

**MINUTES BOOK\*\*TOWN OF COEYMANS  
January 19, 2017 – Town Board Workshop – 6:00pm**

**A Town Board Workshop was held Thursday, January 19, 2017 at 6:00pm at Town Hall, 18 Russell Avenue, Ravena, New York**

**PRESENT:** Philip Crandall, Supervisor  
Thomas E. Dolan, Councilman  
George E. Langdon, Councilman  
James C. Youmans, Councilman

**ABSENT:** Kenneth C. Burns

**ALSO PRESENT:** Diane L. Millious, Town Clerk

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Supervisor Crandall opened the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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**OPENING COMMENT**

Supervisor Crandall stated that the record should reflect the presence of a full Town Board with the exception of Councilman Burns, also attending was Town Clerk Millious.

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**AGENDA**

- Conservation Advisory Council Presentation
- 86 Main Street Sewer Bill

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**PRESENTATION**

**Conservation Advisory Council**

Supervisor Crandall stated that the Conservation Advisory Council was present to give an update of what they have been doing.

Councilman Youmans stated that he wanted to thank the Advisory Council for taking this on and added that it is an important function that they are performing and he appreciates it.

Mr. Mike McGuire stated that they wanted to give an update as to what they have been working on since the establishment of the Conservation Advisory Council. Key points are as follows:

- Increased their membership from 4 to 6 members.
- To date they have been working on 3 main things, a Clean Energy Community Program, establishing a program with the library and an update on the NRI Natural Resources Report.

**Clean Energy Community Program**

- It is a NYSERDA funded program with the objective of providing grants, technical support and recognition to local governments that demonstrate guidance in areas of clean energy, which is done by completing 4 out of 10 high-impact activities that NYSERDA has identified, which will demonstrate that they will be a clean energy community.
- The CAC would like to initiate the Clean Energy Community Program with the Town of Coeymans and complete four of the ten high-impact items so the Town can be designated as a Clean Energy Community.
- If successful the Town would be eligible for grant funding, possibly up to \$100,000.00 and the funding is pretty loose for what they can use it for as long as it is for an environmental project.

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- They met with a representative from the Capital District Regional Planning Commission, Robin Reynolds who is the point person for this program in the area and helped them go through the manual and identify four of the potential ten high-impact activities that are pretty easy to go through.
- The Conservation Advisory Council wishes to initiate the program, spear-head it with Town Board approval and hopefully complete the program and in turn get some funding to use for a program or project down the road.
- This is not matched funding, it is outright funding so the Town does not have to come up with matching funds.

Mr. McGuire continued by outlining the high-impact actions that they have decided to look at.

- Benchmarking
- Solarizing
- Unified Solar Permit
- Energy Code Enforcement Training

Additional key points:

- There would be no cost to the Town to complete the high-impact actions.
- By adopting a Unified Solar Permit the Town would receive a one-time grant from NYSERDA in the amount of \$2,500.00 for adopting the Permit, which would help offset the cost of reviewing the permit and legal costs of implementing it.
- The Unified Solar Permit was developed by NYSERDA, working with different Solar Electric Contractors and mainly focuses on residential systems and caps out of the system at 25 kilowatts, anything larger than that would be commercial and go through the Town's permitting process.
- This is done through the Capital District Regional Planning Commission and if the Town were to get funding, Robin Reynolds would work with the CAS on the grant writing and would be the Town's liaison with NYSERDA, which will be free of charge.

Mr. McGuire stated that they would like to move forward and they need to get the Town Board behind them, hopefully assist them in any way that they can and provide them some guidance.

Ms. Barbara Heinzen suggested that Mr. McGuire go over the other high-impact actions and what they may be required to do.

Mr. McGuire continued as follows:

**Benchmarking** - It would require the Town to input their utility bills into a computer data base, which would identify peak usages in the buildings and compare the Town's buildings to like municipal buildings that are participating in the same program. It could compare the Town's Town Hall, based on age and size to other Town Halls within any jurisdiction involved with this program, which could tell them if they are more or less efficient than other Town Halls or help them identify areas where they could increase energy efficiency and drive down costs for usage and consumption. It would be across the board for all the different electrical usage, natural gas or oil usage within the Town. It has to be done annually, it is pretty straight forward and easy to do, Robin has done it with other municipalities and it has been successful. It would require the Town Board to pass a policy to track energy use in town buildings and report the energy use once a year.

**Solarize Program** – It is a program that would identify a supplier of solar electric systems for an area and in turn they would contract with one installer and they would be looking at a group-buy of solar for the Town of Coeymans and in turn people purchasing through the group-buy would get a discounted rate for their solar electric systems. A requirement would be that there are 2-3 people purchasing. There is a Solarize Albany Campaign that the Town would be able to piggyback onto. The \$2,500.00 grant could be used to install a vehicle electric charging station, DEC has funding for the installation of it and will provide up to \$5,000.00 and the \$2,500.00 grant could go toward helping to pay for the cost.

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**Unified Solar Permit** – Discussed earlier if they adopt the Permit, they get \$2,500.00 in funding from NYSERDA, which could possibly be used for another high-impact action or for whatever they might need it for.

**Energy Code Enforcement Training** – This would be a requirement for the Building Inspectors to participate in Code Training, which would be free of cost and in turn two projects would have to be completed, which would be an energy study at a building site location to complete the requirement. The implementation could take a couple of months depending on active Building Permits and what is going on within the Town.

Discussion ensued amongst the Town Board and the CAC relative to the Town's interest, having Robin attend a Town Board Meeting to give a presentation, the three tiers of funding, what the CAC needs the Town Board to do ie: resolutions, Benchmarking Policy, pass legislation for Unified Solar Permit, Electric Vehicle Charging Station cost, DEC's contribution of 80% plus \$2,500.00 for doing the Unified Solar Permit and it being a pay to charge station and arrange for the Energy Code Enforcement Training.

Programs at the Library - Mr. McGuire stated that they are also looking to establish programs at the Library, which would be a reoccurring program with different presenters, with topics ranging from garden to birds to local flora and fauna to geology or whatever is available to increase knowledge of the Conservation Advisory Council and conservation within the community and asked that Ms. Sylvia Lawler give additional information about the library.

Ms. Lawler continued by pointing out the following:

- She met with Librarian Judith Felston, she was very enthusiastic about it and there are a lot of time slots available.
- She reached out to Rich Guthrie about doing some kind of birding project.
- Mike spoke with people at the Cooperative Extension about doing something with the Master Gardeners Program.
- Dan sent her an e-mail about doing something with seeds.
- Most of the programs that attract people to the library are either Craft Programs or Children's Programs, they need to attract adults, and they want to get adults interested.
- There is some greenhouse space for native gardening.

Mr. McGuire stated that the last thing that they are working on is the Natural Resource Inventory, which is their big project and it will be a detailed description and location of natural resources within the town that have been identified by them and community members as being important, what the resources can be used for and why you would value them, which is supposed to be used in conjunction with Town planning, through the Comprehensive Plan, so the Planning and Zoning Boards can try to help them identify areas that they want to focus on for positive development and try to identify areas that they want to preserve as being naturally sensitive or unique within the Town.

Ms. Lawler and Ms. Heinzen continued by pointing out the following:

- The CAC has identified areas for each member to focus on and research so they can use the information to compile and develop an actual document.
- They are still in the initial stages of their planning and development.
- They have met with representatives from DEC to discuss the plan.
- Ingrid Heckle developed a Habitat Summary for the Town of Coeymans, which they will develop further.
- They also have a Shore Line Habitat Summary, which has to do with the Onesquethaw Water Shed Council and public fishing access.
- Maps are electronically available with different overlays that can be used for planning purposes.

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- Hopefully they will get some help from interns, which will be hired by DEC and would be available to work with different communities, which should be in place within a couple of months
- They have more data than they could ever need, they will have to sift through and organize information for the NRI.
- They CAC wants to have a Community Meeting to determine the scope of the NRI to determine how they want to use it, what is important to the Planning & Zoning Boards as well as what the Town needs.
- The CAC and Planning Board will have to keep in touch for the NRI to be successful.
- The NRI should be useful in helping the Boards make decisions.
- More community members are needed and welcomed.

Ms. Heinzen asked the Town Board if they had any guidance for them as to how they would like the NRI to be used or if there are any critical deadlines that they should be aware of.

Supervisor Crandall stated that he does not know of any critical deadlines but the NRI is definitely going to be useful to the Planning Board, which he would like to see dispersed amongst the members for their use and decision making.

Other key points of discussion were:

- There are three big areas that are environmentally rich, the coastal area, which has been designated a coastal habitat, a karst topography area with special environmental habitat areas and a lot of wild flowers that are unique to that kind of topography and a forest area in the west of the town that connect the Adirondacks and the Catskills, which is good for helping animals migrate as the climate changes.
- The region comprises 13.5% of the land area of NY and contains 85% of the bird, mammal, reptile and amphibian species found in the state.
- Having a geologist from Lafarge work with them and better school them on the geology in the area.
- Reclamation and post Mining Recovery Programs.
- Good community relations with industries.

Supervisor Crandall thanked those attending from the CAC for serving on this important Committee.

Councilman Dolan inquired as to what the next step will be after they complete the four high-impact actions.

Mr. McGuire stated that at the completion of each activity they will notify NYSERDA and submit documentation, Robin from Capital District Regional Planning Commission is there to help them prior to submitting the documentation making sure that it is 100% complete. He added that once the fourth item is submitted, they have 90 days to submit an application for funding.

Councilman Dolan asked if the Town Board has to do anything before they start working on the activities.

Mr. McGuire stated that he was going to double check to see if there are any additional activities that the Board needs to do as far as approvals or authorizations.

Councilman Dolan asked if the Board has to do anything with NYSERDA.

Ms. Heinzen stated that she didn't believe so and added that they will send her a more detailed description of what the Board needs to do.

Supervisor Crandall asked if there were any other comments regarding the CAC.

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Discussion ensued about the timing of a presentation for the public at a Town Board Meeting when it's televised as well as a Community Meeting.

Mr. McGuire continued by announcing that the Winter Carnival scheduled at Lawson Lake for the upcoming weekend was cancelled.

Supervisor Crandall asked if there were any other comments regarding the Conservation Advisory Committee.

Mr. McGuire stated that he had one more thing unrelated but environmental and continued by saying that he was looking at solar for the Town and spoke with two different companies, the last being Hudson Solar and Garrett, from Hudson Solar went down to the Waste Water Treatment Plant. He added that he advised that at this point it doesn't make financial sense for them and the Town to look at a site there and if they did put a site there it would be about a 15 year payback period on the site with the Town financing a solar array. He went on by saying that another thing that Garrett pointed out is that the Town is paying through Veridian, a third party supplier, their bill comes from Central Hudson but the supplier is Veridian and their rate is .09 per kilowatt hour, Central Hudson's over the last 12 months was .06 per kilowatt hour. He continued by saying that by cancelling the Veridian Agreement the Town could potentially save \$7,200.00 a year.

**86 Main Street Sewer Billing**

Supervisor Crandall stated that he was in receipt of a letter from George McHugh, Senior Counsel to Carver Industries and continued by reading the following:

Supervisor Crandall

As you may know, Coeymans Recycling Center, LLC recently purchased the property located at 86 Main Street, Coeymans. According to the Town of Coeymans Building Inspector, this property is condemned and has been for quite some time prior to us even purchasing the property. As such, it has been deemed by the Town that this property is unlawful for anyone to occupy or inhabit. We agree with the Building Inspector's assessment of the current condition of the property.

Our plan is to gut this building to the studs and renovate it both structurally and cosmetically, investing approximately \$200,000.00 in the renovation process. This renovation will take us through June 30, 2017. We hope to obtain certificates of occupancy and be ready to rent the new apartments sometime in July or August 2017.

Given the fact that this property is condemned by the Town of Coeymans and deemed uninhabitable and cannot be occupied by anyone prior to the completion of renovations after June 30, 2017, I respectfully request that the Sewer District Invoice for the 86 Main Street property, which was received today and reflects a balance due of \$506.84, for sewer service to two apartments from January 1, 2017 to June 30, 2017, be waived by the Town Board.

Please feel free to contact me should you wish to discuss this matter.

Thank you.

Supervisor Crandall stated that he discussed this with John Cashin and he believes the Town should offer them a one-time exemption for a vacant property, which would be \$100.00 and he thinks would be fair. He added that they said they were going to renovate it and have it done by June, even if it is not done until December it is still a huge improvement and this is what they want for the Hamlet, step by step, building by building.

Councilman Youmans stated that he was asked about this setting precedence and his reply was that if someone wants to rehab a condemned home that can't be occupied, he will set that precedence.

Collectively the Town Board agreed.

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Supervisor Crandall stated that he will have a resolution for the next meeting.

Councilman Dolan interjected that he thinks they have to be careful not to offer it to condemned buildings because if someone is holding on to the building and not making any changes to the building, they should pay the full amount and if they don't pay their Sewer Rent, it gets put on to the Property Tax Bill and the Town gets paid for it anyway.

Supervisor Crandall stated that the Town is made whole by the County.

Councilman Youmans stated that he thinks the resolution has to have wording in it that says because it is slated for a renovation project, which would set the precedence and added that they might want to add that if the renovations are not completed by December 31, 2017, the amount will go back to the original amount.

Councilman Langdon interjected that they will have to apply for a Building Permit for renovations so they could say that the exemption comes with the application of a Building Permit.

Councilman Youmans stated that someone could pay for a Building Permit and not do the renovations.

Supervisor Crandall interjected that the resolution will be fine-tuned, it will be a one-shot deal and it's not a blanket for everyone, they have to apply on an individual basis and present their case just like Mr. McHugh has offered. He added that there are promises in writing on what they want to do so they will fine-tune a resolution just for that. He concluded by saying that they will do it on a case by case basis for someone interested enough in doing that, if so they will do the same for them as long as they come within the Town's guidelines, which he believes is a good thing.

Councilman Dolan stated that the first component is that the building is condemned and they are not able to use the property, the second component is that they are moving forward to make changes with a third component that it is a one-shot deal and if they don't complete the renovations or Carver goes out of business and they just abandon the project, the deal dies with it.

Councilman Youmans interjected that it should go back to the original amount being due, which he thinks is fair.

Supervisor Crandall stated that it's not fair to charge the full shot when he is trying to do something good and they are willing to work with anyone who wants to do work down there and then asked for a motion to adjourn.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION**

On motion of Councilman Youmans, seconded by Councilman Dolan, the Town Board Workshop was adjourned.

VOTE – AYES 4 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT 1 (Burns) – SO MOVED

Time – 7:04pm

*Respectfully Submitted -*

**APPROVED –**

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*Diane L. Millious, Town Clerk*