

**Danby Town Board
Minutes of Regular Meeting
July 9, 2018**

Present:

Councilpersons: Leslie Connors, Ric Dietrich (Supervisor), Jim Holahan, Matt Ulinski

Not Present:

Councilperson: Jack Miller

Others Present:

Town Clerk Pamela Goddard
Code Officer Paul Hansen
Public Ted Crane, Ronda Roaring, Pat Woodworth

Regular Meeting Opened at 7:08pm

Privilege of the Floor

Ronda Roaring spoke regarding the draft Code of Ethics, encouraging the Board to use the singular “they” rather than him/her or he/she. There was verbal support for this from the Board and the Clerk.

Planning Board Chair

Supervisor Dietrich reported on inconclusive conversations with various PB members. No clear direction, as of this meeting, for a preferred Chair. Dietrich informed the Board that, while certain people have been nominated, it’s not clear whether those people are willing to serve. The PB meets once before the next TB meeting. Dietrich stated that, lacking clear direction, he would prefer to wait for an appointment. Connors stated that she would also suggest waiting, and have the PB appoint an interim Chair for its next meeting. Holahan and Ulinski supported this suggestion. No action was taken.

Code of Ethics

Ulinski and Connors distributed the most current draft of a proposed Town of Danby Code of Ethics. Ulinski suggested waiting for any action, until the full Board was available for final discussion and a vote.

There was a brief discussion of a proposed Annual Disclosure Statement form. The Town Clerk suggested that the current form may not be the most useful, informative, or pertinent to potential conflicts of interest. The current form asks elected and appointed officials, and key employees, to disclose any affiliations with, “organizations with which the Town of Danby may have a financial relationship.” (This form was adapted from one used for non-profit Foundations.) Clerk Goddard noted that there are few organizations with which the Town has ongoing financial relationships, and that it is not well known what those organizations are. At the very least, a list of organizations with financial relationships with the Town should be included in the Code of Ethics. Goddard suggested that Bookkeeper Shawley be consulted on this matter.

Further, the most common potential conflicts of interest would be on a case-by-case basis related to special permits, zoning appeals, and other special requests to the Town. These ethical conflicts would not be represented in an Annual Disclosure form.

There was further discussion of an Ethics Advisory Board to govern the policy and adjudicate disputes and concerns. The current draft includes a proposed three member board, including a “employee” member, a member of the Town Board, and one member of either the Planning Board or Board of Zoning Appeals.

Ted Crane asked how this composition was determined? Supervisor Dietrich recalled discussion at the previous meeting of possible configurations. Ulinski stated that there was interest in having a small board which would be easy to appoint, without the need to solicit citizen interest. Crane cited the NYS Department of State *Model Code of Ethics For Local Governments*, which says that a majority of an Ethics Advisory Board should *not* be members of Boards or employees of a municipality, although at least one of whom must be. Crane noted that the current configuration has the appearance of a lack of transparency, as those who would be reviewing complaints of Ethics violations would be those whose employment or appointment is dependent on the Town Board; a random selection from a pool of volunteers might be more appropriate. Ulinski stated that the intent was to avoid the creation of another board, with the need to solicit new volunteers. Pat Woodworth commented that this is another board, and that “it is a bit weird” to have members of the boards review potential conflicts of interest in their own boards.

Crane suggested that a definition be added to clarify what is meant by “material benefit.”

Discussion will continue at the next TB meetings.

Planning Board Vacancy

Clerk Goddard noted that there is a third potential applicant for the Planning Board vacancy. She asked whether the Board wished to schedule interviews for the applicants, to take place during the August meetings. The Board indicated that this is acceptable.

Electric Vehicle Charging Station

Paul Hansen distributed a draft plan for the installation of a dual-port Electric Vehicle (EV) charging station. The current plan is for the charging station and parking spaces to be near the north side of Town Hall, in the area of an existing garden and cistern. The plan includes further renovation of the entrance walkway and handicap access ramp, in order to bring the slope angle of the ramp into ADA compliance. Once construction on these various elements is completed, the gardens will be restored and replanted. Hansen suggested that the various stages of construction be bid out separately, as small projects. Once bid estimates are in, the Board will review the costs and determine the source of funds.

There was a brief discussion as to the feasibility of combining the EV charging parking spots with a potential handicap access parking spot. The size of the EV parking spaces are also compliant for accessibility parking.

The EV charging station itself should be delivered soon. Hansen asked for approval to secure an electrician’s estimate for work to install the station at this location. This was verbally approved.

Code Report

Hansen gave a brief report of the status of various violations and enforcement.

Short Reports - Correspondence

Clerk Goddard shared communication from NYS Department of Transportation regarding speed limit reduction on South Danby Road. Based on the existing roadside development, test drives, and accident analysis, the DOT investigation determined that the current speed limit is appropriate for this location. The communication continued, *“Studies conducted throughout the country have shown that drivers are influenced more by the appearance of the highway itself and the prevailing traffic conditions rather than by the posted speed limit signs. If speed limit signs are posted for a lower limit than is needed, many drivers will simply ignore the signs. At the same time, other drivers will stay within the posted speed limit. This increases the conflicts between faster and slower drivers, reduces the gaps in traffic, and increases the difficulty for pedestrians and other vehicles to judge the speed of approaching vehicles. The difference in speeds may also create aggressive driving conditions.”*

There was a discussion regarding this view of setting speed limits. Goddard reported on a phone discussion with a NYS DoT representative, expressing the same rationale for not extending the reduced the speed limit on Route 96B northward beyond East/West Miller Roads. The DoT encourages “traffic calming” measures to encourage slower driving. However, there are no clear guidelines or standards for what these traffic calming measures might be.

Supervisor Dietrich reported a related discussion with the State DoT regarding a plan for a proposed bus shelter at the Danby Community Park and a needed crosswalk. They also discussed alternative methods to slow traffic for their effectiveness. Further discussions and meetings with the State DoT will be held.

Goddard shared information about local “food hubs” in Danby, where gardeners may share their excess produce for use with the food network. Produce is collected on Wednesdays at 222 Bald Hill Road and at the corner of Hornbrook and Marsh roads.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Pamela Goddard, Town Clerk