

Minutes of January 14, 2009 Germantown 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 December town board meeting minutes, end-of-year meeting minutes and 2010 Re-Organizational Meeting minutes made by Councilwoman Snyder and seconded by Councilman Smith, with all in favor and none opposed.

Motion to approval paying audited bills made by Councilman Craig and seconded by Councilwoman Lamberta.

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| Supervisor Brown: | Aye | Councilwoman Snyder: | Aye |
| Councilman Smith: | Aye | | |

Motion to pay budget transfers to pay for outstanding December 2009 bills made by Councilwoman Lamberta and seconded by Councilwoman Snyder.

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|------------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| Supervisor Brown: | Aye | Councilwoman Snyder: | Aye |
| Councilwoman Lamberta: | Aye | Councilman Craig: | Aye |
| Councilman Smith: | Aye | | |

Councilwoman Snyder reminded the board that budget transfers should be made before approving the audited bills.

Communication - Town Clerk (letters available at the Clerk's Office)

- Letter of thanks from the family of Paul J. Kellner for flowers the board sent in sympathy.
- Letter from Lee Rekow regarding the Highway Department, Supervisor Brown and the recent election.
- letter from Phyllis Taddeo, a Census Recruiting Assistant, announcing upcoming testing for Census jobs to be held at the Paul J. Kellner Youth & Activity Building.
- Complete Count Committee for the Census has been formed with Donna Diehl, Robert Beaury, Graceann Lamberta and Joan Snyder.
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Department Updates

Highway Department – nothing to report

Sewer - reported by George Sharpe Jr.

- average daily flow is approximately 25,000 gallons;
- 121 calls received in 2009 pertaining to Dig Safely New York (call before you dig program);
- everything running the way it should be, even with the recent heavy rains.

Parks & Maintenance - reported by Anthony Cidras

- all wooden-top picnic tables replaced;
- ultra-violet and quart sleeves and filters in the Town Hall and Activity Building are done;
- new toilets for the Activity Building have been received;
- two service calls to Main Care were made for the Highway Department;

- lake was open for skating, but was closed again due to the warmer conditions; it will reopen when colder temperatures return and the lake is safe for skating.

Supervisor Brown asked if Anthony had noticed anyone using the lake for skating and he has.

Councilman Craig asked if there were means of communication other than the flag to alert folks that the lake is ok for skating and Mr. Cidras said not at this point. Supervisor Brown said maybe something could be put on the Community Channel and web site about when the green flag is out the lake is ok for skating.

Police Department – reported by Roger Rekow

220 hours of patrol time was logged in for the month of December, and 2,772 hours were logged for 2009.

Councilman Craig relayed a revealing statistic he had learned – that in 2009 Germantown answered the most domestic-related calls from all small town police departments in the county. He gives credit where credit is due and kudos to the police department.

Supervisor Brown asked that those who will have Committee Report updates for town board meetings to let Austin know at least 5 days before the town board meeting if there is a report to be given.

Park Commission – nothing to report

Economic Development – reported by Corinne Curry

Art Space opened recently, with the show Friends of the Hudson Valley, featuring four photographers and four painters. The gallery is open Fridays 4-7pm, Saturdays 10-4pm and Sundays 10-3pm. Ms. Curry thanked Roberta Griffen and Graceann Lamberta for their assistance with the reception.

Supervisor Brown said he had received a complaint about parking around the gallery and will work on resolving the issue of notifying patrons where to park.

Councilman Smith recommended that all Germantown Central students attend the show at Art Space.

400/300 Anniversary – reported by Jeremy Smith

- best wishes on behalf of the town board for a full and speedy recovering for Dorothy Montague, the first inspiration for the 300 committee;
- three press mentions - Hudson River Sampler, Register Star and Kingston Freeman;
- Dick Montague is putting together a packet that will cover the celebrations from the perspective of both sides of the river;
- there is a press plan for every month leading up to full coverage in September. If you want to know more, contact Nadine Rumke, myself or Nan Eliot who is the committee's press liaison person.
- doing very well on fund-raising but always need more. Local businesses are to be contacted very shortly for a contribution.
- thanks in particular to the Taconic Foundation for a generous contribution.
- Nadine and myself are meeting Annie Cooper, the Director of Columbia County Tourism hopefully at the end of this week;
- special thanks to Gtel and Bruce Bohnsack for their offer to put up the banners on Main St. and Palatine Park Rd.
- the banners are expected to be up by the end of March/beginning of April. This will be tangible evidence to our residents that we have celebrations planned.

- Plans are for a pamphlet, but we are looking for funds to be able to distribute the pamphlet to all residents in three local communities.
- There is a seminar planned and Philip Otterness has agreed to join the panel at the seminar, and I cannot envision a more knowledgeable panel of people who know about the Palatines: Hank Jones, the leading Palatine genealogist; David Jay Webber, our own local Palatine historian, and now Philip Otterness who has published “Becoming German”, a wonderful description of the complete emigration from Germany to America of the Palatines.
- there were arrangements for a mural at the end of the salt shed, but there may be an issue of insurance for GCS students to participate in the creation, as the town may not be able to cover the insurance. He is looking to the GCS student body to come up with designs for the mural, and is pleased that everybody at the school is enthusiastically involved in the 300th celebrations.
- the 300th committee will have a booth at the July 4th celebration where we will be selling lots of high-class products as both souvenirs of the celebration and as a fund raiser. We expect everybody in town to be wearing 300 garments for the rest of the summer and especially at town board meetings, including town lawyer Jason.
- next meeting is February 23 at 6:30pm at the Town Hall and all are welcome.

ReZoning Committee – reported by Joel Craig

- met on January 11th to go over site plan review and special permits;
- meeting on February 13th at 9am - trying to get something together with the intent to present something to the board in the spring;
- Joel and the committee want to distribute the draft minutes from the Zoning and Planning board meetings to the committee to keep them in the loop of any decisions being made.

New Business

Board Intern Update – presentations available in Clerk’s office

The town board student interns gave presentations on projects they had been assigned by their town board mentors.

Sales Tax Revenue Survey – Justin Pratt

The survey reported on residents’ awareness of the fact if products/services are bought in Columbia County that a portion of the sales tax returns to the towns in Columbia County.

Supervisor Brown remarked when people realize shopping local brings money back to the county that’s a good thing.

Councilman Smith suggested that Mr. Pratt write something about his survey for the Register Star to publish.

Germantown Parks – Why Residents Are or Aren’t Using Them – Max Kelly and Heidi Cameron

The survey was taken from students in grades 5-12 and reported on why they do or don’t use the park. Older playground equipment, unclear water in the pond and bathroom conditions at the ball field were among concerns listed.

Councilwoman Lamberta suggested Max and Heidi share the information from their survey with the new Parks Commissioner.

Councilwoman Snyder agreed that the playground should be revamped.

Town Consolidation of the towns of Germantown, Livingston and Clermont –

Jonathan Diehl and Melissa Fuchs

This survey reported on potential consolidation of services and residents' reactions on the possibility.

Councilman Smith appreciates the work done on this project and it is an interesting prospect to consider.

Germantown Town Budget 2010 – Taylor Race and LeeAnn Hejnal

This survey reported on the services included in Germantown's budget versus those of Hyde Park and Kinderhook, and the percentage of department appropriations from those budgets.

Councilwoman Lamberta thanked the students for their tedious work on completing the surveys.

The board thanked the students and Mr. Beaury for their participation in the projects.

Supervisor Brown informed the audience that there were two public hearings prior to the board meeting regarding proposed local laws for Senior Citizens and Disabled and Low Income Citizen Real Property Tax Exemptions.

Motion to approve Local Law #1 – Establishing Income Levels for Disabled and Low Income Citizens Real Property Tax Exemption made by Councilwoman Snyder and seconded by Councilman Smith.

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| Supervisor Brown: | Aye | Councilwoman Lamberta: | Aye |
| Councilwoman Snyder: | Aye | Councilman Craig: | Aye |
| Councilman Smith: | Aye | | |

Motion to approve Local Law #2 – Establishing Income Levels for Senior Citizen Real Property Tax Exemption made by Councilwoman Lamberta and seconded by Councilman Craig.

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|----------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| Supervisor Brown: | Aye | Councilwoman Lamberta: | Aye |
| Councilwoman Snyder: | Aye | Councilman Craig: | Aye |
| Councilman Smith: | Aye | | |

Supervisor Brown said that the town would like to go forward with a town-wide Assessment Re-Valuation for 2010 and asked the clerk to read the resolution.

Resolution #28 – Reassessment and Reassessment Aid for Town Wide Re-Valuation for 2010

BE IT RESOLVED, that the town board of the Town of Germantown authorizes the Town's participation in the 2011 Reassessment and Reassessment Aid Program administered by New York State Office of Real Property Services. This program is designated to ensure assessment equity and maintenance of 100% equalization rate. Continued compliance with this guideline will result in continuation of awards from the New York State Office of Real Property Services.

Supervisor Brown said adopting this resolution will allow the town to work with the Office of Real Property in bringing someone in to do data collection, and there will be monthly meetings with the agency during the process. The individual who will be doing the data collection will verify and update existing data. Letters will go out to the residents of the town regarding the process.

Councilman Smith asked what the effect will be, i.e. are we using the state's recommendation. Supervisor Brown said the town will be using a person in conjunction with Ralph, with the ultimate result being significant savings.

Motion to approve the resolution for reassessment and reassessment aid for the town, and to move forward with the town-wide re-valuation for 2011 for a 100% equalization made by Councilwoman Lamberta, with a second by Councilman Smith.

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|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| Supervisor Brown: | Aye | Councilwoman Lamberta: | Aye |
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Councilwoman Snyder: Aye Councilman Craig: Aye
Councilman Smith: Aye

The following 2010 Committee Appointments are recommended for approval:

- Economic Development Committee Chairperson – Corrine Curry
- Independence Day Celebration Chairperson – Austin Sullivan
- Public Works & Highway – Joan Snyder and Graceann Lamberta
- Buildings & Facilities – Graceann Lamberta and Roy Brown
- Zoning, Legal, Police & Emergency Preparedness – Joel Craig and Graceann Lamberta;
- Re-Zoning Chairperson – Joel Craig
- Parks & Recreation – Joel Craig and Jerry Smith
- Park Commission Chairperson – Tim Otty
- Town Planning & History – Jerry Smith and Roy Brown
- Germantown 300th Sub-Committee Co-Chairs – Jerry Smith and Nadine Rumke
- Budget & Salary – Roy Brown and Joan Snyder
- Town Clerk & Tax Collector – Roy Brown and Graceann Lamberta

Motion to approve Committee appointment as listed made by Councilwoman Snyder and seconded by Councilwoman Lamberta:

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

Councilwoman Lamberta brought attention to a box on the table in front of the board and indicated it was a collection for relief for Haiti. There is wonderful work being done to help the people of Haiti, especially the organization Doctors Without Borders, and the town board would like to donate the money collected to that charity.

Supervisor Brown said it's a great idea.

Councilman Craig reported on an article he had read in the Association of Towns publication on using social networking to communicate with town residents. He indicated his willingness to assist in getting the word out about meetings and things the town is doing if they want to set up on Facebook or Twitter, and will work with Austin on setting it up.

Supervisor's Reports

- There is a meeting on February 8th for a public town board workshop for the board and residents to get together and talk about issues facing the town, and allow residents to express their opinions on town and county business;
- Thanks to Michael George for serving as Parks chairperson. Tim Otty is the new chair and has met with the supervisor and Austin. Mr. Otty will be at the Town Hall every Thursday from 12-4pm to talk with folks and discuss the future of the park. The web site will have this information posted as well, and there is an e-mail address of GermantownParks@gmail.com for those interesting in communicating ideas electronically. The town is reaching out to any and all volunteers to come forward.

Open to Public

Kay Abraham thanked the board for setting up the workshop, which will provide an opportunity for residents to discuss things. She also said at the last Park Commission meeting there was discussion about the structure of the commission and that it is more of a committee as there are no by-laws or structure that sets it as a commission. Supervisor Brown said that Tim Otty is willing to move forward with changing it back to a committee.

Councilman Smith said that he and Councilman Craig are on the Subcommittee so they should be advised of anything going on regarding this issue.

Martin Overrington confirmed with the board that there are appropriations in the budget for the assessment re-valuation of property taxes and will he get a copy of the rules surrounding the re-valuation.

Supervisor Brown said letters will be going out and public hearings will be held as well regarding the assessment re-valuation.

Mr. Overrington asked about the sewer and reminded everyone the folks in the sewer district are working to keep the town clean. Supervisor Brown said the board is still working on the review of houses with runoff water potentially running into the sewer.

Mr. Overrington asked about the solar panels that were recommended during an audit and Supervisor Brown said he is waiting for NYSERDA and the funding.

Supervisor Brown responded to Mr. Overrington's request on the status of the sidewalks that the town is at the mercy of the state, which is where the request is now.

David Gifford requested the town board formulate next year's budget centered around what people are paying. He indicated the tax rate indicated on the budget is different from what is on the tax bill.

Brian DuBois said the town has a great park here and even though lots of branches and broken trees were cleaned out in the fall he has noticed a lot of trees are being cut down.

Supervisor Brown said that nobody has permission to cut any trees from the park and if he sees or hears of anyone cutting them down he will look into it and have it stopped.

The next town board meeting is February 22nd at 7:00pm.

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Councilwoman Lamberta and seconded by Councilman Craig, with all in favor and none opposed.

Respectfully submitted,