

Catskill Town Board Monthly Meeting
Catskill Town Hall
March 4, 2008 6:30 pm

Attendance: Peter Markou, Supervisor
Robert Antonelli, Councilman
Lewis O'Connor, Councilman
Patrick Walsh, Councilman
Michael Smith, Councilman
Elizabeth Izzo, Clerk

Supervisor Markou opened the meeting with a moment of silent prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

He then reviewed the minutes:

02/05/2008 Public Hearing #5-2008 Senior Citizen/Low Income Disability
Tax Exemption
Motion Councilman Antonelli
Second Councilman Smith
Ayes 5, Nays 0, Absent 0

02/05/2008 Public Hearing #6-2008 "Cold War" Veteran's Exemption
Motion Councilman Antonelli
Second Councilman Walsh
Ayes 5, Nays 0, Absent 0

02/05/2008 Monthly Town Board Meeting
Motion Councilman Antonelli
Second Councilman Smith
Ayes 5, Nays 0, Absent 0

02/20/2008 Monthly Town Board Committee Meeting
Motion Councilman Antonelli
Second Councilman Walsh
Ayes 5, Nays 0, Absent 0

He then reviewed the resolutions:

RESOLUTION # 33-2008

SCHEDULE PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR
SMALL CITIES GRANT FOR CATSKILL
COMMUNITY CENTER

Councilman Antonelli presented the following for consideration and adoption,

WHEREAS, the Catskill Town Board has passes a resolution to jointly apply for a grant from the Governor's Office for Small Cities, Community Center, with the Village of Catskill, so

THEREFORE WE, the Catskill Town Board will schedule the first (1st) Public Hearing for Tuesday, March 18, 2008 at 6:00 pm, to discuss the Small Cities program, including guidelines, regulations and requirements, as well as how the program will proceed if the application is funded. The second (2nd) Public Hearing for Tuesday, March 25, 2008 at 6:00 pm, to discuss the second part which will be the Town's application, including specific application components and requirements, budget estimates and implementation procedures. The Public Hearings will both be held at Catskill Town Hall, 439-441 Main Street, Catskill, NY.

Councilman O'Connor seconded this motion.

Ayes 5, Nays 0, Absent 0

Motion Carried

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Councilman O'Connor, seconded this motion.

Ayes 5, Nays 0, Absent 0

Motion Carried

RESOLUTION # 34-2008

TO ENDORSE THE NEW YORK STATE
PROPERTY TAXPAYERS PROTECTION
ACT

Councilman Antonelli, presented the following for consideration and adoption,

WHEREAS, the tremendously high property tax burden on New York families and businesses is the number one issue facing our community today, and the sheer cost of living in New York has forced many residents and businesses to leave, thus slowing the economic engine of the state; and

WHEREAS, young people are finding it difficult to purchase homes, seniors are struggling to maintain their homes, and businesses are facing immense challenges to create and retain jobs; and

WHEREAS, New Yorkers face the highest property taxes in the nation, and when measured as a percentage of home value, nine of the top 10 property tax rates in the entire country belong to counties in New York; and the State must act now to thwart the detrimental effects that high property taxes are having on local governments; and

WHEREAS, Assembly Minority Conference Members have introduced the “New York State Property Taxpayers Protection Act” (Assembly Bill 8775-A), which puts forth new and innovative ideas for property tax reform that limit the amount school districts can raise annually through local tax levies to four percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is less; in addition the Act would relieve municipalities and school districts of unfunded mandates, reduce county Medicaid costs, strengthen financial accountability over school tax dollars, promote local government efficiency, and encourage local option insurance pooling; and

WHEREAS, the “New York State Property Taxpayers Protection Act” will help fix New York’s broken property tax system, providing homeowners, businesses and municipalities significant and lasting relief from the crushing burden of skyrocketing property taxes; so

THEREFORE WE, the Catskill Town Board resolve that this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to acknowledge New York State’s property tax crisis and urge the immediate passage and chaptering of the “New York State Property Taxpayers Protection Act”, which will help local governments reinvigorate New York’s economy by providing incentives for people and businesses to move and stay here; and be it further

RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Governor of the State of New York, the Temporary President of the New York State Senate, the Speaker of the New York State Assembly, and to each member of the New York State Legislature.

Councilman Walsh & Supervisor Markou, seconded this resolution

Ayes 5, Nays 0, Absent 0

Motion Carried

Supervisor Markou reviewed the County resolutions:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Resolution # 76-08 | Approving Reimbursement to Community Colleges
(Catskill's share is \$578.02) |
| Resolution # 77-08 | Approving Apportionment of Dog license moneys
(Catskill's share is \$403.12) |
| Resolution # 88-08 | Authorizing Greene County Treasurer to Provisionally
Cancel Unenforceable Taxes Located in the Town of
Catskill Identified as Tax Map Number 156.13-11-1 |

Supervisor Markou then spoke about new business. He polled the Board. Councilman O'Connor stated the ambulance trailer has been removed from Brown's Crossing. He then spoke about the noise ordinance issue. He ceded to Councilman Smith who spoke about it in greater detail. He stated they are looking into two issues in regards to the ordinance. One is the enforceability of the law and the other is the ambiguity in connection with the noise decibel level and enforcement. The Board is revisiting the concern of the decibel level and Supervisor Markou is in discussion with law enforcement regarding enforceability.

Councilman Walsh stated there was vandalism at the Washington Irving Senior Center: graffiti. The police are working on the case. The cameras have recorded skateboarders on the property who the police believe were the vandals.

Councilman Antonelli had nothing to state.

Councilman Smith spoke about the need for volunteers in the Fire Departments. Some volunteers no longer live in the area where they are volunteers. He believes this issue will escalate as society matures. He has contacted the Fire Departments to discuss the issue. He believes one solution may be to have a cadet program with the High School students to recruit volunteers and to also look at drawing volunteers from the older members of the community and to provide incentives for volunteerism. He is hoping that a meeting will occur to pursue and discuss this issue. He believes this is an important issue.

Supervisor Markou reviewed the Correspondence:

Letter from Greene County Correctional Facility thanking the staff who assisted in the structure fire on their grounds.

Letter from New York State Commission on Property Tax Relief regarding meeting dates about the issue. Albany's meeting is scheduled for April 23.

Memo from Dan Howard, Planning Board Chair, regarding the Board's interest in reviewing and revising Section 138 of the Town Code, "streets and sidewalks" for smaller subdivisions.

Mr. Howard approached the Board regarding the issue.

Councilman O'Connor felt that the standards cannot be lowered incase the Town needs to take over the road. The Comprehensive Plan Committee, in its recommendation, felt that the standard may be too much for all roads in the Town, especially if a person is having a smaller subdivision. The roads however will still need to be built according to highway standards, whether private or not, however, people have walked away from smaller subdivisions because for a three to four house subdivision, establishing a 30 foot wide road is cost prohibitive.

Councilman Smith asked what the proposal would be in terms of modification of the law. Dan stated no immediate proposal but maybe a tier system. Mike Sterthouse can do a law search to see what other Towns may have to not reinvent the wheel. The Planning Board is concerned that we have a cookie cutter standard.

Councilman Smith asked if the standard is the same for 4 acres or 50 acres. Dan stated yes. Councilman Smith suggested that maybe the standard could be acreage to determine the size of the road. Dan stated it depends on the proposal because you may have 10 acres with only one or two houses on it and then have one and a half acres with 6 houses on it. Councilman Smith stated to have the Planning Board present a concept to review. Dan stated this is why he is here, to see if there is any interest from the Board, in pursuing this matter.

Councilman O'Connor wants to review the subdivision law in whole. He is concerned about minor subdivisions and believes the law can be changed to make it more user friendly. He believes the cost is high if someone wants to give a piece of their property to their son. He did not vote for this when it initially came before the Board. He states that the minor subdivision needs to be reviewed because we have people paying taxes on property and we are making them spend more money to give a piece of property to the family. He wants this reviewed when the roads are reviewed. He states the subdivision law was pushed through.

Dan Howard disagreed with him that the subdivision law was pushed through. Councilman Walsh wants to check with other communities as well. Councilman O'Connor said if it needs to be reviewed, then review, but wants other items reviewed as well. Councilman O'Connor does not want Mr. Sterthouse involved in checking with other communities in order to save money. He stated members of the Planning Board can do this.

Supervisor Markou polled the Board. It will be reviewed.

Dan also asked about the third County resolution. The property in question is in Jefferson Heights before Snake Road. The property was sold before this resolution. It used to be a dump site.

Supervisor Markou reviewed the Reports.

Supervisor Markou opened the floor to public comment. Gary Kistingner approached the Board regarding the planning board and the subdivision laws. His concern within the Town is the subdivision law and requested the Town Board to review the law. He feels it is a cookie cutter plan and doesn't feel that it fits for Catskill.

Supervisor Markou asked if anyone else would like to be heard. Without any interest a motion to end the meeting was made by Councilman Antonelli and seconded by Councilman O'Connor. Meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Izzo
Town Clerk