

MINUTES BOOKTOWN OF COEYMANS
February 11, 2016 – Public Hearing – 6:30pm**

A Public Hearing was held Thursday, February 11, 2016, at 6:30pm at Town Hall, 18 Russell Avenue, Ravena, New York

PRESENT: Philip A. Crandall, Supervisor
Thomas E. Dolan, Councilman
George E. Langdon, Councilman
Kenneth A. Burns, Councilman
James Youmans, Councilman

ALSO PRESENT: Diane L. Millious, Town Clerk
John Cashin, Building Inspector, Code Enforcement Officer

Supervisor Crandall opened the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance, Councilman Burns offered a prayer.

OPENING COMMENT

Supervisor Crandall stated that the record should reflect that there is a full Town Board in addition to Town Clerk Millious and Building Inspector, CEO Cashin.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Supervisor Crandall asked that Town Clerk Millious read the Notice of Public Hearing into the record.

Town Clerk Millious continued by reading the following:

**NOTICE
TOWN OF COEYMANS TOWN BOARD
PUBLIC HEARING**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, that a Public Hearing will be held by the Town Board of Town of Coeymans, on Thursday, February 11, 2016 at 6:30PM at Town of Coeymans, Town Hall, 18 Russell Ave., Ravena, NY on Proposed Local Law #1 of 2016 as follows:

PROPOSED LOCAL LAW #1 FOR 2016

**A LOCAL LAW INCREASING PLANNING BOARD MEMBERSHIP
FROM FIVE TO SEVEN MEMBERS**

BE IT ENACTED BY THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF COEYMANS AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Purpose; Authority: The Town Board has determined that it would be beneficial for the Planning Board to have seven members rather than five members, and an increase in the membership of the Planning Board is specifically authorized under New York Town Law. This Local Law is adopted pursuant to Town Law §271(6) and Municipal Home Rule Law §10.

Section 2. Increase in Planning Board Membership. The membership of the Town of Coeymans Planning Board is hereby increased from five (5) members to seven (7) members. The additional members shall be appointed by Resolution of the Town Board. The initial term of one new member shall be six (6) years and the initial term of the second new member shall be seven (7) years, so that the terms of all Planning Board members expire at the end of seven successive calendar years. The new members shall not take part in the consideration of any matter for which an application was on file with the Planning Board at the time of his or her appointment.

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Section 3. Term of Office. Except as set forth in Section 2 above, the term of all members hereafter appointed to the Planning Board, shall be seven (7) years.

Section 4. Repealer; Supersession. All Local Laws or Ordinances or arts of Local Laws or Ordinances in conflict with any part of this Local Law are hereby repealed. In particular, the portion of the Local Law or Ordinance originally creating the Planning Board which specified that the Planning Board would consist of five (5) members is superseded by this Local Law.

Section 5. Severability. If any part of this Local Law shall be declared invalid by a Court of competent jurisdiction, such declaration shall not affect or impair in any way any other provision and all other provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 6. Effective Date. This Local Law shall take effect upon filing in the office of the New York Secretary of State as provided in §27 of the Municipal Home Rule Law.

**By Order of the Town Board
of the Town of Coeymans
Diane L. Millious
Town Clerk**

COMMENTS

Supervisor Crandall stated that he would entertain comments on the Proposed Local Law.

Mr. Ernest Quinto stated that he is the Chairman of the Town of Coeymans Planning Board, when he was appointed to the Board there were seven members and because of the experience and knowledge of those seven members, it worked quite well. He continued by saying that Mr. Foronda who was the Chairman retired, Ms. Kunz, the Co-Chair resigned, Mr. Kapusta and Mr. Brown unfortunately passed away and the Board was decimated and he was concerned that they were going to go to five members because they lost so much experience on the Board. He added that once they formed the new Board, which consists of Vice-Chair Michael Beachler, a longtime resident of the Town and a longtime member of Coeymans Hollow Fire Department, Mr. David Ross who is a resident of the Hamlet and on the original Board when he was appointed as well as being the Vice-President of the Historical Society in addition to having two very prominent and progressive business men on the Board, Mr. Nolan of Nolan Propane and Mr. Collins of Collings & Son Fuel as well as himself, a taxpayer and private citizen. He went on by saying that he is very pleased that the Board, even as young as it is, has done such good work and are pretty much in unison in terms of their main goal, which is for the benefit of the Town, they like to see new business coming in and like to do whatever they can to help private citizens with whatever their needs are. He concluded by saying that at this particular point he does not see the need to add two more members, basically because of how well the Board is working at this point and it is his understanding that there are not many Planning Boards left in the area that has seven members and he believes that it is standard to have five.

Supervisor Crandall asked if anyone else wished to speak.

Ms. Sylvia Lawler stated that she believed Mr. Quinto contradicted himself because he said when they had seven members and four were gone they were decimated and then asked what would happen if they had five and four were gone. She continued by saying that she thinks that contrary to what Mr. Quinto said, the County likes to see nine members seated on a Planning Board and there are so many things that a Planning Board needs to do to help its Town Board and seven is what they consider standard and she was very much surprised that they had a Planning Board of five members. She added that certainly for the reasons that Mr. Quinto stated

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such as if someone gets sick, resigns or retires, the benefit of having seven people on your Board would be that those with experience can help the newcomers along as well as thinking that when you have businessmen on the Planning Board, you occasionally have a member who for one reason or another has to recuse himself from a vote so there would be fewer members able to make a decision. She concluded by saying that she thinks there are lots of reasons to commend a larger number and she would like to see the number of members go to seven and possibly eventually nine.

Supervisor Crandall asked if anyone else wished to comment.

Ms. Joann Segal stated that she lives in the Hamlet and thinks that if you have more members, you have more diversity, there are no women on the Board and with no offense to anyone a few younger people would be good to train for the future or young families, something different from what the Board is composed of now. She concluded by saying that this way there will be people trained by those who have all the experience and they could pass on their experience which she thinks would be a good thing.

Supervisor Crandall asked if anyone else wished to comment.

Mr. Ernest Quinto stated that he agrees with Joann in that it would be nice to have a woman on the Board and someone younger but in his years of experience sitting where the Supervisor is sitting now; during the Planning Board Meetings they hardly ever see any young women, men or younger generation people at the meetings. He reiterated that he would agree that it would be nice but it is very difficult to get younger people interested in what's going on in the Town and he thinks part of it is reflected in the fact that they had 1/3 of the eligible voters that actually voted this past year. He concluded by saying that it was fantastic having Ms. Kunz on the Board because she always gave them a woman's point of view but he doesn't see a lot of interest from women or a lot of interest from young people as far as the Board's concerned.

Councilman Youmans interjected that Mr. Collins is on the Board and he is younger than he is and asked that they not paint the Board as aged.

Supervisor Crandall asked if there were any other comments.

Councilman Burns stated that he personally thinks that the people who are on that Board right now work well together, they like-minded and he remembers when they knocked it down to five members that they checked and there were a lot of towns in the area that only have five Board Members and said it worked very well. He added that with new businesses coming in, sometimes when you get too many people on the Board things get dragged out and they have to wait three to four months for a decision on their business and reiterated that with the five members now, they seem to work quicker and come up with decisions for businesses faster so he would like to keep it at five members.

Councilman Dolan interjected that he wanted to add that the proposal is in no way a reflection or commentary on the present Board, it has nothing to do with that and for the record they will not be voting on it later at the Town Board Meeting. He concluded by saying that they will discuss it again at their Workshop Meeting and if they plan to take it up, the earliest will be the fourth Thursday of the month on February 25th.

Ms. Sylvia Lawler stated that it is wonderful when a Board comes to a like-mind on an issue but she is not sure that like-minded people make the best Board, she thinks it is better when there is discussion, different points of view and as Joann pointed out diversity because when you are like-minded things just move right along. She concluded by saying that the advantage of adding a couple of people is that you would get diversity but also you might be able to divide some of the tasks so things are not impeded and you might get a better cross section of the population.

Supervisor Crandall asked if there were any other comments.

Councilman Langdon stated that the only thing that he would add to that is more heads isn't always better, he understands that it can bring some new ideas, which isn't a bad thing. He added

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that he is assuming that they are still under a spending freeze and they are supposed to be watchful of what they are spending so two more members would add to the cost and if adding more people is the answer, why don't they have seven Town Board members.

Councilman Youmans interjected that it is statutory as far as how many people sit on the Town Board, there are towns within the state that have seven members on their Board because they are towns of the first class, the Town of Coeymans is a town of the second class according to the classification and it is laid out that they have five people on the Board.

Supervisor Crandall asked if there were any more comments.

Ms. Barbara Tanner stated that the Proposed Law states that the Town Board has determined that it would be beneficial and then asked why those in favor of seven members want that as opposed to having five members.

Councilman Burns interjected that he didn't know why.

Supervisor Crandall stated that he is still making up his mind and wants to hear public comment.

Councilman Youmans stated that he is of the belief that as Ms. Lawler said, with five members, what if someone is sick and those types of situations occur as well as thinking more diversity on that particular Board is better.

Councilman Langdon interjected that there is an alternate and she is a woman.

Ms. Tanner stated that it would be like the Town Board, if two members are sick they would have to postpone the meeting.

Councilman Burns stated that it takes three to have a meeting.

Councilman Youmans stated that he thinks it is the same with the Planning Board, you need a quorum and the Planning Board does things entirely different from the Town Board. He added that he got a frantic call from a Town resident about an issue they had before the Planning Board, they didn't know that they needed to be at the meeting for the Planning Board to consider it so it got tabled and in that case, time was of the essence and he gives kudos to the Planning Board because they had a special meeting to accommodate the business owner to get the problem straightened out. He concluded by saying that his point is that time is of the essence when someone is waiting to get something approved so they can build, expand or do that type of thing and he is of the belief that more is better.

Ms. Tanner stated that if there were more, there would be diversity so it would take longer to settle something.

Councilman Youmans stated that in going back to Sylvia's comment about being like-minded, he doesn't necessarily think that they want five people who all think exactly the same and rubber stamp everything anyway.

Ms. Tanner stated that she doesn't think that is true.

Councilman Youmans stated that he's not saying that it is but what he is saying is that more debate, thoughts and ideas are a better thing in his opinion.

Councilman Burns stated that he brought up the comment of like-minded and then asked Mr. Quinto if they have run into problems with people not being able to make it to a meeting and whether or not it is a big issue.

Mr. Quinto stated that it hadn't been a big issue and occasionally they have one member absent but have yet to convene a meeting since they have had five members that they didn't have a quorum and most of the time there are five members present. He continued by saying that he wanted to make a comment on diversity and added that one of the things that he was hearing when they had seven members was that basically everyone had the same opinion and with that many they were like-minded. He went on by saying that maybe it was because those people were

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together for so many years but it seem as though once you get some experience under your belt and start learning how the town works, everyone has the opinion that they should do whatever they have to do to make the Town better and better for the citizens. He continued by saying that he can't remember one time in all of his experience on the Board, that any of the members got in an argument about anything, they had different opinions and there were some times when a couple of the members voted no instead of yes. He added by saying that diversity is good but he would hate to see it get to the point where they got positives and negatives that never get together because it would destroy the function of the Board and you have to have a certain amount of like-mindedness in order to make it work because if they all have a different opinion and are going to fight about it, nothing is going to happen. He went on by saying that the Planning Board does things a little different from the Town Board and if someone comes in for a sub-division, to start a new business or whatever the reason may be, if they don't have all their ducks in a row that month, they have to come back the next month and hopefully they have everything the second time but it has been his experience that he has seen people come back 3-4 times because they didn't have the right things even though they told them so it is put off another month. He concluded by saying that it is very important work, the Planning Board as well as those coming before them need to be on the same page.

Ms. Segal suggested that they possible do it on a trial basis to see how seven people would work together and then asked if it is something that is set in stone.

Councilman Dolan stated that nothing is set in stone.

Supervisor Crandall asked if there were any other comments, hearing none he asked for a motion to close the Public Hearing.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

On motion of Councilman Youmans, seconded by Councilman Dolan, the Public Hearing was adjourned.

VOTE – AYES 5 – NAYS 0 – SO MOVED

Time – 6:53pm

Respectfully Submitted,

APPROVED –

Diane L. Millious, Town Clerk