

Village of Athens Board Meeting

August 9, 2023

Present: Mayor Serrago, Trustee Lasher, Trustee Lipsman, Trustee Phoenix, and Trustee Scott

Meeting began at 6:30pm with pledge to the flag.

Public Hearing:

The Village Board heard comments on amendments to Village of Athens Code Section 201-16: Cutting of Grass, Weeds and Bushes Abutting Streets.

Mayor Serrago explained the procedure that is used now for cutting, lawns, weeds, etc....

Kirsten Bates- Asked to have Christopher Baswells statement read that was sent by email. She continued to say that she is in her 30th year of gardening and she is involved with native plants. She said they transform properties. She said why should I be penalized just because I don't get the work done fast enough. She said you will be hitting people where they are passionate.

Village Attorney Tal Rappelyea said this is not a one-way street and people will get a notice before the cutting is done, and you would still have time to appeal an issue.

Kirsten said she feels the Village is getting into a very grey area.

Nancy Poylo- She said that the visibility at the end of Church and Market is very poor due to a Rose of Sharon.

DPW Supervisor Sprague said they have started trimming alleys next to streets and intersections.

Joshua Barrie- who said he moved here a year and ago and the old law has some language that seems ambiguous. The new law still has the same language.

Rob Brunner- Asked how far back on the property and if the reduction was from 10 inches to 8 inches?

Mayor Serrago said with the former law people were not notified, although we did notify people before doing anything.

Rob Brunner said to try and work with people right away and not make the fine so high.

Hannah Munson said she moved here last November she said that she just did a great amount of yard and landscape work. She said she understands mowing near public roads but then we get into wetlands, I need heavy equipment for that and more clarification.

Written Comments were read aloud, and they came in from:

Philip Miller, Janis Pforsich, Paul Kim and Chris Baswell.

Trustee Lasher said that these rules are geared more towards walkways.

Mayor Serrago said that she appreciates the feedback and she will need to go back to the drawing board. There are several properties where we have gardeners and farmers. She said that maybe her and the Village Attorney could get together and talk about this issue further.

Department Heads:

Northdome-Joe Myers

He said that in July there were two callouts due to electrical issues at the water plant. He said he would like to get the bottles out to residents on the 15th for copper and collect them back on the 16th or 17th. Tomorrow, he said they will start cleaning the big tanks.

Mayor Serrago said they will be spending \$8600.00 of the ARPA money to do this.

Joe said they will then begin flushing from the plant to Dogwood Lane. He spoke about the cost of a harvester and using copper sulfate to inhibit growth.

Trustee Lipsman said that Stephanie Fachene sent a few grant opportunities that may work for this.

Joe said he will keep the board updated.

Mayor Serrago said that she received word that the sewer project was included in the House Appropriation Bill that still needs to be signed into law. She said we will prioritize the sewer.

Joe also explained why the water is turning brown as it reacts with iron and oxidizes. He said we test consistently.

DPW- Chirs Sprague

He said they had completed paving and had a few complaints. He said there was an issue at the Stewart House and while they were there the DPW replaced their lead pipe. They had 3 sump pumps hooked into the sewer and were told to take care of that ASAP. The DPW helped with an electrical problem at the water plant. He said there were 2 new hook ups to the Village system. He said the crew has been trimming alleys and that the new chipper is an asset. He said he spoke with Whitney Parshall's plumber in depth to resolve the issue at that property. He said there is a problem with the alarm at the garage. He spoke about the phone system and getting a dedicated line only for the alarm.

Trustee Lipsman asked about a tree complaint from a few weeks ago.

Chris said the tree is large and they will need help with it. He said he will call the County.

Mayor Serrago said they may need to someone privately to help with this. She also asked Chris about Leah Rhodes sidewalks and about a notice from the Insurance company about the battery disconnect switch on the trucks.

Chris said that Leahs sidewalk is not the villages responsibility, but they can help but it would be at her expense.

Fire Department-Wayne Butterworth

Wayne said that a salesman came in with the newest environmentally safe "stuff", so the fire department can get rid of the foam. The new "stuff" costs the same. He said the radios that were ordered a year ago have finally arrived. He said the department received the money form Hinchey's office for the dive equipment and they will be getting 6 sets of gear.

Athens Police Department-Ed Tercasio

Ed said there was a problem with the computer program not working today. He said it needs an update for \$175.00 and should be done. He said that he and Jeff will be taking a 2-hour course on the 27th.

Trustee Lipsman brought up a noise complaint from a party he attended. He said the complaint came form a senior and the person was concerned about a heart issue. He said an officer came and after he left and the noise continued, but there were no other complaints.

Tercasio said during the day there isn't much that can be done, but if it was after 10pm and we need to come back then they may need to do something. Ed also mentioned he would like to get cameras for the outside of the building. He said that garbage and a dead animal have been left outside.

Mayor Serrago said to go ahead and get the cameras. She said the money could come from different budgets.

Ed said they also have money left to spend on vests.

Code Enforcement-Ed Tercasio and Jeff Ruso

There was no report given.

APPLICATIONS:

1. Facility Use Application- Riverfront Park. Applicant: Marya Warshaw
Offered by: Trustee Lipsman
Seconded by: Trustee Phoenix
Record of vote: All were in favor
2. Facility use Application- Riverfront Park Applicant: Athens Cultural Center
Offered by: Trustee Lasher
Seconded by: Trustee Phoenix

Record of vote: All were in favor

RESOLUTIONS:

1. Proposed Resolution Approving Minutes

BE IT RESOLVED, that Minutes from Village Board meetings held on

Offered by:

Seconded by:

Record of vote:

2. Proposed Resolution Approving Payment of Vouchers as Presented on Abstracts

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

Offered by:

Seconded by:

Record of vote:

There were no minutes or vouchers to approve for this meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Appollo Heating Work Order Firehouse
2. NYMIR: Attached Form to sign concerns over vehicles with battery
3. Aventine Properties LLC: SCAR Petitions filed with the Clerk of the County

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. Leah Rhodes-sidewalk

A **MOTION** was made to adopt the Green Procurement Policy

Offered by: Trustee Lipsman

Seconded by: Trustee Lasher

Record of Vote: All were in favor

Mayor Serrago:

Mayor Serrago said that the outdoor dining law needs to be looked into again by herself and the Village Attorney.

Trustee Lipsman:

Trustee Lipsman spoke about the NY Forward Grant for small villages. He said the application needed to be in by September 29th and a letter of intent of 150 words would be needed by the week of August 16th-18th. He said the idea of this grant would be to increase the presence of buildings in the community and economically develop the Village. He said he has spoke with Jonathan Palmer to get an app and signage together for information on historical buildings. He also said that he and Mayor Serrago will have a call with the Riverene Site the end of August. He said there needed to be an anchor and then 3 or 4 others such as Crossroads and Stewart House.

DPW Supervisor Sprague spoke up about Scenic Hudson and how they leave most projects and then the Village would be alone with the Athens Riverene site.

Trustee Lipsman said there might need to be a public hearing on this.
Mayor Serrago said there would need to be a lot of public input.

Trustee Phoenix:

Trustee Phoenix said she is still working on quotes for the front door.

Trustee Scott:

Trustee Scott said that he and the Mayor were made aware of an issue with the recreation program operating without a permit today. He said the Department of Health did a check at the school today and found the group of kids. Jen had called Dawn and she called the Greene County Youth Bureau. This will drastically change next years program.

The Board went into Executive Session at 8:39 for a personnel issue and was out at 9:04pm when the meeting was adjourned for the evening.

Respectfully submitted,



Dawn M. Palmateer

Deputy Clerk

Village of Athens