

Police – Trustee Perkins reported that a letter has been sent to Fire Chief Coit to attend a meeting to discuss the present and future use of building, and possible construction of a new building. Lt. Williams noted that there have been several incidents of criminal mischief which should be concluded soon.

The Board thanked the Police and Fire Depts. for the excellent job they did during the Vietnam Memorial Highway of Valor ride on Saturday, October 17.

Electric – Supervisor Teeter reported that his crew assisted the DPW with the water line on Walpole Road, rebuilt Washington Ave., mowed the high line, along with various other repairs and replacements. They also assisted the Village of Greene on two different days.

Public Works – Supervisor Shurtleff reported that he is working with NY Rural Water on a leak detections system, which was used on South Parkway to try to find a “difficult to find” leak there. RL Stone will be installing the new telemetry system soon, they are waiting on an antenna. Paving at the park pavilion and village hall was completed. The park has been winterized.

Admin. Rankin reported that there will be a meeting of the New York Municipal Power Agency on Thursday, Oct. 22nd in East Syracuse. The second installment of our purchased TCC’s of \$22,000+ plus will be made this week. Rate increase went into effect on October 1. A letter will be inserted with the October bill notifying residents of this change in the base rate.

Trustee Conger noted that there is a group of Cornell students who may be willing to perform a cleanup at the park in the spring.

Trustee Perkins moved for the adoption of the following resolution:

RESOLVED, THAT upon the recommendation of the Village Engineer, CT Male Associates, and those listed below being the lowest responsible bidders for the respective contracts, that the Board of Trustees of the Village of Groton, NY, award the bids for Wastewater Treatment Plant Project to the following contractors:

General Contract – Crane Hogan Structural Systems, Inc. - \$3,445,000
Mechanical – King & King Mechanical, Inc. - \$33,400
Plumbing – King & King Mechanical, Inc. - \$29,100
Electrical – Vacri Construction Corp. - \$183,203

Seconded by Trustee Neville, carried.

Trustee Neville offered the following resolution:

RESOLVED, THAT the Village Office, 143 Cortland St., be designated as the one polling place for the general village election to be held on Tuesday, March 16, 2010.

Seconded by Trustee Conger, carried.

Trustee Neville made a motion that the Village participate in the Tompkins County Drug and Alcohol Testing Consortium in 2010, and authorize the Mayor to sign such paperwork as necessary to carry this out, seconded by Trustee Conger, carried.

The annual review of the accounting and investment policies was noted. There are no recommended changes to the policy at this time.

Admin. Rankin reported that he has been in contact with grant consultant, Bernie Thoma, in regards to two possible grants. The first was a possible Shared Services grant with the Town on relocation of the salt storage bin somewhere near the Town's. Bernie feels that this grant would not likely be competitive, due to lack of documentation saying it would save costs or is some sort of hazard. The second is a records grant to assist the Village in purchasing equipment for an automatic meter reading system (AMR). The problem with this is to secure enough quotes from vendors that will have equipment that will work with our present meters. Bernie noted that he would check further into this possible grant for us.

There was a brief discussion in letting snowmobilers into the Village along the designated trail that enters the Village from the north along the old railroad bed. Upon conclusion, Trustee Neville made a motion that the Village approve the use of snowmobiles along this designated trail only, seconded by Trustee Conger, carried.

The regular meeting was temporarily suspended and Mayor Evener declared the Public Hearing on Local Law No. 2 of 2009, amending Chapter 200 of the Code of the Village of Groton, entitled "Zoning", as open.

Clerk read the Notice of Public Hearing.

Clerk read the letter from the Tompkins County Planning Dept. as their review to the proposed amendments pursuant to Sections 239 -l and -m of the New York State General Municipal Law.

Christine Walpole read a statement of her concerns with the proposed amendments (attached).

Wally Holmes inquired as to what brought this to the floor. Have there been complaints? All businesses rely on signage. He stated he wants the community to look good but how much regulation is needed.

Mayor Evener stated that this is part of the process, which is to solicit public comments, before we adopt regulations that will have a negative effect on businesses.

Dale Dickey stated that there is a concern that future boards could misinterpret the law being proposed. Some of the definitions are vague. He stated he did not see any problem with animated signs.

Trustee Neville noted that one of issues the Board attempted to address for businesses is where an existing business changes occupancy, at present it requires a site plan review. Under the new law, we will have the ability to waive such review. Admin. Rankin noted that the promulgation of the new regulation is a natural progression from the Town and Village adopting a joint comprehensive plan in October of 2005. Thoma Development Consultants did assist the Planning Board with the development of the proposed law, perhaps we missed some things in regards to signs. It has been such a long process to get to this point. We did have a public informational meeting on the zoning law in January of 2008, but only four people showed up to that meeting.

Doug VanBenshoten inquired as to what the next step in and what he should do. He is the owner of the trailer storage business and it appears that such storage trailers are targeted in this proposed

law. Atty. Grossman replied that the use would be grandfathered, and we cannot force him to close.

Christy Walpole asked what the purpose of regulating storage units are.

Bill Higgins, want to know is he or Doug VanBenschoten want to sell their business, what happens then? Peter Grossman says the use passes with the sale and the rights thereof.

Doug VanBenschoten asked to what is the next step in the process. Admin. Rankin stated the board would have to decide what they want to do and proceed from there. Bob Walpole asked that if the Board is going to table the law that he suggests that we have some working sessions and/or informational meetings to review the areas of concern. He suggested that Lt. Williams be present at these sessions. Mayor Evener said agreed that we have to be cognizant of overregulation.

Bob Walpole made note of worsening state of commercial business in New York State.

Mayor Evener stated we would put some proposed dates together and advertise them in the paper and the website.

Trustee Neville made a motion to close the Public Hearing, seconded by Trustee Perkins, carried.

Trustee Neville made a motion to table action on Local Law No. 2 of 2009, seconded by Trustee Perkins, carried.

Trustee Conger made a motion to move into executive session to discuss a personnel matter in the Dept. of Public Works and consult with the Village Attorney, seconded by Trustee Perkins, carried.

Trustee Conger made a motion to move out of executive session, seconded by Trustee Perkins, carried.

Trustee Conger made a motion, that due to change in supervisory responsibilities in the Dept. of Public Works and Electric Dept., Schedule 5 of the budget be adjusted as follows:

Motor Equipment Operator (Working Supervisor) - \$21.15 per hour.

Electric Utility Supervisor - \$27.95 per hour.

Clerk-Treasurer/Administrator - \$1,320.60/wk.

Seconded by Trustee Neville, carried.

The meeting was closed at 9:10 pm.

CHARLES V. RANKIN
Village Clerk

There are a number of amendments which you have presented involving the business district. Before addressing those, I would like to bring your attention to two other concerns which involve residences.

The first is Item C of Section 10, (page 5). We are seeing more and more people do things as families. They are utilizing campers and recreational vehicles. Certainly, the economy plays a part in this. If these vehicles are stored on side yards or at the rear of properties, what is the purpose of stipulating a time period for the storage? Are you telling the owner that after 30 days he has to get rid of his camper?

The second is in Section 12, Item E, (page 6). I can see the need for the regulation of fencing. We already have some. This is probably a good time to also state that I am not against zoning. I do question, however, the need for some of these changes. What is wrong with a chain link fence? What is wrong with plastic or fiberglass. From what I have researched, some of the white fences now on the market have those materials in them. Let's face it, our Village, like many others, has more crime. We are going to see more property owners install fences. They have to fence their pools. Chain link fences offer the best protection for the owner as well as the public. They also require the least maintenance.

One of the first items relating to business concerns is regarding storage trailers, Section 10, Item B, (page 5). I think that the Board needs to be reminded that we are in a high intensity zone, a commercial zone. Most of the business owners own their properties, and they take pride in their appearances. Do you think we are going to place a storage unit in an unsightly place? If a business owner places a storage unit on his property for business use, such as storing inventory or supplies, why would you consider placing a time limit on that?

There are a number of items in Section 52 beginning on page 20 which concern other business owners as well as myself. Previously, these very same items were brought to the Board's attention; yet all of the items are still listed. Before attempting to put these into law, I would like to suggest that you delay the passage of these amendments and work with some people in business. I commend all of you for the work that you do, but you do not think or work like we do. We do not have pay raises, we work more hours than you do, we do not have designated vacation periods, we do not have a retirement plan, and if we are lucky enough to have a medical insurance plan, we are paying much more than you do for that luxury. We are over-regulated by government, and it has become more and more difficult for small businesses to survive. Like all "Main Streets", we are feeling that constant "squash" effect from MONSTER STORES. Maybe you need to be reminded that we still play an important part in our community. We are the businesses supporting the local causes, families, and sporting events.

Now, you are attempting to take the one, most important tool that we have in marketing...signs. Item D states that we would not be able to have any signage relating to price other than what we would post in a window. This alone shows that you need to speak with the business owners before passing laws. Are you aware that bars and liquor and wine stores are already prohibited by law from having signs in their windows?

What is the reasoning for prohibiting portable signs? We have one chance to attract people driving through the community. The number one attraction to a buyer is price. Even the monster stores take advantage of that. Those portable signs, those signs with prices on them, are the best advertisements we have. I would like to invite you to drive down Main Street. While watching traffic, see how many store fronts you look at. You have the advantage this time of year of not trying to look around trees that block your view. Remember too, that you are concentrating on seeing the store fronts. The average driver is not.

Those portable signs may have one word or a dollar amount that will make a customer stop in, or hopefully, come back. There is nothing more valuable to a real estate agent than a portable sign. Agents have use of real estate magazines, newspapers, the internet. Still, the one thing that gives the biggest return is that portable sign.

What about the Historical Museum? Will they be forbidden to use their portable open sign? What about the churches? Will their dinners no longer be advertised by a portable sign? If they do have a sign on their building, will they have to eliminate the cost of a dinner?

All of the items under Section 52 need to be re-considered. What is classified as a billboard? What are the dimensions of a billboard? What is wrong with an illuminated "Open" sign that has lights circling around it? We feel like you may want us here, you just don't want us to be seen.

Please, delay passing these amendments. Meet with representatives from our district first.

Thank you.

Christy Walpole