

**Danby Town Board
Minutes of Regular Meeting
February 13, 2017**

Present:

Councilpersons: Ric Dietrich (Supervisor), Rebecca Brenner, Leslie Connors, Jim Holahan, Jack Miller

Others Present:

Town Clerk Pamela Goddard
Planner CJ Randall
Public Mary Ann Barr, Alex Pfeifer, Roger Grant, Pat Woodworth, Charles Tilton, Mary Woodsen, Zach Blazek, Ted Crane, Ronda Roaring, Katharine Hunter

Regular Meeting Opened at 7:08pm

Privilege of the Floor

Roger Grant welcomed the new Town Historians and expressed displeasure regarding the process by which the old Town Historian was, “let go.” He submitted a written list of questions/statements to the Board and departed.

Pat Woodworth spoke regarding the Planning Board appointment. Woodworth noted that, according to the Planning Board minutes, representative Selin had an attendance record of only 52% of meetings. She expressed her concern that his seat is often vacant due to his inability to attend meetings.

Ronda Roaring asked the Board to contact the Tompkins County Highway Department in regards to repair to dangerous potholes on South Danby Road.

Ted Crane spoke regarding the pending appointment to the Planning Board with concerns about attendance.

CAC Interview - Mary Woodsen

Woodsen’s previous term on the CAC had expired and she reapplied for another term. The Board had a discussion with Mary Woodsen about Conservation Advisory Council activities, focusing on her interests and concerns. Woodsen suggested that the CAC could use more information regarding the tax implications of Conservation Easements. The Town Attorney will address the CAC on this matter.

The Board asked various questions of Woodsen. There was discussion about the status of pending Easements and compiling a Natural Resources Inventory. Dietrich supported Woodsen’s continued involvement with the CAC.

RESOLUTION NO. 27 OF 2017 - APPOINTMENT OF CONSERVATION ADVISORY BOARD REPRESENTATIVE

Resolved, That the Town Board of the Town of Danby re-appoints Mary Woodsen to a two year term on the Conservation Advisory Council, effective January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2018.

Moved by Brenner, Second by Holahan. The motion passed.

In Favor: Brenner, Connors, Holahan, Miller, Dietrich

Historian's Report

Mary Ann Barr and Alex Pfeifer presented a preliminary plan of work for the new Town Historian team. Their agenda for the coming year includes researching and writing essays on local history for History Center Projects and for publication on the Town of Danby web site, meeting with the previous historian to facilitate the return of historical materials and files, producing at least one public program, and attending monthly meetings of the Municipal Historians of Tompkins County.

The Historians had some questions of the Board regarding what information there may be regarding a job description from the Town, and any inventory of what might be in the possession of the previous historian. Connors responded to the question of an Historian's job description, noting a draft from 2014. The Historians will review this and bring back their thoughts to the Board. There was some discussion regarding creating a presence on the Town of Danby web site. The Historians will be put in touch with the Danby webmaster.

The Historians would like to house all of the historical files and artifacts in the Town Hall. There was discussion regarding the best process for the return of materials in the possession of the previous Historian. This includes return of the key to the artifact display case in the Town Hall.

Warrants

ABSTRACT #2 OF 2017:

FIRE DISTRICT

#1 for a total of \$514,000.00

**Moved by Connors, Second by Holahan. The motion passed.
In Favor: Brenner, Connors, Holahan, Miller, Dietrich**

GENERAL FUND

#24-72 for a total of \$31,108.53

**Moved by Connors, Second by Holahan. The motion passed.
In Favor: Brenner, Connors, Holahan, Miller, Dietrich**

HIGHWAY FUND

#6-26 for a total \$74,269.96

**Moved by Miller, Second by Brenner. The motion passed.
In Favor: Brenner, Connors, Holahan, Miller, Dietrich**

WEST DANBY WATER DISTRICT

#4-10 for a total of \$2,407.85

**Moved by Holahan, Second by Brenner. The motion passed.
In Favor: Brenner, Connors, Holahan, Miller, Dietrich**

Approve Town Board Minutes

MOTION—APPROVE MINUTES

Resolved, That the Town Board of the Town of Danby approves the minutes of December 12 and 19, 2016, and the minutes of January 9 and 16, 2017.

**Moved by Brenner, Second by Holahan. The motion passed.
In Favor: Brenner, Holahan, Miller
Abstain: Connors, Dietrich**

Appointments

There was discussion of appointments to the Planning Board and for CAC Chair. Clerk Goddard noted that there were two applicants for the vacant seat on the Planning Board, only one of which had been interviewed. The second applicant is not available to speak to the TB on Monday nights. Dietrich moved that Scott Davis be appointed to the vacant seat on the Planning Board. Dietrich expressed the view that attendance is important for this Board, which only meets once a month. In recent months, the PB has had difficulty maintaining a quorum for its meetings.

Connors made comments regarding this PB appointment. She noted that attendance has been a problem with this Board, but questioned whether attendance is the most important thing? This might eliminate people with young children, seasonally intensive jobs, and other considerations. Connors suggested that the TB think of creative ways to overcome this obstacle. Connors noted the value of having someone with an agriculture background on the Planning Board. Selin is the only recent member of the PB with this background. In Connors view, such experience matters.

Dietrich agreed that these are important considerations. However, if people with qualifications do not attend their value is lost. He expressed the view that this is a voting board and that attendance is of great importance and that members of volunteer boards have a responsibility to meet this commitment.

Clerk Goddard pointed out a requirement in Danby's municipal Planning Board law that four or more absences is grounds for removal of an appointee. (See Town of Danby LL #2 of 2007). Goddard noted that she has been concerned about this for many years. Miller asked whether this requirement has been enforced in the past? Goddard and Dietrich noted that the Town is making an effort to bring this and other policies and procedures into better compliance.

There was a general discussion regarding improving communication regarding expectations of appointees to this and other positions. The Board also briefly discussed potential ways to make it easier for young parents to be involved in municipal business.

RESOLUTION NO. 28 OF 2017—APPOINTMENT OF PLANNING BOARD REPRESENTATIVE

Resolved, That the Town Board of the Town of Danby appoints Scott Davis to a seven year term on the Planning Board, effective February 13, 2017 through December 31, 2023.

Moved by Dietrich, Second by Brenner. The motion passed.

In Favor: Brenner, Holahan, Dietrich

Opposed: Connors, Miller

Dietrich reported that he had communicated with members of the Conservation Advisory Council, including past Chair Joel Gagnon and Matt Ulinski. Dietrich expressed the view that the CAC needs a shift in direction. Ulinski is agreeable to serving as Chair. There is no opposition from other members of the CAC.

RESOLUTION NO. 29 OF 2017—APPOINTMENT OF CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL CHAIR

Resolved, That the Town Board of the Town of Danby appoints Matt Ulinski to Chair of the Conservation Advisory Council.

Moved by Dietrich, Second by Brenner. The motion passed.

In Favor: Brenner, Connors, Holahan, Miller, Dietrich

Brenner was Excused from the meeting, in order to take care of family matters.

2017 Priorities Discussion

The Board held a preliminary discussion regarding three major areas that are targeted as priorities for 2017: review and action on Danby Planned Development Zones, direction and actions for the Conservation Advisory Council, and review of potential development concerns/interests in the Danby Hamlet area. These priorities are a result from the November 29, 2016 joint board scoping meeting.

Randall gave an update on the status of these three projects. She described these as long term and with complicated scopes. The inventory of Planned Development Zones is on-going. The Records

Management Assistant, Mary Ann Barr, has continued to uncover records pertaining to Danby's PDZs. Randall is working on an improved Townwide map of the PDZs. Connors asked whether any are complete enough for review and possible action. Randall said yes, and that PDZ #1 needs to be addressed. She asked whether the TB wanted her to focus on the high priority cases? The Board agreed with this suggestion.

Randall reported on an update of Hamlet considerations. She suggested that the Board consider selective rezoning for some parcels, as higher density and mixed use. Randall suggested investigating the feasibility of water and sewer systems as a first step. Dietrich supported this idea and suggested applying for funds to conduct an engineering study. Other members of the Board supported a preliminary engineering study to assess feasibility of development in this area. There was a brief discussion of potential sources of funding.

Randall reported that the CAC is now excited about the Natural Resource Inventory process and sees how this will be a useful tool. Work will begin on this over the next few months. Attorney Krogh will attend a CAC meeting to provide information about tax implications of conservation easements.

Randall introduced intern, Zach Blazek. Blazek will be working on various sustainability efforts including the Climate Smart Communities survey. Blazek will also be assisting with administrative work in the Planning office.

There was an update on Broadband buildout in Danby from Supervisor Dietrich. He provided information that the buildout on Durfee Hill and Steam Mill Roads is close to complete. Dietrich stated that there is an attempt to do a similar community buildout on South Danby Road.

Solar Zoning information reported by Planner Randall. Randall distributed information from TCOG about possible zoning issues related to large solar installations. Two are currently planned for Tompkins County, one in Dryden and a second in Newfield connected to the West Danby substation. These are in the range of 50+ acres of solar. Randall suggested that, due to the potential of such an installation in Danby, the TB should adopt appropriate zoning rules. She noted that there are many excellent models, such as those from the Towns of Ulysses and Dryden and Sullivan County, and it would not be difficult to adapt one for Danby. Randall believed that a final version of a Danby Zoning Law could be prepared in a few months.

The Board asked several questions about potential tax abatement/Payment in Lieu of Taxes plans being considered by Tompkins County Economic Development and about the carrying capacity of the West Danby substation and related infrastructure. Randall will research these questions and provide additional information to the board at a future meeting.

There was a review and discussion of correspondence related to the South Hill Recreation Way. Most of the correspondence to the TB was from some residents of Caroline who are opposed to the trail. Randall reported that, over all, there is overwhelming support for a buildout of the trail.

Connors reported a question from a resident on Middaugh Road (in the Town of Caroline) as to whether there is any way to reroute the trail in some places?" There was a brief discussion regarding involvement and notification of some residents. Connors reported that she is very supportive of trails, but wants to be sensitive to landowner concerns. Some of the confusion on the part of property owners is in regards to NYSEG rights of way through private property.

Randall noted that full information is on the South Hill Recreation Way web site. She noted that the route is still in the preliminary stages and that public comment is still being gathered.

Code/Planning Report

Randall reported on activities in the Planning Office. The Verizon wireless tower has been approved. The next Planning Board agenda, for its February 16 meeting, will be quite full: "Blue Sky" on Gunderman Road (a project of David Hall) is approaching the Planning Board for a special permit. National Book Auctions (also David Hall) has submitted a request for modification of its site plan. The Waldorf School has submitted a proposal for its "Phase two expansion." Information for all of these proposals are posted on the Danby web site.

Connors added that there was concern, regarding the Verizon tower project, that notification was not earlier enough for some residents (especially those in the Town of Ithaca). Connors suggested that Danby could be doing more and better notification. Randall stated that this is being addressed.

Randall reported that the County Records office approached Danby to be part of a grant project to digitally scan older and large format maps. Records Management Assistant, Mary Ann Barr, is working with Randall to identify maps of historical value for this project.

Short Reports

Justices' Reports from Klinger and Huddle were circulated among the Board.

The Town Clerk's Report was circulated among the Board.

Clerk Goddard reported correspondence from the Dept. of Assessment, that the TB will need to appoint Local Board of Assessment Review for 2017, and set date for the review day. This can be done at either the next TB meeting or in March. Clerk Goddard will contact the two persons who have served on this Board for several years to see if they are interested in serving again.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Pamela Goddard, Town Clerk