

Joint Meeting of the Town and Village of Lansing
6:00PM - Lansing Town Hall

MINUTES of a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Lansing held on Monday, April 29, 2013, at the Town of Lansing.

PRESENT: Mayor Donald Hartill; Trustees Lynn Leopold, Julie Baker, Patricia O'Rourke and John O'Neill; Clerk/Treasurer Jodi Dake; Town Supervisor Kathy Miller; Deputy Supervisor, Sharon Butler Bowman, Councilpersons Ruth Hopkins, Ed LaVigne, Robert Cree, Katrina Binkewicz,

Kathy Miller welcomed the Village and all the Lansing residents who were in attendance. Miller suggested we start with the Topics for Discussion that the Village provided to the Town. The following are the questions and comments on each topic.

How does the Town see development of the southern end of the town adjacent to the Village?

Supervisor Miller introduced Jonathan Kanter, and asked him to address this issue since he is the Town Planner and also a Village Planning Board member. Kanter stated that there is not much in the southernmost part of the Town. Cornell has land north of the airport where they are proposing a big solar project.

Village Circle/Village Solar Apartments off Warren Road in the Town will build 320 units over a ten year period. They just got final approval a week ago. Cayuga Farms on N. Triphammer Rd. will be building 138 townhouse units. This project is located next to Michaleen's Florist & Garden Center. They will be starting the project with on site septic treatment, but are hoping that town sewer will go through.

Kathy Miller stated that she previously spoke with the Village of Cayuga Heights to see if they had enough capacity for the Village Circle/Village Solar projects. The Town also has another developer interested in the Town Center which is not NRP. They may go ahead even if the Town doesn't get sewer. Lynn asked what might happen between Route 34 and Triphammer Rd. The Butler property has a lot of developable land. The Town doesn't know of any plans for the part in the Town next to this area.

Robert Cree asked about the Village's future plans. The northern part of the Village is low residential and there are no plans to change. Currently, the Village Planning Board is looking at the Commercial Low Traffic (CLT) area to divide it into CLT I & II. This is a down zoning of sorts to maintain a balance. CLT was formed to create a buffer between residential and Commercial High Traffic. The current owner of the large undeveloped area has no plans of developing this low density residential property.

Cree asked if Craft Road would eventually cut all the way through to Warren Road. Mayor Hartill stated that the Village is currently in the process. The Village will complete the road in

the next year after the road has been able to settle for a year. This will make two paths between N. Triphammer Road & Warren Road. The Village has kept the road curved enough to discourage cut through traffic.

Kathy Miller suggested that the Boards go down the list of questions that the Village previously submitted for discussion.

1. The Village has improved the infrastructure to accommodate the current sewer agreement to provide sewer to the Cherry Road and Warren Road areas. Are there plans to expand that area?

Kathy stated that they didn't know of any right now. The Town will be asking Chelsea's Walk residents if they want to expand into sewer. Kathy stated that the total estimate is unknown but she and Don will get together at a later date to discuss this. Mayor Hartill thinks that it is around 400 sewer units. Mayor Hartill stated that last summer the Village updated the sewer infrastructure on the back side of The Shops at Ithaca Mall so that line is in good shape. Kathy stated that the Village of Cayuga Heights can handle the extra flow.

2. As the Town is looking at their Comprehensive Plan and the transition areas, we should look at both Greenway Plans and see how the two can be compatible. What are the Town's plans for greenway?

Ruth Hopkins heads up the pathways & greenways committee. It was suggested that the Village have a representative at the presentation. Lynn Leopold suggested that it be a Planning Board member. As developments come up it is our Planning Board that deals with this type of issue. Leopold looks forward to the connectivity of trails between the Town and Village. As auto traffic increases it's nice to have connections between developments. It was stated that the Village secures easements as we go. Hartill stated that the way we do it is with set asides when new developments come in. The Village developed a greenway plan 20 years ago, because we must plan for the future as we develop. Ruth is working on getting easements before developments for the Town.

3. Are the Town zoning plans consistent with ours?

Miller deferred that question to Jon Kanter who replied yes. Mayor Hartill stated that the reason why this was brought up was because of very high density in the past. Katrina stated that money is in smart growth now. Kathy Miller stated that it is important to preserve farm land.. There is a market for denser development. Tompkins County says that people are working in the county, but live outside Tompkins County. 13,000 people commute in each day and 3,000 commute out. Kathy Miller stated that it would be nice to capture those people. Housing costs are cheaper outside the County. Could we attract that population if there were more affordable housing options? Ruth noted a need to focus effort on building of farms. This will be part of the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

4. Are there shared services that would make sense?

Hartill stated that the Villagers are 1/3 of the population of Town. The Village provides infrastructure except for parks, dog control, library and court. Hartill asked what is the basis for that. We used to have snow plowing, but that became very expensive and we ended up doing snowplowing ourselves. Hartill would like to revisit the issue to see if there is something that could lower our tax and some way to equalize. Kathy Miller stated that she has spoken with Jack & Cricket and she thinks there are a lot of things the Town can do. Kathy feels it comes down to who is sitting in the Supervisor's seat. The question was asked as to what does the Town do for the Village. Kathy has looked into what other Towns do for their Villages, and feels that with more discussion the Town and Village could come up with cost savings and consolidation of services to get a better product. Hartill stated that the Town has been very cooperative when our Supt. of Public Works asks for help.

Ed LaVigne mentioned plowing and cost. LaVigne asked if the Town could get actual snowplowing costs to look at. Hartill stated that those could be provided to the Town. Ruth stated that there are efficiency effectiveness grants that the two municipalities could receive if they worked together to help save on the cost of delivery. These are available through the Department of State.

Ed stated that he would hope we could develop a relationship with or without sharing a grant. We are unique in our own ways. It's good to meet. Even if one on one. There is respect for Village and we have the tax payers at heart. Ed stated that he is available every Wednesday for lunch if any of the Trustees would like to meet and talk. We have a lot more in common than people think.

Julie Baker stated that it is difficult to understand the Town's budget breakdown. She would like to sit down with someone from the Town and discuss how it is broken down. Sharon Bowman will have time to do that with her in August. Ruth is working on multiyear planning. Hartill stated that the Village budget is simpler. We have A, F and G Funds. It is more straightforward than the Town Budget which has separate General Fund, Highway Fund budgets and Special District budgets. The Village tax rate was decreased for the coming year to \$.95/1,000 of assessed value. Hartill stated that the system is crazy because the Village assessment went up because of new development and a municipality can't absorb those costs with the Tax Cap formula. The Village budget year is from June 1st -May 31st. Towns and Counties are on a calendar year budget. Dake stated that this is to spread out the work load for the State. The State added staff to cover the tax cap work load.

Hartill stated that roads are the biggest area he sees for shared services. There may also be some opportunities in Planning & Zoning for our Code Officers to cover for one another. Complying with MS4 Storm Water Regulations is another area that we may be able to work together on. The Storm Water Management Officer for the Village is our Code & Zoning officer. Could we share this service? Stormwater Reporting has a lot to track. The Village has its own law and the Town would have to have theirs. The Village used other municipal model laws to fit our community. Leopold stated that we looked at other communities before we developed our law. That's a reason why we formed a coalition.

LaVigne asked if the Village goes retroactive when rules and regulations change. Mayor Hartill

stated that we grandfather in existing situations unless they expand.

It was asked what other services could be shared. Most of the Village's Engineering services are contracted out. Our Police protection is by New York State Police and Tompkins County Sheriff. All of the cases in the Village go through the Town Court which receives all the monies from violations. Kathy stated that New York State gets most of the monies collected from court. It was asked if there were many illegal events at the mall. Hartill stated that there are not many that he has heard of. There was an incident at the Econo Lodge. Crime is down in the Village. Kathy Miller stated that ½ of the cases in Court are shop lifting at the all and accidents that occur in the mall parking lots. Miller will send that info to Mayor Hartill.

Everyone wants to pay less taxes and the way to do that is to share services. Miller wondered how we would join together in survey work for the Village and Town Comprehensive Plan efforts. Leopold stated that we have questions we want to ask and now we need to talk to SRI about our questions and how to craft them. We don't have a handle on how to survey the business owners. We have many new businesses in the Village. May 8th is the next meeting.

LaVigne stated that the Village has Convenient Care and doctors are coming to this area. Dr. Smith is on N. Triphammer Rd. There are patterns of what comes first and what comes next. The medical field will not leave. We have a building code that dictates how high buildings can go. Ed thinks that Lansing will eventually be the center of Tompkins County because the airport is there. The Village had vision.

Lynn Leopold would like to discuss shared service on how to be ready for climate change and how peoples living patterns may change. What can we do to reduce our carbon footprint -- solar possibilities and a lot of food for thought? Kathy Miller stated that the Village Solars/Village Circle projects have been working with TCAT public transportation due to the anticipated increased need in future ridership as a means of reducing traffic. Transportation needs to be considered. Could we cut down on the amount of traffic if there was more public transportation availability? In other areas, businesses help to get this going. Ruth stated that as both municipalities are updating their Comprehensive Plans, the issue of traffic patterns would be a key area to work together.

Cree asked how the Village would join in the survey process. Hartill stated that additional questions would be asked to those Town residents who are also in the Village. Since we are also in the Town, the other questions are the same. We are looking for clarification. We will both need separate contracts. Some will be shared questions.

Hartill would like to come to an understanding with the railroad.

When Miller thinks about what makes us different from Ithaca, she thinks it is green. Both the Town and Village like to preserve green space. Hartill stated that when the Village was in the planning stages with the development of Lansing Trails we arranged for green space.

LaVigne stated that the Village is limited to how many more businesses can actually come in. How can we provide better services in the future? Leopold feels that reinventing space is up to

the businesses, not us. Hartill estimates that empty commercial property is less than 10%. LaVigne stated that clients will tell you what you want. LaVigne feels that on this side of Route 13 those 3 traffic signals are difficult to get through.

Hartill stated that one thing you have to be careful with is you have to look at the population base. The biggest business is education and that won't grow a lot. We have a B&T Park that continues to grow, but not large dramatic growth because of population. Slow steady and keep on going. This will change again as people retire. Hartill doesn't see any dramatic changes.

The next topic was if there is an Emergency Plan for the Village. Hartill stated that Tompkins County has a new Emergency Plan. It is online. They have looked at census data. LaVigne asked where people would go if a disaster happens.

Hartill stated that the water plant has a generator and gas generator, so there will be water for fire protection. The water tanks are in good shape. We don't have a community place in the Village of Lansing to go to. Large groups can be gathered in the YMCA or Mall if need be. Hotels have backup generators to accommodate people in an emergency. Ed feels this is an ideal place to work together. Leopold feels we should identify strengths and weaknesses together. This is a main concern for Katrina.

Ruth wondered if the Planning Board had any comments. Mario Tomei, Village Planning Board Chairman, stated there has been a shift in development from Ithaca up into our Village and Town. Mario is very interested in what the Town is doing. The Village is very close to build-out with one Commercial High Traffic parcel yet to be developed and limited Commercial Low Traffic areas. Mario stated that the Town has more open space and will possibly be building a Town Center. Better Housing of Tompkins County is interested in coming to the Town. What the Town builds will influence our reaction to it, because you have to go through the Village to get to the Town. Ed stated that the Town hopes to get some of this business here in the Town Center. The way he looks at it is one can either be proactive or reactive to it.

Mayor Hartill stated that there was an opportunity to extend Warren Rd. which would have moved the traffic flow to the east, but it didn't happen due to mis-steps. Kathy Miller feels that if you keep traffic for the everyday basics in your area, residents would be able to walk or bike so you don't have to jump in cars for services.

Don Hartill stated that a Comprehensive Plan is a guide. Kathy indicated that the Comprehensive Plan is critical, the backbone of zoning and dealing with developers.

Tom Ellis stated that throughout the United States urban areas tend to consume little areas. We all look to the North and see greenway. Tom feels that zoning needs to change drastically in the Town. He also feels that both the Town and Village need to address keeping open land in their Comprehensive Plans. Don stated that one must be very careful and honor contiguous zoning.

It was the consensus that the Town and the Village would like to work together. Katrina thinks we should plan another meeting.

Dan Veaner asked Don Hartill when the last meeting was held between the two boards. Leopold thought it was just before snow planning when Steve Farkas was the Superintendent. Jodi will look up previous minutes to see when the Boards last met.

It was suggested that the Boards meet in smaller groups in the future and then bring it all back together.

The meeting adjourned 7:44pm.

Jodi Dake
Clerk/Treasurer
Village of Lansing