

Minutes of May 19, 2008 Town Board Meeting, held at the Germantown Town Hall, Germantown, NY, commencing at 7:00pm

Present: Supervisor Roy Brown
Councilwoman Joan Snyder
Councilwoman Graceann Lamberta
Councilman Joel Craig
Councilman Jeremy Smith
Town Lawyer, Jason Shaw

Recorded by: Town Clerk, Charlene Diehl

Supervisor Brown opened the meeting and led the Pledge to the Flag.

Motion to approve the previous month's minutes after verbal corrections by Councilman Smith are incorporated made by Councilwoman Smith and seconded by Councilwoman Lamberta, with all in favor and none opposed.

Motion to pay audited bills from the abstract was made by Councilwoman Lamberta, and seconded by Councilman Smith.

Supervisor Brown: Aye Councilwoman Snyder: Aye
Councilman Craig: Aye

The Clerk notified the board there were no written communications for the month.

In response to an inquiry about the status of the Catskill Mayor's Office seeking to get the board's approval for the naming of an island off to the west of Germantown to be called Bush Island, Supervisor Brown said he is working on a response.

Department Updates

Highway:

- the new loader is in and heavy road work has been started;
- culvert work has been done on Camp Creek Road;
- cutting shoulder in back of the school;
- roadside mowing has begun

Sewer:

- work is being done on Pump Station #2;
- preventative maintenance continues i.e. blowers, generators, UV lights;
- average gallons per day: 31,738

Maintenance:

- working on building office in Highway garage which will be handicapped accessible

Police Department:

- 227 hours were logged in for the month of April

Park Commission:

Mike George said that the yard sale went well and thanked all the volunteers. The next meeting is June 2nd at 7:00pm at the Activities Building. Facilities Development meeting will be held on Saturday with the purpose of creating a 5 and 10 year plan to improve the parks.

Mr. George also stated that Bill Foster had approached him about a pilot program sponsored by the Sheriff's Department to have low-offender, non-violent inmates to do a work release program at the Park. There would be 2 to 3 trustees with guards supervising them to help maintain the parks. They would not be working around any children and would only work when the town indicated they needed it. Supervisor Brown said he would follow up with Mr. Foster to get more information about the program before the board makes a decision.

Mr. George would like the board to be prepared to finalize when to replace the snack bar at the next board meeting. The barbeques for the parks are in, and Mike has some lifeguards he would like the board to meet.

Volunteers are needed, especially to help with parking, for the July 4th celebration being held June 28th. Please contact the Town Hall if you're interested in volunteering.

Economic Development Committee - Harold Einhorn who owns the building at the corner of Main and Maple, in coordination with Columbia County on the Arts, has agreed to turn the space into an art space and gallery. The property is still for rent, and Supervisor Brown said the committee had been thinking of ways to give a nominal fee to Mr. Einhorn to cover costs while the gallery is allowed to be housed there.

Corrine Curry, said there has also been some interest expressed in Central Market but there is nothing specific the committee can report on yet. There is a public forum for Economic Development being held on June 19th at 7:00pm at the Activities Building.

Motion was made for the town to take ownership of its municipal signs, once the maintenance and ownership issues around the signs have been clarified with the state, and maintain said signs

Old Business

Councilman Craig said that a moratorium had been proposed but nothing further has been done and they will consider re-visiting the issue once the Re-Zoning Committee has some professional help on board.

The Town Junk Law is with the Economic Development Committee now - they are looking to integrate ideas and will report back as needed.

Nothing is being done about the release of the Policy Department Policy Manual as of today; the matter is under investigation and once that is concluded the board will have a better idea of how to proceed.

Resolution #30 - Naming the Town of Germantown an Official Explore NY 400 Community in the celebrations commemorating the 400th Anniversary of the Voyages of Henry Hudson and Samuel deChamplain

Upon recommendation to the Germantown Town Board on this day, April 21, 2008, Germantown, New York, it has been determined that it is in the interests of its citizens to become an Official Explore NY 400 Community in the celebrations commemorating the 400th anniversary of the voyages of Henry Hudson and Samuel deChamplain along the river and lake that bear their names.

Whereas, the celebrations are being held under the auspices of the Hudson, Lake Champlain and Fulton Quadricentennial Commission, whose charge under New York State legislation is to engage the public as well as civic, educational, environmental, cultural and heritage organizations to develop and support related plans and activities including creation of infrastructure benefiting future generations; and

Whereas, the Explore NY 400 Community Program enlists municipalities and community groups, who when they sign on as partners, share the logo and promote the Quadricentennial in their communities; and

Whereas, in return, they are listed in the Commissioner's published materials and on its website; and as a partners, the community may also become eligible for funding for projects, events or programs that help achieve the Commissioner's missions and objectives; and

Whereas, the Town Board further authorizes the establishment of an Explore NY 400 Planning Committee to explore the types of projects, events, programs best suited to reflect Germantown's history, culture and/or natural resources;

Now, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Germantown Town Board does hereby approve the Explore NY 400 Planning Committee to use the Explore NY 400 logo, link to the Explore NY website, and may be eligible for either State or Federal grant money to assist in Quadricentennial planning and events; and be it further

Resolved, that the Germantown Town Board supports the mission of the Hudson-Fulton Champlain Quadricentennial Commission and requests designation as an Explore NY 400 Community; and be it further

Resolved, that certified copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Columbia County Tourism Department, Columbia County Historical Society, and Explore NY 400 Quadricentennial Commission.

400th Anniversary - resolution sponsored by Councilman Smith and seconded by Councilman Craig.

Supervisor Brown: Aye Councilwoman Lamberta: Aye
Councilwoman Snyder: Aye

Supervisor Brown will look into how many communities are participating in the 400 event.

He has also charged the town attorney to review the Code of Ethics recommendations.

Development in the Arts - Councilmen Craig and Smith realize the large arts population in Germantown and want to encourage them to be recognized, with a possible incorporation into the town centennial. They hope to have a forum in the next couple of months.

Councilman Smith said he'd like to make relevant correspondence to the town available for all board members. Supervisor Brown said he would put the information into a binder for the council members to review in the Council Member's office. Councilman Smith made a motion, which was seconded by Councilwoman Snyder.

Supervisor Brown: Aye Councilwoman Lamberta: Aye
Councilman Craig: Aye

Supervisor's Report

Supervisor Brown met with some members of the Germantown Reformed Church about an idea to bring an assisted living facility to Germantown. He also visited the Good Shepard's Assisted Living facility in Saratoga, NY and learned a lot from the visit. He would like to have the support of the board in moving forward with his inquiries and investigation with the members of the Reformed Church into the project, and that he would like to work with the town economic development committee in the near future if this project has merit.

Motion for the board's support for Supervisor Brown to continue looking into the matter of an assisted living facility made by Councilwoman Lamberta, with a second by Councilman Smith.

Supervisor Brown: Aye Councilwoman Snyder: Aye
Councilman Craig: Aye

Supervisor Brown has been working with Austin on the Municipal Parking Lot and the Martha Lorenz Van Allen Memory Tree project, and has met with a couple of local sign vendors and discussed the longevity of the vinyl letters on board versus an engraved sign, with the consensus being the engraved sign would outlive the vinyl lettered sign by a 4 to 1 margin.

Motion to approve the Martha Lorenz Van Allen Memory Tree project with an engraved sign, as proposed by Austin Sullivan in February, made by Councilwoman Snyder and seconded by Councilwoman Lamberta.

Supervisor Brown: Aye Councilman Craig: Aye
Councilman Smith: Aye

Open meeting on Assessments and Real Property taxes at the Activity Building on Saturday, April 26th from 9:00-12:00 and all are welcome.

Sidewalk Project - contract was signed between the town and the Department of Transportation, preliminary design work will be underway shortly and the next meeting is April 30th at 9:00am.

Supervisor Brown said a new Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP) request for funding application was just received. This is the same program under which the funds for the current sidewalk project were received - application deadline is June 15th.

Park Summer Camp applications are in the Town Hall and will be going out with the schoolchildren, as well as being available on the web site.

Supervisor Brown, Councilman Craig and Bruce Bohnsack met with the PACE University folks who advised them that with proposed zoning changes the town should adopt new zoning along with the Comprehensive Plan - they should be adopted at the same time.

Open to the Public

The Cub Master for the Germantown Cub Scouts thanked everyone for their support at the Pancake breakfast and mentioned that the kids enjoyed working on the town clean up.

Ellen Epstein verified with Supervisor Brown that the sidewalk project will encompass the new library.

Mark Scherzer spoke about the release of the draft Police portion of the Policy Manual and said that drafts do have to be disclosed; the town should provide training in civil liberties and would like to know the public process and who are the authorities investigating the release of the manual. He was informed that was a Personnel issue and won't be discussed, as per the town attorney.

Arthur Schiff wanted to know why the Police manual would be redone. He stated that the Cincinnati Police manual is on the web as well as other manuals so it's not unusual to have such information on there. He also said that he read that when a town supervisor isn't present to chair a board meeting that the board members select a temporary chairperson.

Patricia Eller thinks the Germantown website is wonderful and would like to see local businesses posted on the site so folks can support local businesses, to which Supervisor Brown said work is being done on that.

Michael George said he thinks only the Town Board, Ethics Commission and Police Department should have knowledge of police procedures.

Councilman Craig said there was nothing in the document that addresses confidentiality and the attorney had said it was FOIL-able and that in the future documents should be marked accordingly so there is no confusion.

Kay Abraham thinks the concern expressed over the Police policy manual is unwarranted as the motivation was to have the public's review and if a workshop meeting had been scheduled the issue would have been satisfied. She said there's no information in the document that puts police officers in jeopardy and thinks nothing in there is of a confidential nature. She'd like a workshop to work through any controversial issues.

Councilwoman Snyder read a portion of town law pertaining to the Deputy Supervisor and their ability to preside over meetings in absence of the Supervisor, with all the powers and duties given to the Supervisor under town law. She reiterated the way the voting at a previous meeting had gone and that if an issue is voted down (no vote) that means you're not supposed to release related information. She doesn't feel that the public has a right to any input on the Police manual, as there are police officers and the safety committee providing their knowledge.

Martin Overrington mentioned the upcoming River Sweep, a 4-mile hike that starts Saturday at 9:00, with the Highway crew assisting. He said this year's plan is to have folks start at the south and north ends and work towards the middle.

Betty Ahrens wanted to know if the public could come in and review the bills. Supervisor Brown said no - let us know what information you're looking for and we'll provide it.

Sherry McGregor inquired about the hay wagon rides the town previously had and why they stopped. She was referred to the Parks Commission, at which point Michael George said they are working with the PTSA on a Halloween event to bring them back.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Councilwoman Lamberta and seconded by Councilman Smith, with all in agreement and none opposed.

Next town board meeting is Monday, June 16th at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,