

Town Board Workshop
April 30, 2018
Town Hall 836 Route 217, Mellenville, NY 12544
6:00pm

Attendees:

Clifford Weigelt –Supervisor	Stephen Hook	Councilman
Katy Cashen	Councilwoman	
Lauren Bell	Deputy Town Clerk	

Absent:

Brian Keeler	Councilman	Louis LaMont – Superintendent of Highways	
Maryanne Lee	Councilwoman	Robert Fitzsimmons	Town Attorney

The Town Board had invited Robert Gibson from the Columbia County Department of Social Services to hear complaints regarding the Yorkshire Motel. The motel is located within the Town of Claverack, and is a private business the Department of Social Services contracts with to house clients of the department in need of shelter.

Edward Beaty a resident of the Town who lives on Route 23 directly across from the Motel explained various incidents that have occurred with residents of the Motel including trespassing on his property and intimidating moments. He has witnessed various drug raids and a steady stream of police presence. His property was even used by law enforcement for a “stakeout” of the motel.

David Baylen, a resident of the Town who lives nearby the motel stated he has noticed a change in the activity of the motel in the last 10 years. He has witnessed motel patrons walking up his road and the surrounding community. He noted however, the motel is approximately 4 miles to the nearest convenience store and roughly 8 miles to a shopping center and residents of the motel appear to have no transportation to get there. DSS is placing people at the motel with no support. He also informed that as a member of the Churchtown Fire Department, whose jurisdiction the motel is in, most calls require law enforcement to “clear” the area before medical responders can provide aid. He also noted that many of the clients the DSS place in the motel are listed on the Sex Offender Registry which is not a good situation for the homeowners in the area. He concluded, without support services and resources this is not a good situation for DSS clients and residents of the Town.

Edward Beaty proceeded to ask Mr. Gibson if his Department of Social Services was responsible for everyone staying in the motel.

Mr. Gibson informed the group the Yorkshire motel is not County owned or operated. DSS determines eligibility for all manner of social services. They place some people at the Yorkshire, but not all. His department has been aware of the situation for some time and has inspected the space time and again. He wanted everyone to know the owner of the Yorkshire motel owns the Joslen hotel in Greenport as well, another facility the DSS utilizes. Mr. Gibson stated they are trying to utilize the Yorkshire motel less and less because it is so far away from services and his clients are housed with a mixed population that

is less than ideal. He continued his department is looking for and developing alternatives. He is concerned his options are limited, his department has to legally shelter those who are eligible. He concluded he did not come to the meeting with answers but to listen.

Edward Beaty asked what other agencies house residents in the motel? Who should residents contact?

Mr. Gibson does not know what other agencies may or may not use the facility. He is only aware of the requirements his department places on a facility in order to house his clients i.e. clean rooms, changed linens, no drugs, etc. Beyond those, his department has no other jurisdiction to change things.

Supervisor Weigelt interjected he is unaware of any other agency using the facility. He reminded everyone it is a motel that is open and available to the public. He recommended having the Town's attorney look into the legality and standards of the motel within the confines of the Town's zoning code. He also told the group the County is working with the new owner of the Sunset Hotel in Greenport which is being renovated and that will have a staff and support service in place for those clients that are placed there. It is a better scenario.

It was expressed it would be more helpful to the residents of Claverack if they knew if only DSS housed clients there as it seems this department is conscientious about who they place in facilities and the standards they expect of facilities before they can be paid. It was also stated that other Counties may be housing clients in the facility, but there would be no way to monitor this. Someone also stated they believe the facility's owners have received some type of grant and or state funding but were unsure as to the veracity of this and what that would mean.

Brennan Keeler, a resident of the Town and neighbor to the facility noted the residents of the motel are not all DSS clients and stated in his opinion the owners do not care about the facility and or who they are housing and this lack of oversight is well known in the community, thus continuing to attract a negative clientele.

Steven Paradis, a resident of the Town remarked that he had done some research into the grants that have been received, they require standards which are not being maintained. The owners were required to do construction to upgrade the facility to get State aid. He also noted the facility is not manned. He questioned whether it is meeting Department of Health standards as a motel.

Supervisor Weigelt said the Town would look into the requirements for aid that was received and to review the standards of the motel.

Mr. Gibson appreciated hearing from residents and getting notice of what is occurring at the motel because it allows him to check on his clients but also strengthens his argument to not use the facility and further the owner's gains. He stressed the need for the county to find an alternative and to be more accountable to the community.

Tim Smith, a resident of the Town informed the group the Sunset Hotel has a completely different structure and is using parolees to do construction of the facility. It is a model that is working.

Supervisor Weigelt noted he has mentioned this issue at the County meetings and they will continue to research this problem.

Councilwoman Cashen enquired as to whether DSS places sex offenders. Mr. Gibson replied that he places some in housing but not all. He followed by stating his clients are placed temporarily. They are people looking for a permanent solution. The Yorkshire Motel offers not only daily, but weekly and monthly rentals. To Mr. Gibson that would constitute a permanent residence. Councilwoman Cashen followed by asking if his programs require on-site monitoring to which they do not. Mr. Gibson clarified the Sunset Hotel scenario will have on-site monitoring. It will be treated more like a shelter with family spaces and have more requirements and rules that would need to be followed. There would also be no sex offenders placed in the Sunset Hotel facility.

Councilman Hook shared that between January and April there will 18 calls to the police. He informed Mr. Gibson he lives adjacent to the facility and there are 4 minors on the property. He has encountered multiple people in his driveway despite large no trespassing signs.

Brennan Keeler asked Mr. Gibson if sex offenders are placed at the Yorkshire, to which the answer was sometimes but will try not to, but he could not guarantee this. Mr. Keeler inquired as to why sex offenders were excluded from the Sunset facility but not the Yorkshire. Mr. Gibson explained it is a new agreement with the owners; they have the right to first refusal. Only DSS clients will be placed there, no one will be violent or on the sex offender registry. He informed the group that other towns and counties have passed ordinances that place restrictions on who can be placed where, as is the case in Rensselaer County. There was general agreement the Town should look into these ordinances.

Supervisor Weigelt concluded the most crucial fact is not all residents of the motel are placed by DSS.

David Baylen queried as to whether or not the Yorkshire Motel could be considered a motel if there are long term rentals. Supervisor Weigelt expressed the need for the Town to look into this. He stated there needs to be more oversight by the owners.

Mr. Gibson concluded this is the beginning of the conversation but a comprehensive plan for this population needs to be established. He urged residents to continue to reach out to him and reminded everyone his population of clients are generally trying to get themselves back up.

Brennan Keeler commented the owners seem to be the cause. Supervisor Weigelt informed the group the Building Inspector does periodic checks of the facility to make sure they are in compliance. A comment was made that more police monitoring is needed.

The Town Board very briefly continued with their regular workshop.

After discussion and clarification, **Motion** to approve the March 8, 2018 Town Board and March 26, 2018 Workshop and Special Zoning Meeting minutes was made by Councilman Hook, seconded by Councilwoman Cashen. Carried.

Councilman Hook informed the Board residents who do not pay their water bills after 3 notices will be shut off. This was already approved but never placed in practice.

After discussion **Motion** to rollover the bus bid of Michael S. Johnston Bus from last year to this year was made by Councilman Hook, seconded by Councilman Cashen. Carried. Supervisor Weigelt explained the advantage of this is the Town gets billed at last year's rates.

Councilman Hook explained Building Inspector Trapp is performing the work of 3 positions and only being compensated for one. He is the Town's Building Inspector, Code Enforcement Officer as well as the Grant writer. As such he recommended his compensation per hour is commiserate with his experience and job description. **Motion** to increase the Building Inspector rate from \$22/hour to \$30/hour was made by Councilman Hook, seconded by Councilwoman Cashen. Carried.

Motion to move the Town Board Workshop to May 21, 2018 at 6pm at the Town Hall, due to the Memorial Day Holiday, was made by Councilman Hook, seconded by Supervisor Weigelt. Carried.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Councilman Hook, seconded by Councilwoman Cashen. Carried.

Adjourned 7:01pm

**Continuation of Special Meeting regarding Amendments to the
Town of Claverack Zoning Law creating a Planned Development District (PDD)**

April 30, 2018

Town Hall 836 Route 217, Mellenville, NY 12544

7:00pm

Attendees:

Clifford Weigelt –Supervisor	Stephen Hook	Councilman
Katy Cashen	Councilwoman	
Lauren Bell	Deputy Town Clerk	Liz Axelson – Senior Planner, Morris and Associates

Associates

Absent:

Brian Keeler	Councilman	Louis LaMont – Superintendent of Highways	
Maryanne Lee	Councilwoman	Robert Fitzsimmons	Town Attorney

Supervisor Weigelt thanked the members of the Planning Board and Zoning Board for the attendance. Supervisor Weigelt opened the meeting reminding those in attendance there would be no public comments or questions entertained. Documents were made available for the public in attendance to review.

Liz Axelson, Senior Planner, from Morris Associates Engineering, opened the discussion by explaining she is not ready to revise the Draft law because she is hoping for more comments. She produced visual aids for the Boards to review in order to understand footprint versus square footage amounts and how they translate visually. She reminded everyone the PDD is creating a new zoning designation. An applicant would begin the process at the Town Board and would then go between the Planning, Town Boards, and Zoning Boards. A piece of land would be designated a PDD once they have completed the entire process. The Zoning Law and tables the group has been discussing will put limits and requirements on what can be designed to qualify for PDD status.

Supervisor Weigelt says the Board is working diligently to promote a mixed use space, something that fits in our community. Liz Axelson stated that is the general direction most communities are going. Historically, in the 70's and 80's uses were separated. Communities are going away from this trend. She cautioned the Boards to make sure they provide for a truly mixed use space and not lean too much towards either residential or commercial. Councilwoman Cashen wondered, based on the need designated in our Town's Comprehensive Plan, if there was a way to structure a PDD to incentivize builders to create a retirement or assisted living community? Ms. Axelson cautioned the Board on narrowing the language of the law too much because communities thrive better when there is a variety. Discussion followed around how to structure the language to account for the Town's needs. Ms. Axelson reminded everyone if a plan is not to the Board and the Town's liking there are plenty of protocols in place that allow for the Boards to reject a plan.

Discussion ensued about meeting the water and sewer needs this development.

Supervisor Weigelt asked Ms. Axelson to complete the revision of the draft law based on these past meetings. Ms. Axelson reminded the group a PDD does not become active until someone has a project for the site. The Town Board creates the designation by adhering to the steps laid out in the zoning law. This does not change the map yet. Then a developer or owner can start the process to change the map designation. Supervisor Weigelt wondered if someone wanted to create a PDD not in the commercial zone. Ms. Axelson responded a new zoning amendment would have to be made as this one only applies to the commercial zone.

Ms. Axelson said the next steps are to re-write the law and for the Boards to review this followed by beginning the outline for what the Environmental Assessment Review(EAF) documents would contain.

It was suggested to meet back in June to have some time to digest the Zoning Law revisions and allow Ms. Axelson a chance to begin the EAF.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Councilwoman Hook, seconded by Supervisor Weigelt. Carried.

Adjourned 8:15pm

Respectfully submitted,
Lauren Bell - Deputy Town Clerk