

VILLAGE OF ATHENS BOARD MEETING MINUTES – September 25, 2019

PRESENT: Mayor Stephan Bradicich, Trustee Gail Lasher, Trustee Robert Scott, Trustee Amy Serrago and Trustee Dr. Joshua Lipsman.

Village Attorney Tal Rappleyea was also present.

Pledge to the Flag.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Two Public Hearings are being held this evening per published legal notice for the following purposes:

Proposed Local Law #5 of 2019 which proposes creating a supplemental commercial overlay zone on Second Street in the village and Proposed Local Law #6 of 2019 which proposes to add a new chapter to the Village Code entitled ‘Community Choice Aggregation (energy) Program’.

The Mayor opened the public hearing to public comment for proposed local law #6:

Trustee Lipsman gave a brief overview of the program. The Village Board is proposing to determine who will be the supplier for energy for residents of the village. In doing so the cost of energy may go down. In order to do this the village will engage a broker or administrator to shop for the lowest cost for energy. Residents may opt out of the program at any point. The savings annually per household is estimated at \$50.00-\$150.00.

The Mayor noted that this is a New York State incentivized program that uses the aggregate to attain a lower cost. The buying power for the aggregate of the village is more than for an individual.

Village Attorney Tal Rappleyea noted that this law is just the beginning phase or the first step in allowing the Village Board to consider joining this program. The local law is needed in order to pursue the possibility of doing this. It enables the broker/administrator to go out and shop for energy on behalf of the village as a whole. If the VB likes the contract/pricing provided by the Broker they may go forward- but they have to have this law in place in order to take it that far.

A broker/administrator was present to answer any questions.

Public comments/ questions:

- Nancy Poylo- are there any guarantees that the cost will go down?

Response was ‘no’.

- Resident – can you opt out of the program?

Response was ‘yes- there will be plenty of notices and opportunities to opt out’.

- Robert Brunner – are there protections for rising rates?

Response- 'It is a fixed rate- will not go up.'

- Sam Sebren - asked about solar communities. A lot of communities in the Hudson Valley are getting involved in community solar since there are many huge solar farms in our area. Will this prevent us from opting into these?

Response - 'no – but there would not be the buying power'.

- Resident -What is the timetable for this?

Response - The law has to be passed – perhaps in a month- and then the broker can shop prices. Probably 6 months before all is completed.

Public notices – public outreach will take place as well.

- Nancy Poylo- asked how many brokers are being considered.

Reply is '2'.

PUBLIC HEARING for proposed Local Law #6 closes.

Public Hearing for proposed Local Law #5 is opened. This proposed Local Law would create a commercial overlay zone on Second Street:

The Mayor opened up the Public Hearing by stating 'the proposed law #5 is focusing on properties on Second Street which are currently zoned as commercial/residential and trying to maintain the 1st floor as commercial space and prevent further conversion of those spaces to residential space'. If the space is currently residential then it will remain as such. Reverting back to residential from commercial will require a special use permit.

The period for public comment will be open for at least one month. He will be meeting with the Village and County Planning Boards.

Public comment/questions:

Robert Brunner – Why did you choose to bring the overlay up to Church Street?

Response - We are considering bringing the section back down to Warren Street.

Yves Goldberg – which properties or how many have been converted from commercial to residential?

Reply – Not sure off hand but 25 are zoned commercially viable spaces and 17 of them are not utilized or are underutilized.

The Mayor stated that this is a step to preserve these areas for future economic development especially as the village looks for grant opportunities.

Resident - Discussion of workspaces for artists in these spaces ensued. Also will the village promote these spaces?

Response - Mayor – not in this local law – no promotion of the areas. It’s just a step to preserve commercial spaces.

Ron Puhalski - Parking is a problem. Developing commercial spaces is great but the parking is still a problem.

Mayor agrees.

The Clerk noted that there has been a written comment submitted by the Planning Board Chairperson (Margaret Moree) in regard to this proposed local law that will become part of the record.

The Mayor again stated that he will be meeting with the Planning Board Chairperson in the near future to review the proposed local law and her findings.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARINGS (7:00PM):

MOTION made by Trustee Lasher

Seconded by Trustee Serrago

Record of vote: All in favor

OPEN REGULAR MEETING.

PUBLIC:

1. Marty Miller. Re: Riverfront Park –flags. No show.

FACILITY USE APPLICATIONS:

Applicant: Brent E. Rozell. Facility: gym. **MOTION** to approve made by Trustee Serrago, seconded by Trustee Lipsman, all in favor.

Applicant: Seth Weinstein – Greene County Outlaws. Facility – gym. **MOTION** to approve made by Trustee Lasher, seconded by Trustee Serrago, all in favor.

MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS:

1. Proposed Resolution Approving Minutes

BE IT RESOLVED, the Minutes from Village Board meeting held on September 11, 2019 be approved:

Offered by: Trustee Lasher

Seconded by: Trustee Serrago

Record of vote: All in favor

2. Proposed Resolution Approving Payment of Vouchers as Presented

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board approves payment of the following vouchers as presented:

GENERAL – Abstract #2005, vouchers numbered #9919069 through #9919089 in the amount of \$68,912.46.

WATER – Abstract #10457, vouchers numbered #9919090 through #9919092 and voucher #9919095 in the amount of \$1354.64.

SEWER – Abstract #10440, vouchers numbered #9919093 through #9919094 in the amount of \$120.24

Offered by: Trustee Scott

Seconded by: Trustee Lipsman

Record of vote: All in favor

3. Proposed Resolution Approving Support for HALPS

WHEREAS, the Hudson Athens Lighthouse Preservation Society (HALPS) is seeking to have the Hudson-Athens Lighthouse be named to the 2020-2021 Preservation League of NYS Seven to Save list for the purpose of facilitating grant funding for much needed preservation, and

WHEREAS, HALPS has requested that the Village submit a letter of support for the nomination of the lighthouse on this list, and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Athens Village Board approves the Mayor signing a letter of support for HALPS in their request to have the lighthouse named to the list of the 2020-2021 Preservation League's Seven to Save:

Offered by: Trustee Lipsman

Seconded by: Trustee Lasher

Record of vote: All in favor

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Lighthouse Church. Re: 6th Annual Harvest Festival Hay Ride.
2. HALPS (Hudson-Athens Lighthouse Preservation Society). Request for a letter of support for Preservation League of NYS Seven to Save List.
3. Town Board of Athens. Re: Resolution No. 19-26 Local Law #2.
4. PERMA. Re: 2019 Fall Educational Conference.
5. Keith Rodan. Re: Crossroads noise.

The Mayor noted that he did speak to the owners of Crossroads and they are going to look into insulating their refrigeration unit for soundproofing. He will also 'touch base' with Keith Rodan regarding this issue.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. HBO.
2. Community Benefits Grant Application. Village Board members will bring ideas to the next meeting for possible grant application ideas.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Paving between Senior's housing. The Mayor noted that they would like to put drainage in this year on this roadway pending a clearer understanding of where the proposed DPW garage will be constructed.

MOTION made by Trustee Scott, seconded by Trustee Serrago, all in favor to ADJOURN MEETING: 7:50PM

Respectfully submitted by:

Mary Jo Wynne