

TOWN OF SENECA
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
July 18th, 2023

The Regular Meeting of the Seneca Town Board, County of Ontario, State of New York was held at 3675 Flint Road, Stanley, NY 14561 on the 18TH day of July 2023 at 7:30 pm.

PRESENT	
Drew Wickham	Town Supervisor
Jason Mosher	Councilman/ Deputy Supervisor
Howard Keeney	Councilman
Jim Malyj	Councilman
Jesse Orbaker	Councilman
Haley Eagley	Town Clerk/ Tax Collector
Shana Jo Hilton	Town Assessor
Kathy Mastellar	Town Historian
Jim Lawson	Highway Superintendent
Brian Sanders	Manager of the Ontario County Landfill

Supervisor Wickham called the regular monthly meeting to order at 7:30 pm. Supervisor Wickham led the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call was dispensed with a note that CEO Hoover and Water Superintendent Coolbaugh were necessarily absent.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Supervisor Wickham looked for a motion to approve the agenda for tonight’s meeting. The approval was motioned by Councilman Mosher and seconded by Councilman Orbaker. Motion carried. There were no amendments to the agenda.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Supervisor Wickham looked for anyone who wanted privilege of the floor. Town Resident, Larry Townley, wished to speak on a couple of points. Mr. Townley started off by stating that he appreciated the Board’s progress in putting a moratorium on event centers; however, explained that it’s frustrating to see that this comprehensive plan has been put off for longer than it should have. He explained how frustrating it was to see that the new event center in the town had an event in their building without a Certificate of Occupancy, which means numerous inspections hadn’t been completed at the time they held that event. Mr. Townley went on to explain that a lot of the things that they were supposed to have completed, are not completed such as lighting, shrubbery, and privacy fencing. Mr. Townley said that he feels that it’s making our town look bad. He explained that again tonight before the meeting, the parking lot was full of at least 16 cars and a large passenger van. Mr. Townley said that, in his opinion, the comment made about this event center increasing the value of a property is a joke and that this is a rural, agricultural community. Back when this process started, Mr. Townley said some of the notes made explained that this event center was “far-reaching” for the area it is in. Mr. Townley said that he feels this is out of control.

He, again, said that he appreciates the Board moving forward with a Moratorium on Event Centers in the Town, but also feels that there should be one on Vacation Rentals. He explained that there are more Vacation Rentals in the Town than we are aware of. Mr. Townley wants to know when it’s going to stop. He feels that there should be a Moratorium on vacation rentals until the proper codes are set in place so that CEO Hoover can enforce them with inspections, fees, and whatever else has to be done. He said that everywhere in the county is struggling with this and a lot of them owning these properties aren’t people who live here. He went on to talk about the fact that there is a housing shortage in Ontario County and that people are buying up and advertising vacation rentals. He feels that we should stand up as a Board and a Town and stop it.

Mr. Townley said that his family has been here for over 75 years and that he stayed here for a reason: because it’s a rural community and now he’s had random people walking through the gully of his house and people walking up and down the roads that we’ve never seen before. He added that there are four wheelers running around the solar farm in his area and that he believes they’re coming from a Vacation Rental. He explained

TOWN OF SENECA
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
July 18th, 2023

that corn was getting run over in the field and the landowners were getting angry. He said that it's time that we make a move here and do something about this.

Supervisor Wickham thanked Mr. Townley for his comments and asked if there was anybody else that would like to speak.

Marissa (Turnbull) Bournique, of Turnbull Road, wished to echo and add to some of Mr. Townley's comments. She said that she is the 7th generation to live here. After a pretty lengthy hiatus, she's very proud to live back in this area and she is also very concerned about this event venue space that is within feet of her property line. In summary of her involvement with this event center, she said that she feels that this Town and/or area is being taken advantage of by individuals who are very aggressively moving forward with things. Mrs. Bournique wanted to clarify that she is very "pro" small-business and that she thinks it is great for the area, but that she doesn't believe that it's great for this particular instance. She explained that she feels that the cart is very much in front of the horse and that a lot of the conversation topic driven by the other boards was empathy. She explained that rules are in place for a reason and that she is very well versed in all things related to live events as she has played a big part in planning large events for the past 20 years. She recently hosted an event for 89,000 people in Los Angeles and is getting ready to host an event for 60,000 people in two weeks. She said that life safety is incredibly important to her and what's more important is the integrity of the area. Rules are meant to be followed to protect the people who are attending these events, which also protects the owners of these events from a legal standpoint. She explained that, selfishly, she would also like to protect the integrity of this area. It means a lot to her, and she absolutely feels that rules aren't being followed, corners are being cut and to occupy a building without a Certificate of Occupancy is absolutely illegal and those are concerns that cannot be overlooked. She's concerned about what the forward-going picture looks like. She knows that there are a lot of concerns that she doesn't feel are being addressed at the initial level continuing up to the county level. She said that she is happy to prioritize these concerns in a list, she doesn't want to waste anybody's time, but that there are very specific bullet points that were outlined, drafted, and shared that were completely disregarded when they held their grand opening. Explaining that this event was advertised and very well could have attracted 500 people; however, there was a thunderstorm that day and the event happened to shut down within 30 minutes of a severe thunderstorm. She went on to explain that a lot of things could have happened. There could have been flooding, they could have been stuck there until dark and there was no clear-lit path to get people back to a parking lot that is hardly considered a parking lot (being a pile of stone that has been flattened). She said that these are some of the small, anecdotal points that need to be thought about. She ended by stating that her concern is for herself, her neighbors, and the integrity of the area being jeopardized because we are allowing a group of individuals to pass through this because of their financial situation. Allowing them to do things that aren't up to par and aren't up to the current code and she feels that they're just looking the other way while we re-evaluate what this means for the future of places like this, and she feels that the Town is also looking the other way on this as well.

Supervisor Wickham thanked Mrs. Bournique for her comments.

Mr. Townley also wanted to add, quickly, that the event center is also advertising rental houses on the property that were never part of their application.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

WATER RATE STUDY: Supervisor Wickham said that, as mentioned last month, we had received our water rate study back that we had done through the Rural Water Association. He said that there was a meeting and there is discussion about adjusting the local water rate as well as any sales to other municipalities that we make. The target is to make this adjustment for the January 1, 2024 Water Billing.

COUNTY ROAD 4 & COUNTY ROAD 20 UPDATE: Supervisor Wickham thinks that this has calmed down a bit now that frequent travelers have found their detour and are familiar with it. The County has improved signage since the start. We're looking to do everything that we can to mitigate any issues with that area.

TOWN OF SENECA
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
 July 18th, 2023

STANLEY, HALL, GORHAM AMBULANCE: Financing is coming together from Lyons National Bank. They are working with their contractor as well as Lyons National Bank to move forward with their building. If there are any questions, Mrs. Gibeau would be happy to answer them for you.

Supervisor Wickham looked for a motion to approve the Minutes for the June 20th, 2023, Regular meeting Councilman Keeney made the motion and councilman Malyj seconded. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS

All communications were reviewed and are available to view during business hours at the Town Hall upon request.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

HIGHWAY: Councilman Mosher asked if there was any indication on the pricing for the next truck and what the price increase would be for that. Highway Superintendent Lawson explained that with the sander that has to be purchased this year, it will be close to \$90,000. The last truck was \$50,000 and we re-used the sander that was in the previous truck.

CEO: CEO Hoover will be holding a ZBA Workshop on Thursday, July 27, 2023 to discuss both the wedding venue and Vacation Rentals.

CASELLA: Mr. Sanders said that gas construction has been sent out for RFP and they're waiting for bids to return on that. They expect this will be a middle to late August occurrence. He reported no issues with leachate or storm water. He has not put a drop of leachate in the new tank. He explained about 30% decrease in leachate between this year and last year.

Supervisor Wickham looked for a motion to accept the Supervisor, Town Clerk, and CEO Financial Reports. A motion was made by Councilman Malyj and Seconded by Councilman Mosher.

NEW BUSINESS

RES. NUMBER	TITLE	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	MOTION	SECOND
#69-23	Authorization to pay the 2023 Audited Vouchers	5	0	0	Councilman Orbaker	Councilman Mosher
#70-23	Authorizing Sale of Town-Owned Property	5	0	0	Councilman Mosher	Councilman Keeney
#71-23	Authorization to schedule a public hearing for Proposed Local Law establishing a moratorium on Event Venues.	5	0	0	Councilman Keeney	Councilman Malyj

Councilman Orbaker had a question regarding the proposed Moratorium

He wanted to clarify what this specifically defines. He wondered if this would put a stop to all event centers (including current) or just future event venue builds. He wondered if this moratorium would stop current businesses from having events such as some of the places on 5 & 20 like the new Legion, Pick N Patch, Sweet Acres, Etc. Supervisor Wickham clarified that this will only put a stop to the application of an event venue in a residential area. Any application in an area that's not commercially zoned or considered a home-based business will be paused.

OLD BUSINESS

Councilman Mosher wanted to mention that he's done research on Short-Term Rentals and how other NYS Governments are handling them. He has information that would be helpful to look at when we move forward with the comprehensive plan. Supervisor Wickham clarified that the Comprehensive Plan is more of a location issue and doesn't have too much to do with the regulations. He said that the regulations would be more of a

TOWN OF SENECA
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
July 18th, 2023

planning and zoning issue. CEO Hoover will take it to the Planning Board to begin to draft regulations on Short-Term Rentals. He will also provide to the board what some of our neighboring communities have done.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Privilege of the Floor was offered, and Mr. Townley added that he's concerned about the transparency of this town. He explained that years ago they used to read their reports out loud for the public to hear and now the public is made the FOIL them. He thinks that the public should have access to what each department is doing each month.

Town Resident, Ben Wickham, added that he would be interested in being on the committee for the Comprehensive Plan.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:13 pm, Supervisor Wickham looked for a motion to go into executive session regarding the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal, or removal of a particular person or corporation. Councilman Orbaker made the motion that was seconded by Councilman Mosher. There will be no business to complete after the executive session.

At 8:49 pm a motion was made by Councilman Keeney to exit executive session. That motion was seconded by Councilman Mosher.

At 8:50 pm a motion was made by Councilman Orbaker to adjourn the regular monthly meeting of the Town Board and the motion was seconded by Councilman Malyj.

Respectfully,
Haley Eagley
Town Clerk