

Notes from the February 2021 meeting of the Hamilton, NY, Town Council (2.11.21)

The regular monthly meeting of the Hamilton Town Council convened February 11 via Zoom.

Chris Rossi, who heads the Town's Zoning Update Committee and represents the Town on the Hamilton Climate Preparedness Working Group (HCPWG), reported recent activity for both groups.

- *The Zoning Update Committee* is still working on a draft for review by the Town Council and legal counsel. The committee hopes to submit their draft in April.
- *HCPWG* has been coordinating and supporting a joint effort by the Town and Village of Hamilton to develop local strategies (a "Climate Action Plan") for addressing climate change. The draft plan has just been completed and will be submitted to the Town Council for review and further discussion. HCPWG is also in discussion with the Finger Lakes Climate Fund, a group that helps finance energy improvements for low - and middle-income families, and which could potentially be a model for local efforts.

When she served on the Town Council, Rossi chaired the effort that produced the Town's current Comprehensive Plan. The plan includes a matrix that provides for regular review to ensure that the Town is progressing toward its goals. Rossi, Town Clerk Sue Reymers, and Town Council member Shari Taylor recently conducted the annual review, which they summarized for the Council. Taylor characterized the review as showing the Town is "in good standing, on the whole." The plan is available on the Town's website at https://www.townofhamiltonny.org/about/pages/comprehensive_plan.

The Council receives monthly reports from Highway Superintendent Luke Dowsland, Town Clerk Sue Reymers, Bookkeeper Brynley Wilcox, and Codes Enforcement Officer Mark Miller. Dowsland said the Town's backup truck had caught fire; no one was injured and the truck was insured for replacement cost, but it is no longer in service. Neighboring towns are available to provide backup, if necessary, until a new truck (already on order) arrives.

The coronavirus pandemic has presented a challenge to budgets everywhere; Wilcox, who has been monitoring the effects on the Town's budget, said it appears the impact may not be as great as was once feared. Her report included receipt of an annual contribution from Colgate (\$86,113), and payments in lieu of taxes received from Madison Lane and Good Nature Brewery. The Council approved annual donations to a list of agencies and services that support and protect Town residents.

Miller's report on permits, inspections, reviews and exploratory meetings was seen by the Council to indicate a healthy construction market. The Council in January had mandated the "board-up/clean-up" of a private property on Willey Road; Miller has received bids for that work and it is proceeding.

Reymers updated the Council on storage of the *Mid-York Weekly* archives, which the Town agreed to house when *MWP* closed its local office. She is working with historian Joan Prindle to complete arrangements.

In committee reports, the Council's liaison to the Partnership for Community Development, Mary Dinski, said that PCD will be promoting a new service – The HUB – that coordinates efforts with the Incubator and the Hamilton Business Alliance to increase support of local businesses (the Town is one of three principal sponsors of PCD).

The Council's liaison to SOMAC, Peter Darby, said mutual aid calls increased and that insurance offsets the costs. SOMAC anticipates a fundraising effort to support the replacement of needed equipment.

Shari Taylor reported that "Earlville for Earlville" group has applied for a Main Street grant, and awaits word on funding.

Town Supervisor Eve Ann Shwartz said that she, Council member Darrell Griff and Highway Superintendent Luke Dowsland had toured the recently-acquired parking area and access site at Nine Mile Swamp and determined a need for design and planning assistance to make the most of the property. Griff has been in touch with the County planner and the Town will also contact the PCD for grant writing and design support.

The Council gave its unanimous approval to three resolutions: establishing a public hearing in March to review the proposed franchise agreement with Spectrum, adding John Pumilio to the Zoning Board of Appeals, and establishing the Town's "Standard Workday" (required by NYS Retirement Commission).

Reporting on activities of the Madison County Board of Supervisors, Shwartz said there is "heated discussion" about the "thin blue line" flag that is currently flying at the County Sheriff's Building and Jail. She also reported that the County is working diligently on issues related to the coronavirus vaccine, including efforts to allay fears about the vaccination. The Town Council discussed ways in which local volunteers might be enlisted to help seniors and others who need assistance to sign up for vaccinations.

The next meeting of the Hamilton Town Council is scheduled at 6:30 pm Thursday, March 11, via Zoom, and is open to the public. Contact the Town Clerk (315-824-3380) for details.

Reported by Jim Leach for the Hamilton Town Council