

MINUTES BOOKTOWN OF COEYMANS
January 14, 2021 – Town Board Meeting – 6:30pm**

A Town Board Meeting was held Thursday, January 14th, 2021 at 6:30pm at Town Hall, 18 Russell Avenue, Ravena, New York

PRESENT: George D. McHugh, Supervisor
Daniel D. Baker, Council member
Linda S. Bruno, Council member
Zachary S. Collins, Council member
Brandon L. LeFevre, Council member

ALSO PRESENT: Cindy L. Rowzee, Town Clerk

Supervisor McHugh opened the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance. He stated that a full Board was present.

Announcements

Necessary Town Hall business to be conducted by appointment only – Supervisor McHugh asked that people who need to enter Town Hall please make an appointment with the Supervisor’s Office. He stated that taxes could also be paid in the secure drop boxes or in person at the Bank of Greene County.

COVID-19 Update – Supervisor McHugh gave the current local numbers for COVID cases. He stated that people in the 1B category are eligible for vaccines and then gave the number to call to schedule a vaccine appointment. He mentioned that the Town was working with the Albany County Sheriff to set up a mobile vaccination unit and they were in direct communication with senior housing in Ravena. He asked everyone to remain diligent with social distancing, hand washing and wearing a mask.

Presentations

Honoring Louis Newburg V for achieving rank of Eagle Scout – Council member Baker, on behalf of the Town Board, honored Louis Newburg V for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout on November 5, 2020. He spoke of Mr. Newburg’s Eagle Scout project which was to create grave markers for veterans in the Bethlehem Rural Cemetery in Selkirk. The Town Board then presented him with a certificate of achievement and thanked him for his hard work.

Update from Carver Laraway – Mr. Laraway spoke about the growth of the Industrial Park. He stated that in 2010 there were 30 employees and now there are 500 employees with 25 different companies. He spoke of trying to reach the 30/30 Club where there would be 30 companies having at least 30 employees. He stated that there will likely be about 500 more employees coming in with the wind farm project. He stated that we will need more pharmacies and coffee shops and things like that to serve the people. Mr. Laraway stated that in 2014 the Industrial Park paid about \$14,000 a year in all taxes, it now pays nearly \$200,000 in Town, \$30,000 in Village and \$500,000 in school taxes. There will be 2-3 more buildings going up this year. They have also purchased 16 properties in the community that include apartments and

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housing. He spoke of wanting to offer a workshop meeting at the Firehouse in order to have the community weigh in on its needs and things they would like to see. Mr. Laraway's public relations employee, Sydney Kane spoke about organizing this to see what they can do to give back to the community. Mr. Laraway was stating he thought it would be nice for the Fire Company to have a boat that could potentially help other communities.

Council member Baker spoke of the continued fight for a reduction in speed on Route 144 and his desire to combine forces with Mr. Laraway in order to push this through. He mentioned that he felt it was not a big deal to reduce the speed limit to 45.

Mr. Laraway stated even 40 would not be a big deal and recommended whatever they feel is safe. He mentioned that he has spoken to Lafarge about a "Lafarge Bypass" to help with truck traffic and to limit them in the community.

Council member Baker thanked Mr. Laraway for instituting no jake brakes coming out of the Port. Mr. Laraway stated that he had put up signs and they act as a refresher for the drivers of no jake brakes through town.

Supervisor McHugh asked how many people from this area are employed at the Port and Industrial Park. Mr. Laraway stated that he believes from last year's numbers 68 live within a 7 mile radius from here.

Supervisor McHugh announced that although the paper mentioned the Port of Albany in relation to the Off-shore Wind Project that the Port of Coeymans will be involved as well. They will be involved in the work related to the bases of the off-shore wind towers. He mentioned that this project is part of the green initiative by the governor and it will increase employment at the Port and the Industrial Park.

Council member LeFevre asked Mr. Laraway about the traffic counters that had been placed outside of the Port. Mr. Laraway stated that those had been part of the wind farm submission to the state to see if it is potentially time to put a speed limit or a traffic light there. He stated that Route 144 will have to be improved and widened.

Old Business

RAK Property – Supervisor McHugh went through the timeline of this project and stated that there were outstanding invoices in the amount of \$66,300 and that the contractor would be willing to take the property in lieu of payments. This was the only proposal received for purchase of the property. The parcels have been assessed at \$45,200 and would be given in exchange for service.

Clean Air Law Amendments – Status of Petition for Permissive Referendum – Supervisor McHugh gave a timeline of the Clean Air Law Amendments and stated that the Town Clerk had received a petition with 254 signatures to have this law placed on a ballot through permissive referendum. He stated that the Town Clerk had sent a letter out on December 31st in response to

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the petition deeming it invalid. He then stated that the Town Board did not participate in the decision. He stated that under the law there was no legal mechanism that would allow the Town Board to place this on a ballot. He also stated that the petitions were unlawful and going door to door during the height of a global pandemic is reckless, irresponsible and thoughtless behavior.

Draft Comprehensive Master Plan Revisions – Supervisor McHugh stated that this is a targeted update that has been going on for over a year. It was created from input from an on-line community survey, stakeholder meetings, Town Board Workshop meetings, a community survey by the Riverview Baptist Church, and booths at the Farmer’s Market and Riverfest. The draft has been sent to adjacent Towns and the Village for their review and comments. It was also sent to the Albany County Planning Board. There will be a public hearing on January 28th at 6pm and the Town Board is committed to keeping the hearing open long enough to get the comprehensive plan right. He stated that he feels it is hypocritical of people to want to keep the comp plan hearing open due to COVID yet they went door to door to get signatures.

Council member Baker stated that he feels that people owe this board an apology for being called liars. He stated that the Town Board never saw the petitions and they never came in front of the Town Board.

Supervisor McHugh stated that the Board had seen the petitions but they did not receive it in a formal way to act upon it.

Town Clerk Rowzee stated that it had all worked just as it should have.

New Business

Green Initiative Grant Application – Supervisor McHugh stated that the Town of Coeymans would be receiving \$200,000 from the NYS Attorney General’s Office. This was a portion of the penalties assessed on Lafarge-Holcim for storm water management issues over 10 years ago. The Attorney General’s Office and DEC is offering that money to the town to be used as seed money to leverage a grant from EFC of \$2 million for updates to the Riverfront Park and surrounding area. The plan would include bio-retention areas, storm water run-off improvements as well as permanent lavatory facilities for the riverfront park and Joralemon Park. He stated that the he and the Town Board members had met with representatives from the Attorney Generals’s Office, NYS DEC, Superintendent of Highway’s Scott Searles, Village Foreman Henry Traver, Sewer Plant Chief Geraldson, along with the Town Engineers from MJ Engineering and Grant Writer Nicole D’Ambrosio to discuss the grant application process and the improvements that were proposed to be made to the park and surrounding area. It must be submitted on or before February 12th and a resolution would be introduced at the February 11th Town Board meeting to authorize the grant application to be submitted. If successful this will be the largest capital project for a quality of life initiative ever received by the Town of Coeymans.

Council member Collins stated that the grant was all about water quality and if we can upgrade the park while maintaining that prerogative to keep the water quality up he’s excited.

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MARAD – Marine Highway Project Designation – Supervisor McHugh stated that the US Maritime Administration had designated the Town of Coeymans as a Marine Highway Project. We are one of only 45 places to receive this designation. This allows the Town or the Port to expand the use of America’s navigable water and to apply to the Marine Highway Grant Program. This highlights the benefits and promotes waterways as an alternative to land based options. Public benefits include, create and sustain jobs in US vessels, ports and shipyards, relieve landside congestion, reduce maintenance costs and improve the US Transportation system’s overall state of repair (wear and tear on roads and bridges), drive the mandatory use of emerging engine technologies, improve US competitiveness by adding new cost-effective freight, improve environmental sustainability of the US transportation system by using less energy and reducing air emissions, improve public safety and security by providing alternatives for the movement of hazardous materials outside heavily populated areas, improve transportation system resiliency and redundancy by providing transportation alternatives during times of disaster or national emergency, and improve national security by adding to the nation’s strategic sealift resources. The more we can ship, the less we have to put on the roads. It could mean a lot of money coming towards Coeymans. He then thanked the grant writer as we have been having a lot of luck with grants lately.

Central Hudson LED Street Light Replacement Project – Supervisor McHugh stated that the Town had budgeted to switch over the remaining street lights to LED. It will be a little over \$15,000 and the cost of doing this will be recouped within 2 years with the savings on electricity. The lights will be brighter and safer.

Proposed Local Law – Zoning Moratorium – Supervisor McHugh stated that he had discussions this week with the Building Department, the Planning Board/Zoning Board of Appeals Chairman Stephen Schmitt, and the Planning Board/Zoning Board of Appeals Attorney Andy Brick. This will stop anything to do with zoning for at least six months to let the comprehensive plan update go through review and adoption. This would allow the Town Board to act upon any recommendations and then it would be opened back up to receiving applications.

Resolutions

Resolution #045-21 – Authorize Sale of RK Property to Collins

On motion of Council member Baker, seconded by Council member LeFevre, the following resolution was:

APPROVED – VOTE – AYES 4 – NAYS 0 – ABSTAIN 1 (Collins) - ABSENT – SO MOVED

Resolution Authorizing the Transfer of Certain Lands Owned by the Town of Coeymans to Albert F. Collins, Jr. and Lori Collins., or their designee/assigns

WHEREAS, the Town is the owner of certain vacant real property located at 957 & 959 State Route 143, Coeymans, Albany County, New York (tax map parcels: 167.-3-12.1 & 167.-3-12.2); and

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WHEREAS, it is no longer necessary for the Town of Coeymans to retain said property; and on November 23, 2020 the Town published a request for proposals for the purchase of the two parcels; and

WHEREAS, in response to said request for proposals, the Town received a proposal on December 31, 2020 from Albert F. Collins, Jr. and Lori Collins to purchase said real property parcels for \$66,300.00, which represents the amount owed by the Town to Collins & Son, Inc. under a contract for prior cleanup work performed on the property; and

WHEREAS, the Town Assessor previously established the fair market value of said real property to be \$45,200.00 as reflected on the 2020 assessment roll (\$30,100.00 for parcel 167.-3-12.1 and \$15,100 for parcel 167.-3-12.2); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Town Law § 64(2), a Town Board may, upon adoption of a resolution, convey or lease real property in the name of the town, which resolution shall be subject to permissive referendum;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED; that the Town Board accepts such offer of \$66,300.00 for conveyance of said real property located at 957 & 959 State Route 143, Coeymans, Albany County, New York (tax map parcels: 167.-3-12.1 & 167.-3-12.2) and authorizes the Town Supervisor after review by the Town Attorney to execute a contract and necessary documents to transfer title of said property to Albert F. Collins, Jr. and Lori Collins, or their designee/assigns, subject to permissive referendum; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Albert F. Collins, Jr. and Lori Collins shall be required to bear any and all costs for the conveyance of said real property including but not limited to New York State transfer tax, preparation of title abstract, survey, recording and filing fees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Clerk is directed to publish notice of the conveyance subject to permissive referendum as required by applicable law.

Resolution #046-21 – Set Date for Special Meeting for Town Board Procedural Audit

On motion of Council member LeFevre, seconded by Supervisor McHugh, the following resolution was: APPROVED – VOTE – AYES 5 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT – SO MOVED

WHEREAS, the Town Board must complete or have completed an audit, in accordance with section 123 of Town Law, of all Town Officials that handle cash; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board has adopted an audit procedure, based on the Local Management Guide, Fiscal Oversight Responsibilities, published by the State of New York Office of the State Comptroller, on April 7, 2018, to be applied to the records of each Town Official that handles cash;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board of the Town of Coeymans does hereby authorize the Town Clerk to provide Public Notice that the Town Board of the Town of Coeymans shall conduct a Special Meeting for the purpose of auditing those departments

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within the Town of Coeymans that handle cash, on Saturday, February 06, 2021 at 9:00a.m. at Town Hall, 18 Russell Avenue, Ravena, New York 12143.

Supervisor McHugh explained that this was an annual requirement by the State that the Town Board audit any department that handles cash.

Resolution #047-21 – Appoint PT Floater Clerk - Barry

On motion of Supervisor McHugh, seconded by Council member Collins, the following resolution was: APPROVED – VOTE – AYES 5 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT – SO MOVED

WHEREAS, the Town of Coeymans is desirous of hiring a Part-Time Floater Clerk to assist in various departments as needed; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Coeymans has received applications and resumes from interested applicants and has conducted interviews of potential candidates for the aforementioned position;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Coeymans does hereby appoint Laura Barry as a Part-Time Clerk, at an hourly rate of \$15.60, on an as needed basis, effective immediately.

Resolution #048-21 – Authorized Supervisor to Execute Installation of LED Streetlights

On motion of Council member Collins, seconded by Council member Bruno, the following resolution was: APPROVED – VOTE – AYES 5 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT – SO MOVED

WHEREAS, the Town of Coeymans, in furtherance of its Green Initiatives, has inquired of Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp. what the costs and incentives would be to convert all town street lights from standard street lights to LED street lights; and

WHEREAS, the Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp. has provided a quote (attached hereto) outlining the cost of this Green Initiative, which will cost the Town of Coeymans \$15,720.00 after receiving an Energy Efficiency Rebate of \$2,900.00; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board budgeted for this expenditure in the 2021 Adopted Budget;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Coeymans does hereby approve the Streetlight LED Conversion for all streetlights located within the Town of Coeymans applicable to accounts 1411-4240-00, 1411-4260-00, and 1411-4280-00; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Town Supervisor George D. McHugh is hereby authorized to execute any and all documents necessary to effectuate the commencement and completion of this conversion project.

Council member LeFevre stated that the town pays a lot of money to Central Hudson each month. Supervisor McHugh stated that we will recoup the money in two and a half years due to the savings.

Resolution #049-21 – Adopt Social Media Policy for Employee Handbook

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On motion of Council member Bruno, seconded by Council member Baker, the following resolution was: APPROVED – VOTE – AYES 5 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT – SO MOVED

WHEREAS, the Town of Coeymans has determined there is a need to address the use of social media as a communication tool to provide information to the public and for guidance to employees of the Town of Coeymans;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Town Board of the Town of Coeymans does hereby adopt the attached Social Media Policy to be added to Section 200 of the Town of Coeymans Employee Handbook, effective immediately.

Social Media Policy

At the Town of Coeymans, we understand that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends and co-workers around the world. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media as an employee of the Town, we have established these guidelines for appropriate use of social media that is related to your job duties or which may negatively impact the Town’s operations or expose the Town to liability.

This policy applies to all employees of the Town of Coeymans.

Managers and supervisors should use the supplemental Social Media Management Guidelines for additional guidance in administering the policy.

GUIDELINES

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, *social media* can mean many things. *Social Media* includes all means of communicating or posting of information or content of any sort on the internet, including to your own or someone else’s web log or blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with the Town of Coeymans, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

Although the Town recognizes that employees may choose to express themselves by posting personal information on social media, this right of expression is not free from limitation. That is, while the Town acknowledges its employees have the First Amendment right to free speech, that right is not absolute and extends only to matters of public concern. Therefore, employees must exercise caution with respect to comments they post concerning the Town, a particular department of the Town, and/or other employees of the Town.

The same principles and guidelines found in the Town of Coeymans policies and three basic beliefs apply to your activities online. Ultimately you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow employees or otherwise adversely affects customers, suppliers,

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contractors, or other legitimate business interests of the Town, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Know and Follow the Rules

Carefully read these guidelines, the Town of Coeymans Code of Ethics, and the Discrimination and Harrassment Prevention Policy, and ensure that your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate posting may include discriminatory remarks, harrassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Be Respectful

Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, customers, suppliers, contractors or other people who work on behalf of the Town of Coeymans. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work related complaints by speaking differently with your co-workers or by utilizing our Open Door Policy than by posting complaints to social media outlet. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage employees, customers, suppliers, contractors or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or Town policy.

Be Honest and Accurate

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the internet archives almost anything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about the Town of Coeymans, fellow employees, customers, suppliers, contractors or people working on behalf of the Town of Coeymans.

Post only appropriate and respectful content

- Maintain the confidentiality of the Town of Coeymans private or confidential information. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures, or other internal business-related confidential communications.
- Do not create a link from your blog, website or other social networking site to a Town of Coeymans Website.
- Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the Town of Coeymans. If the Town of Coeymans is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an associate and make it clear that your views do not represent those of the Town of Coeymans, fellow associates, members, customers, suppliers, or people working on behalf of the Town of Coeymans. If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with the Town of Coeymans, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of the Town of Coeymans. It is best to include a disclaimer such as “the postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Town of Coeymans.”

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Using social media at work

Refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment we provide, unless it is work-related as authorized by your Supervisor. Do not use the Town of Coeymans email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.

Retaliation is prohibited

The Town of Coeymans prohibits taking negative action against any associate for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any associate who retaliates against another associate for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to a disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Media contacts

Employees should not speak to the media on the Town of Coeymans behalf without first contacting the Town Supervisor. All media inquiries should be directed to the Office of the Town Supervisor.

For more information

If you have questions or need further guidance, please contact your HR representative.

Supervisor McHugh stated that this policy is a guideline, it is not meant to stifle any first amendment rights, but it is things like being respectful and being honest and accurate, post only respectful content, using social media at work, especially when you are portraying yourself as a Coeymans employee.

Resolution #050-21 – Propose Local Law “Zoning Moratorium”

On motion of Council member Baker, seconded by Council member LeFevre, the following resolution was: APPROVED – VOTE – AYES 5 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT – SO MOVED

WHEREAS, the Town of Coeymans Town Board has determined it is in the public interest to update the Town’ Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board has retained MJ Engineering to assist in updating the Comprehensive Plan through data collection and analysis, obtaining public input, and preparing a Draft Comprehensive Plan for consideration; and

WHEREAS, MJ Engineering has submitted a draft Comprehensive Plan for review and consideration by the Town Board as well as the public at large; and

WHEREAS, the Draft Comprehensive Plan has been created based upon the current existing zoning conditions in effect within the Town of Coeymans; and

WHEREAS, a Public hearing has been scheduled to obtain public input on the draft Comprehensive Plan; and

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WHEREAS, changes to the Town’s Zoning map or changes to zoning classifications for properties within the Town while the Draft Comprehensive Plan is being reviewed could impact the validity and effectiveness of recommendations contained within the Draft Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, it is in the Town’s best interest to maintain the current Town Zoning Map while the Draft Comprehensive Plan is being reviewed;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT,`

A Public Hearing upon proposed Local Law No. 1 of 2021 entitled “Zoning Moratorium”, with said Local Law being introduced by Supervisor George D. McHugh on this date with a copy being attached hereto, shall be held on February 11, 2021 at 6:00p.m., to be held at Coeymans Town Hall, located at 18 Russell Ave., Ravena, NY 12143,

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT,

The Town Clerk shall cause Notice of said Public Hearing to be published in the Official Newspaper at least 7 days prior to said Public Hearing.

Upcoming Workshops/Meetings

Public Hearing – Comprehensive Master Plan Update – January 28th, 2021 at 6pm
Town Board Meeting – January 28th, 2021 at 6:30pm
Planning Board/ZBA Meeting – January 27th, 2021 at 7pm

Public Comment

Barbara Heinzen of New Baltimore called in and hoped that they would keep the Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing open until late April as time is needed to debate this and it is a very long document. She stated that only 20 people had submitted information. She asked that they keep it open longer so that as the pandemic numbers go down they may be able to debate this in person.

Supervisor McHugh stated that we had over 130 surveys submitted. Town Clerk Rowzee stated that it was 147. Supervisor McHugh then went on to say that there were 6 workshop meetings open to public comment, information booths at Riverfest and the farmer’s market, and the Riverview Baptist Church survey. The comp plan is 28 pages.

Council member Collins stated that this was not a complete overhaul of the comp plan and that it was a targeted approach. He stated that it had a good foundation and they targeted the aspects that they wanted to update.

Raymond Kottke of Coeymans called in and stated that the Comprehensive Plan was too important to be rushed. He read a letter signed by several people asking this to be held over longer to give people more time to read it.

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Sara Pruiksma of Coeymans called and stated that she found Supervisor McHugh’s comments rather upsetting. She stated that the actions took to gather the signatures for the petition were not dangerous and it shows what we can do and what we can accomplish. She stated that they got 254 signatures in a few weeks and the Comprehensive Plan survey only got 147 responses in several months. She stated that she feels more time is needed to read over the 234 pages. She then asked about the proposal she had submitted for the RK Property.

Supervisor McHugh stated that they liked her proposal and the Town Board has discussed doing something similar up at Joralemon Park but that the RK property was given to the Town with the intent of it getting back on the tax rolls.

Ms. Pruiksma stated that she does not want more added to Joralemon Park to clutter it up because of the hayride and things like that. She was thinking a separate specific educational site would be better. She also stated that she feels COVID has hampered the ability to get feedback on the Comprehensive Plan as barely anyone responded to the on-line survey. She stated that there was a huge disparity in the people’s voices that are going to represent our Town.

Supervisor McHugh stated that there were over 300 people at the Farmer’s Market and over 1000 people at Riverfest.

Council member Collins stated that they have had a lot of dialogue as they have been working with MJ Designs and that they have said they are going to keep this open longer than the 28th. He stated that she would be able to ask her questions on January 28th, then go back and look at it some more before the next scheduled public hearing.

She stated that she did not have confidence in the Board after they passed through the Clean Air Law Amendments only four days after the public hearing.

Motion to Adjourn

On motion of Council member Bruno, seconded by Council member Baker, the Town Board Meeting was adjourned. APPROVED – VOTE – AYES 5 – NAYS 0 – ABSENT – SO MOVED

Time – 7:40pm

Respectfully Submitted,



Cindy L. Rowzee, Town Clerk