He stated that “our” Planning Board did a very good job.

Mayor Snow questioned how many towers the permit allowed for and stated he felt that there would be a negative impact with the removal of trees.

Trustee Breese questioned if the town takes a stand or opinion. Supervisor Dolph stated, no, this is part of our zoning.

Trustee O’Leary wanted the name(s) of the property owners. Councilman Armstrong and Rodriguez-Betancourt stated it does not matter who the property owners are and the names were not our right to release, they felt.

Village Resident Chad Hall confirmed that everything is already in the SEQRA and stated how detailed the SEQRA is. He stated that detailed information is available on www.southmountainwind.com. He provided information on the watts a turbine would produce the height of a tower and the emergency systems in place on a tower. Mr. Hall reminded the boards that no one wanted the cell towers a couple of years ago but now you can’t live without it. Mr. Hall stated that the proposed towers are small in comparison to what is out there but still very efficient. He felt the company looking into the project was good and efficient.

Trustee Reynolds stated whether we want them or not, we need to be knowledgeable.

Trustee Gregory thanked the Mayor and Supervisor for bringing this forward.

Discussion took place to hold another meeting in January and May. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronda Williams
Town Clerk