

RED HOOK TOWN BOARD MEETING

October 9, 2007

A workshop meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Red Hook, Dutchess County, New York was convened in public session in the Town Hall, 7340 South Broadway, Red Hook, at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Deputy Supervisor William O'Neill
Councilman James Ross
Councilwoman Sue Crane
Councilman Harold Ramsey
Councilwoman Lisa Pullaro
Town Clerk Sue McCann
Also Present: Attorney for the Town Christine Chale
Absent: Supervisor Marirose Blum Bump

Deputy Supervisor William O'Neill welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced the date of the October 16th business meeting. He then opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Deputy Supervisor O'Neill introduced Dutchess County Sheriff Adrian "Butch" Anderson, Undersheriff Kirk Imperati, and Captain Paul Piastro of the Dutchess County Sheriff's Department. Bureau Chief Officer Bruce Cannini was also recognized.

Dutchess County Sheriff Butch Anderson said they were pleased to be at the meeting to answer any questions. The police are all working together in light of the recent burglaries. They have increased patrols, put information in the newspapers and tried to get as much information out as they can because they need the public's help. When they receive a call, they act accordingly. We hope to catch the person involved, they've picked up a few people, and the burglaries have stopped for the time being.

Rosemarie Zengen thanked Sheriff Anderson for answering his own phone. She said the Town Board was blamed for not releasing information about the burglaries. She asked if any of the blame should have been put on them.

Sheriff Anderson answered that he didn't know what the Town Board would have to do with their investigation. He will try to answer questions for the Town Board and he will give them as much information as he can that they should give out to residents. He gave a brief explanation of how they conduct their investigations.

Ann Rubin asked if there is a hot line.

Sheriff Anderson answered they do have a hotline 845-486-3800.

Bureau Chief Officer Bruce Cannini said they are alerted if information comes in.

Sheriff Imperati explained that not every press release reaches the papers.

Dick Franklin explained that Red Hook Police Officer Cole went to a neighborhood meeting last week and was very helpful. He asked what homeowners can do for their homes.

Frank Knobloch is interested in the process of notifying the community. His understanding is that it was close to two weeks before they heard anything from the police. Why hadn't the residents heard? He wants to be notified.

Patty Gordon feels we need a constructive way for residents to be informed.

Richard Trotti was robbed and said it was his own fault for leaving his own doors opened.

Kristofer Munn agrees that crime is not the Board's fault. The police are doing a great job but he is concerned with the fact that he wasn't informed.

Vince Moran suggested the residents are gotten in touch with quickly and notified. He's heard a lot of rumors.

A resident asked if there was a composite drawing of the burglar.

Sheriff Anderson explained that the Sheriff's Department works together with local agencies. Neighborhood Watch is a good program but it is time consuming and a lot of people don't want to get involved. We have a Student Resource Officer in the school and SRO's are on top of a lot of things that go on in Red Hook. They have a lot of trust from the students and they don't like to interrupt that. The students trust and believe in them. They are a very important part of the community and he doesn't know if the community is aware of that fact.

A resident asked if Neighborhood Watch groups would have been informed of the burglaries.

Councilwoman Pullaro addressed the Neighborhood Watch. They've had one for two years in Rokeby Gardens as a result of the alleged drug activity and shooting on Jefferson Road. The residents of that community came to this Town Board and asked what they could do from that point forward to help them help the Board. They worked with Deputies Gallagher and Castano who were their contacts with the DC Sheriff. She explained they have liaisons from the Sheriff's department that they work with. They continue to have regular meetings. It does require time and effort, but increases a sense of community. She announced a community forum on October 29 at 7:00 p.m. at the Firehouse that all residents are invited to attend. She explained that it is easy to start a Neighborhood Watch, it is hard to maintain it.

Doris Sorko suggested maybe having information sent out via radio.

Dick Franklin explained that Red Hook has a Disaster Preparedness Committee dealing with emergency issues.

A resident asked if there could be some sort of system to inform senior citizens.

Sheriff Anderson responded that there are a lot of programs for seniors. If something doesn't look right, pick up the phone and call them. Red Hook is a good area. If someone here calls him he will get answers for them. He will give out any information that he is allowed to. He will help the Board in any way he can. People were interviewed, we dealt with subjects, and information went to the newspapers. There is work being done by the police that no one knows about. The newspaper calls them on a daily basis and their office gives them whatever information they possibly can. You can't be afraid to call the police department.

Kathleen Tovee asked if notice went to the newspapers.

Undersheriff Imperati responded that a FAX goes out to all the newspapers, radio and television.

Kathleen Tovee said there was a lot going on. Is there a way of letting the newspapers know that this is important.

Sheriff Anderson responded that the information gets out. He cannot speak for the newspapers.

Tom Mansfield commended the police for the great job they've been doing. He asked how we can help the citizens of Red Hook protect themselves. He suggested sending out letters to residents just mentioning facts.

Sheriff Anderson suggested if anyone wants Neighborhood Watch, crime prevention, or to break into groups as to what to do to protect yourself, the Sheriff's office can help. If something doesn't look or feel right, residents have to call the office. We have to be notified. It is not bothering them, it is their job.

Mr. Gordon suggested using computers to disseminate information. When something comes through we can give appropriate warning. Why doesn't the Board have a community bulletin board in which they can post up to date information such as this.

Assemblyman Marcus Molinaro told the residents that there have been ongoing communications. We tried getting information out via e-mail. 95% of the communication in his community was

gossip. We couldn't control the information even with the detail they disseminated. If the newspapers don't feel it's newsworthy it won't be printed. Getting the information out becomes almost impossible to manage.

Robert McKeon asked who decided when a press release goes out.

Sheriff Anderson explained that his department will talk to the victims and tell them they'd like to give out this information. Most often the victim agrees. They don't give out who was victimized or their address.

Robert McKeon clarified his question. He asked how the Sheriff's office was contacted to issue a press release.

Officer Imperati said the Sheriff's office works with the State Police and the Red Hook Police, and share information with them. They don't want to scare the community they just want them to be informed.

Robert McKeon asked when and how this decision was made to issue a press release.

Officer Imperati explained that other agencies will be contacted and press releases go out.

Sheriff Anderson again stressed that if any residents are uncomfortable to call them and they will send someone as fast as they possibly can.

Deputy Supervisor Bill O'Neill ended the comment period. He reminded everyone that the public comment period was to let the Board hear the resident's concerns. He asked if the Board or anyone else had any comments.

Kristofer Munn presented a number of letters to Deputy Supervisor O'Neill.

Councilman Ramsey said the Board tried to the best of their ability to get the word out. He did talk to Captain Piastro about the incidents. He spoke with the Supervisor from Rhinebeck and together they decided to put the information on PANDA. He read an e-mail from the Red Hook Moms about a tool to disseminate information that he will look into.

Councilwoman Pullaro added that the Board heard the message that they are disappointed in the way this was handled. However, what do we do from this point forward. It is a new experience and we've learned from it. Be assured we will make best efforts to make changes. She also addressed the comments regarding getting the information from the law enforcement officials. The most damaging thing they can do in this community is to perpetuate rumor. She had a factually inaccurate e-mail in front of her regarding the previous meeting. We have the opportunity right now to act as a cohesive community and not divide this community along political lines for political gain in any way, shape or form. She implored everyone that if they received an e-mail that they know is wrong, please don't forward it. It hurts the investigation and it hurts the people in this community. Let's work together as a community. We have to rise to the occasion and act as a cohesive community and not allow this to have political undertones and to divide us. That is not what this Town is about, let's take the high road here.

The Public Comment period ended at 9:10 p.m.

Robert McKeon feels that Councilwoman Pullaro's comments were grossly divisive. He thinks the most dangerous thing that can happen in this community is that people were coming to other people's homes and no one let the residents know.

Deputy Supervisor O'Neill again, reminded everyone the public comment period was closed. He reminded everyone about the community forum focusing on personal and home safety and establishing a Neighborhood Watch that will be held on Monday, October 29, 2007 at the Firehouse at 7:00 p.m.

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The Board continued with the Centers & Greenspace Plan regarding the Agricultural Business District. Michelle Greig displayed three Agriculture Business District maps.

Michelle Greig of Greenplan reviewed a handout from the American Planning Association, "A Policy Guide on Agricultural Land Preservation". She touched on various points from the handout.

Robert McKeon echoed the comments about the contiguous nature of preservation. He went on to explain that the Ag & Open Space committee focused on a general area which has important soils. The characteristics they looked for were broken into two categories. One category included soils, access to water resources, a property's historic significance, development potential, and critical mass. The second category included location; whether or not it is consistent with the comprehensive plan, consistent with the open space plan which generally identifies agricultural areas, buffering or adjacent to nearby farmlands or near protected farmland. The other considerations were the gateway and the scenic view shed.

Michelle Grieg interjected that criteria is consistent with criteria recommended by the Federal Government and also the American Planning Association.

Mr. McKeon reviewed the proposed agricultural business district proposed parcels as well as the agricultural exemption parcels.

Councilwoman Crane asked how was prime and soils of state wide importance weighted in the overall listing of characteristics.

Mr. McKeon answered it was an important characteristic but not of sole importance. He explained how different characteristics were weighted.

Councilwoman Crane questioned why some parcels are included and others not.

Robert McKeon explained that they looked at the characteristics of properties.

Councilwoman Crane stated there is a 200 acre parcel in Barrytown that isn't included, and asked why not.

Robert McKeon answered that they felt the Hudson River properties should have their own designation. We are trying to designate a new district.

Councilwoman Pullaro requested a copy of Mr. McKeon's criteria list.

Mr. McKeon can produce it for the Board. It is a whole book.

Councilwoman Crane asked about a property owner choosing not to be in the agricultural district or not asking for any exemptions. How do we answer them?

Mr. McKeon responded that he didn't feel it's appropriate for him to answer that. They have a committee of 8 members who looked at the locations and resources who made recommendations. Zoning is the authority of a government.

Councilman Ramsey asked if the landowners were informed. Was there feedback from the landowners? Were they notified as to why they were in this district, how they could get out if they were in it.

Mr. McKeon responded that it would be great to have a public hearing on this issue. We should send a mailer explaining the intent of their parcels being in the agricultural district.

Councilman Ramsey asked if Mr. McKeon would be willing to go to each of the landowners and give them a copy of the report as to why they are included in this district with a comment section. He doesn't think it's an unreasonable request.

Trilby Seiverding feels the criteria is arbitrary and is a burden on a small percentage of people. She doesn't want to be in the agricultural business district. She has seven adopted cats and four pet horses. That doesn't make her a farm. She is not claiming an exemption and she does not make money farming. She does not want her property rights to be taken.

Deputy Supervisor O'Neill said that Robert McKeon will put together the criteria for people to review.

Leo Seiverding has already gone through the process and their rights have been taken away from them. Why are they even included in this district.

Robert McKeon will put together criteria to be reviewed. It is important to remember that because a farm has a low or no level of activity that does not weigh in. They look at the property. They saw the criteria and made their conclusions.

Paul Fredricks explained that the agricultural district effects everyone in this town. How are we helping the farmers remain farmers? He thinks there is going to be one heck of a tax implication by establishing the district with all the people that would qualify for the agricultural exemption. It will have a big impact. Have we done an economic study about what the impact would be? How much more of a tax burden can the people in this town take? We are forgetting about people. How can people keep living in Red Hook?

Michelle Grieg explained that the economic issues will be studied with the proposal. The Town Board will have to weigh the impacts. We have to at least get to the stage where we can study these impacts.

Councilwoman Crane said the task force has worked on this for 2 ½ years, and the public is just hearing about it. In fairness to the public, are we expecting them to absorb it all? The Town Board keeps getting accused of stalling this process. We haven't had enough time. We need to be able to respond to people, we need to clarify questions. There are people who see the validity and others that do not. The community was generous in offering 3.5 million dollars to protect farmland. She doesn't think we are giving the community enough credit. She doesn't know that we can go 100% on all of these properties.

Robert McKeon responded that this plan has the developer doing a lot of the preservation work for us. As far as the community having an opportunity, they have opportunities every week.

Leo Seiverding feels the mapping of this agricultural reserve should be done by an independent unit, rather than the Ag Committee, who includes farmers, but represents a broad spectrum of the community.

Deputy Supervisor O'Neill announced the conclusion of the presentation.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE SOLICITATION OF BIDS FOR HIGHWAY DEPARTMENTS ANNUAL MATERIALS CONTRACT

Attorney Chale explained that Highway Superintendent Wayne Hildenbrand requested the Town advertise for highway materials and services. The bids will be separated as Hot Mix Asphalt, Ice Control Abrasives, and Materials and Services. They will be opened by Town Clerk Sue McCann and Highway Superintendent Hildenbrand on November 9, 2007 at 4:30 p.m.

RESOLUTION 2006 # 111

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN CLERK TO ADVERTISE A REQUEST FOR BIDS FOR THE PURCHASE OF ICE CONTROL ABRASIVES, A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR VARIOUS MATERIALS & SERVICES FOR 2008, AND A REQUEST FOR BIDS FOR HOT MIX ASPHALT

On a motion of Councilman James Ross, seconded by Councilman Harold Ramsey, move to accept the resolution. – Copy Attached

Adopted	Ayes	4	Ross, Crane, Ramsey, Pullaro
	Nays	0	
	Absent	1	Blum Bump

PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

Councilman Ramsey referred to a letter from Assemblyman Marcus Molinaro. His recommendation is to go forward with support of Assembly Bill 6119 and Senate Bill 4746. These two bills were to ask the State to work on property tax relief. He hoped the Board reviewed the letter and asked the Board to go forward with support of the bills.

On a motion of Councilwoman Crane, seconded by Councilman Ramsey, move to support the two bills regarding property tax relief.

Adopted Ayes 4 Ross, Crane, Ramsey, Pullaro
 Nays 0
 Absent 1 Blum Bump

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

Councilman Ramsey moved forward with the CDBG. He spoke with Wheeler Engineering and Beth Doyle from Dutchess County Planning and it was their recommendation they go with the sidewalks only and not with St. Margaret’s at this time due to reasons described in his letter. The grant application has been submitted.

SHARED SERVICES GRANT

Councilman Ramsey announced another shared service grant available that is due in early December. He will apply for a grant for recreation field infrastructure at the proposed new recreation park and is hoping to work with the Red Hook School District. Councilman Ramsey is waiting to hear from our engineers. He asked for the Board’s approval to continue pursuing the grant.

On a motion of Councilman Ramsey, seconded for Councilwoman Crane, move to have Councilman Ramsey pursue the grant.

Adopted Ayes 4 Ross, Crane, Ramsey, Pullaro
 Nays 0
 Absent 1 Blum Bump

Attorney Chale explained that the Planning Board approved the parcel, and will ideally close on the property by the end of the year.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Deputy Supervisor O’Neill asked for a motion to go into Executive Session regarding the Assessors position.

On a motion of Councilwoman Pullaro, seconded by Councilwoman Crane, move to go to Executive Session at 10:40 p.m. to discuss employment of an assessor.

Adopted Ayes 4 Ross, Crane, Ramsey, Pullaro
 Nays 0
 Absent 1 Blum Bump

On a motion of Councilwoman Pullaro, seconded by Councilwoman Crane, move to close the Executive Session at 11:20 p.m.

Adopted Ayes 4 Ross, Crane, Ramsey, Pullaro
 Nays 0
 Absent 1 Blum Bump

The Board discussed meeting dates. Councilman Ross will be away from October 24th – 28th. The budget meeting had tentatively been scheduled for October 23.

On a motion of Councilwoman Crane, seconded by Councilman Ross, moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:32 p.m.

Adopted Ayes 4 Ross, Crane, Ramsey, Pullaro
 Nays 0
 Absent 1 Blum Bump

Respectfully submitted, Sue McCann Town Clerk