

**TOWN OF DRYDEN
TOWN BOARD MEETING
January 9, 2020**

Present: Supervisor Jason Leifer, Cl Daniel Lamb, Cl James Skaley
 Absent: Cl Kathrin Servoss, Cl Loren Sparling,
 Elected Officials: Bambi L. Avery, Town Clerk
 Other Town Staff: Ray Burger, Director of Planning

Supv Leifer called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

The Highway Superintendent has submitted a proposal by Van Hee Heating Service Heating Inc to repair the heating system at town hall for \$9,400.00.

RESOLUTION #24 (2020) – ACCEPT PROPOSAL TO REPAIR HEATING SYSTEM

Supv Leifer offered the following resolution and asked for its adoption:

RESOLVED, that this Town Board hereby accepts the proposal from Van Hee Heating Service Inc to repair the heating system at the town hall for the sum of \$9,400.00 and authorizes the work to be completed.

2nd Cl Lamb

Roll Call Vote	Cl Skaley	Yes
	Cl Lamb	Yes
	Supv Leifer	Yes

Compensation Study Update

Cl Lamb said that the two studies done on the wage and compensation study by the students didn't quite get finished, though they came up with some good research. There was some money left over from the grant from Cornell for this project (about \$1,000) and there is a student available this spring who would like to get the work completed and to the town in May. That study will establish performance management protocols for non-union employees on a monthly and annual basis; create job profiles for each position, including a job summary, basic responsibilities, the knowledge and skills needed for each position, the decision-making authority, the confidential requirements of the job, and the salary history. The profiles will be informed by the PAQs that employees completed about a year ago and result in an internal job profile. To the extent that he can, he will look at other municipalities that are similar to the town of Dryden. There will be some suggested salary bands the town could use based on the job profiles. This student is from management already, has a lot of experience, and is excited to get to work on it.

Freese Road Bridge

There will be a public information meeting on Wednesday, January 15, at the Varna Community Center at 6:30 p.m. Representatives of the involved agencies will be present for a presentation and subsequent questions.

Certified First Responder Course (CRF)

Patrick Brunner presented a budget and sample contract for the CFR class he is proposing that will be held after school at the Dryden High School. He anticipates at least 25 attendees. The school may choose to put this class in their budget for next year. The board asked him to reach out to areas of the town that are not in the Dryden School District, including the Varna Fire Department. The goal of the class is to boost membership in the fire departments and ambulance service. The town will pay the cost of this first year (\$5,500.00) from the ambulance fund balance.

RESOLUTION #25 (2020) – APPROVE CERTIFIED FIRST RESPONDER CLASS

Supv Leifer offered the following resolution and asked for its adoption:

RESOLVED, that this Town Board hereby approves funding a certified first responder class to be held at the Dryden High School at a cost not to exceed \$5,500 from the ambulance district fund balance and authorizes the Town Supervisor to execute a contract for the same pending review and approval by the town attorney.

2nd Cl Lamb

Roll Call Vote	Cl Skaley	Yes
	Cl Lamb	Yes
	Supv Leifer	Yes

Town Audits

Supv Leifer asked that the Finance Committee schedule and complete in-house audits of the court and all departments that handle funds.

County Update

Mike Lane thanked Supv Leifer for sending an email requesting a street light at the Livermore Road and Route 392 intersections.

M Lane reported that he has been contacted by Neptune and WB Strong Fire Departments with concerns about radios. When the County put in the new radio system some years ago, they decided in the capital budget to purchase for the handheld radios for the departments. He understood that the departments would then be responsible to replace the radios as necessary. Now the departments are asking for funds to help with replacement. He suggested to them that if they want the county to be involved, then there should be an ask from departments and support from municipalities.

The County Legislature in its reorganization this year were not able to elect a chair. The vote was a 7-7 split between Mike Lane and Anna Kelles. Under the charter they had elected Mike Sigler as temporary chair. They did not elect a vice chair either and the temporary chair will perform the duties until a successful election.

The census committee met again and things are moving ahead. They are waiting to hear what the Governor will do with respect to the \$137,000 that is expected by the county to help with the expenses of the census.

M Lane reported the county is worried about the 6-billion-dollar budget deficit the Governor has attributed to Medicaid. The state has held the counties harmless for the increases for the last few years. The cost of Medicaid continues to go up substantially. The only way the Governor has to get at the property tax is by mandating the counties to pay more.

They are worried that will happen and there will be an increase in what the county has to pay toward this unfunded mandate.

The City of Ithaca wants to have a conference center as part of the development of the Green Street block, along with housing. Initial estimates are that it will operate at a deficit of about \$250,000 per year, so they need to try to cover that and are coming to the County asking them to cover that gap. They are talking about an increase in the room occupancy tax by a percent, which takes state authority. The Governor recently vetoed a request for a similar increase by Cortland County. The city is trying to make the case that the entire county would benefit from this conference center. The legislature has not agreed to anything yet. M Lane said they would appreciate hearing from towns, villages and groups in the outskirts as to whether they feel this would be a benefit to the whole county.

Varna Zoning Presentation

David Weinstein said the Town Board has received recommendations from the Planning Board on three of the articles in the Zoning Law. He gave the attached presentation which was also presented at a Planning Board meeting in Varna and explains why the Planning Board took on this issue.

J Kiefer said for years the Planning Board has looked carefully at projects that come up in Varna and compared them to the Varna plan. They think carefully how the zoning laws reflect what was written in the plan. When Trinitas came up it hit full tilt for the Planning Board. They went through a SEQR analysis for the Trinitas project and recommended a positive declaration for the project. Should the Town Board decide to pos dec the Trinitas project and cause it to go to an environmental impact statement, the next step would be scoping and more than likely one of the scoping items for mitigation would be a reduced project size. This is something they could analyze for mitigation between their proposal and the Varna plan. In addition to this being a possible future for the hamlet in terms of a revised zoning law, it could also serve as an analysis tool in a possible environmental impact statement.

Comments:

- This new plan provides almost twice the density recommended by the Varna plan.
- Building is happening in Varna at a rate that will quickly use up the 454 bedrooms anticipated in the Varna Plan; new developments are coming in at the maximum for the lot.
- Varna needs more affordable/workforce housing.
- Development in Varna tends to be rentals.
- They would like more permanence in the community to help sustain the community center and the fire department and organizations that rely on volunteers. You don't get that from people in transition.
- The comprehensive plan directs density to the hamlets.
- The overarching goal of the comp plan is to preserve the rural and small-town character.
- Equal to the effort to direct development to the nodal areas is the effort to protect and enhance the livability of existing residential.
- Density in the hamlets is recommended at 4 units per acre in the comp plan and this recommendation is higher than that.
- There was a recent article on what it takes to develop more affordable, walkable neighborhoods.
- Local investors could be leveraged for small scale development.
- If developers underestimate the demand and doesn't attract the intended market, you wind up with a problem area.
- Current zoning is inconsistent with the comprehensive plan.
- The comprehensive plan is supposed to direct the zoning.

- The recommendations for zoning in the Varna plan are missing.
- There is a mismatch between density for Varna in the plan and what is allowable under the zoning that has translated to all developers building at a maximum rate.
- The Planning Board was unanimous on a positive declaration for the Trinitas project because of the size and density of the proposal; that presented the Town Board with a tool.
- Is there any liability or jeopardy in adopting a zoning law change like this after a project is initiated?
- If counsel advises against this zoning law change, it could be postponed, and the project given a positive declaration and in scoping a smaller project could be analyzed as a mitigation.
- Asking a developer to consider a mitigation is appropriate.
- The intent of the SEQR process is to put a microscope on project proposals and when issues have been identified, to analyze alternatives.
- The board can identify the scope of the analysis and the mitigations explored; reduction in project size is almost one of the mitigations.
- Trinitas has already done a reduction of the project size.
- The board needs to be sure that the existing zoning is not in conflict with what is expressed in the Varna plan.
- Could this change be made when the zoning is amended after the comprehensive plan update?
- The Planning Board was so alarmed when it first saw the Trinitas proposal that it recommended a moratorium (not a unanimous vote). It appeared that things were beginning to move very quickly and it would soon become a moot point.
- Time is of the essence.
- That static status of the market in Varna is because three landowners control the bulk of the property in those areas; the properties never reached the public market.
- There is a need to follow what is envisioned in the plan rather than what a particular owner chooses to do.
- The Varna plan had a large amount of participation by residents who made it known what they wanted the hamlet to look like, and that should be taken into consideration as well.
- There are conceptual drawings in the plan that lead people to believe that is the way it should be. Some of those show more buildings that would be in this project even.
- There may be some opportunity for subsidized housing.
- That could result in a loss of tax revenue and the developer is not going to put any funds toward upgrading the infrastructure.
- There should be a mix of occupancy to help maintain a sustainable community.
- The Planning Board wanted to be sure the Town Board knew how it felt about the Trinitas proposal; if the Town Board chooses, it can use the information provided.
- It is not inappropriate to start the process of bringing the existing zoning in line with the plan, regardless with what happens with Trinitas; the Town Board should realize this is important.
- The zoning should be brought in line with the plan, regardless of what happens with Trinitas. That application is before the Town Board, not the Planning Board.
- The traditional neighborhood has the biggest density reduction in the recommendation mainly to keep single family homes there and protect Fall Creek.
- Do other municipalities drill down this deep on density requirements? Yes.
- This argument is because of a plan devised by the community that said it wanted a rural character and set out goals.
- In the meantime, we are facing a housing shortage and exorbitant rents and housing prices.
- We want to provide more affordable housing and opportunities for people to live here.
- Recent developments are not directed at even the middle-income level.

- The more housing that is created, the more openings there will be in the housing that was already being used.

Supv Leifer would like to discuss this again when more board members are present. He will seek advice from the town attorney on adopting zoning law changes while there is a potential project. There is case law on both sides of the matter.

J Kiefer reiterated that the Planning Board is advising the Town Board that there is a disconnect between the comp plan the and zoning and Trinitas is one result of that. The main driver for this for the Planning Board was the Varna plan and they took that very seriously. We should try to cause development to be consistent with the comprehensive plan.

Another presentation for Cl Sparling and Cl Servoss was suggested. Cl Lamb would like the town attorney to advise on what exposure the town would have if the changes were adopted while a project is moving through the process. Cl Skaley said there is not a complete application yet or a spade in the ground.

R Burger noted there is case law on both sides. Section 700 had domino effects in the zoning except in the three instances addressed in the proposed amendment.

Wind Energy Law

The Town Board is interested in moving forward with this effort so that residents have the ability to have a windmill on their property. Cl Lamb said he is surprised at the number of conditions contained in the proposal. The idea was to make it attractive to wind mill builders and those who want a wind mill. D Weinstein said the conditions came from the Conservation Board and they felt those were important. A representative of Weaver Wind attended a Planning Board meeting to discuss the proposal and felt positive about the proposal.

J Kiefer said the language is consistent with that used in other municipalities and with the county regulations. The conditions are not unusual. The Planning Board is willing to revisit this if needed.

RESOLUTION #26 (2020) – APPROVE ABSTRACT #13

Supv Leifer offered the following resolution and asked for its adoption:

RESOLVED, that this Town Board hereby approves Abstract #13, as audited, general vouchers #955 through #1032, totaling \$116,909.35.

2nd Cl Lamb

Roll Call Vote	Cl Skaley	Yes
	Cl Lamb	Yes
	Supv Leifer	Yes

RESOLUTION #27 (2020) – APPROVE ABSTRACT #1

Supv Leifer offered the following resolution and asked for its adoption:

RESOLVED, that this Town Board hereby approves Abstract #1, as audited, general vouchers #1 through #18 (\$12,988.95) and TA vouchers #17 & #18 (\$710.83), totaling \$13,699.78.

2nd Cl Lamb

Roll Call Vote	Cl Skaley	Yes
	Cl Lamb	Yes
	Supv Leifer	Yes

Supv Leifer announced there will be a meeting next Thursday, January 16, at the Town Hall at 9:30 with representatives from NYSEG, Martha Robertson, and a representative from Cornell to discuss the interconnects involving the solar panels.

There being no further business, on motion made, seconded and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bambi L. Avery
Town Clerk