



**TOWN HALL MEETING
TOWN OF OSSINING
JOSEPH G. CAPUTO COMMUNITY CENTER
95 BROADWAY
OSSINING, NY 10562**

**MARCH 20, 2012
7:30 P.M.**

**Supervisor
Susanne Donnelly**

**Councilmembers
Geoffrey Harter Eric P. Blaha
Peter Tripodi IV Northern Wilcher**

The Town Hall meeting for the Town of Ossining was held on March 20, 2012 at the Joseph G. Caputo Community Center, 95 Broadway, Ossining, N.Y. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 P.M. by Supervisor Donnelly. Members of the Board present were: Northern Wilcher, Geoffrey Harter, Peter Tripodi and Eric P. Blaha. Also present were: Wayne Spector and Madeline Zachacz Budget Officer and Deputy Town Clerk, Ann Marie Rocco

Supervisor Donnelly thanked all of the Town Residents for coming out to the Town Hall meeting. She introduced all of the Board members and also present were the various Department Heads.

Supervisor Donnelly explained the redistricting is that of the State Senate Districts and Assembly Districts only. Our Assembly person did not change. Our new State Senate District 38 does consist of part of Rockland County.

Supervisor Donnelly advised that she will be sending updates on all the items that will discussed tonight. The next Town Hall meeting will be on Tuesday, May 1, 2012.

- Philip Rader is not convinced that the annexation is in our favor. Is there a hidden hidden agenda other than savings tax dollars?
- Robert Katz advised that there has been a matter before the Town for fifteen days and would like to know:
 - If this matter will be referred to a specific committee? If so, when? And if not, why not?

Supervisor Donnelly explained that the matter Mr. Katz is referring to are group homes. This matter is in legal hands at the moment.

- Jim O'Connor questioned how many members of the board live in the unincorporated area? Mr. O'Connor feels that he is over taxed. Houses on our street cannot sell due to the tax structure. He would like to be part of Briarcliff. We are over taxed. His housed is assessed at \$395,000 and his taxes are \$15,000.

Supervisor Donnelly commented that most people would want to have qualified people on their board.

Mr. O'Connor feels that the Town is out numbered by the Village.

Supervisor Donnelly encouraged residents in the Town to run for election. Supervisor Donnelly also stated that the Town residents had a zero % increase in their taxes this year.

Edward Marlberg spoke about the Group Home issue on White Birch Drive. Mr. Malberg felt a sense of betrayal because he did not get any notification pertaining to this group home.

Supervisor Donnelly advised that the Town has established a Group Home Task Force. We are willing to dedicate our Town Hall meeting just to discuss group homes in the future. We do have monthly meeting with certain group home neighborhoods.

Kim Jeffrey questioned when Ryder Ave. would be fixed from the recent sewer construction? Also, she questioned the North State Road facility and what the possibilities are? There has been some issues at Ryder Park pertaining to the field time between Briarcliff and Ossining.

Supervisor Donnelly stated that Ryder Ave. was part of a sewer program and we will be paving Ryder Ave. as part of our CHIPS program. Westchester County Police have expressed to the Town that they do not need to use the building. The building is for sale by owner. Supervisor Donnelly explained that once the schedule for the spring sports has been published you will understand how this works.

George Usher commented on the sewer projects and was wondering if residents would have the opportunity to tie into the sewers? Also, Mr. Usher commented on the conditions at Ryder Park and feels that it has not been kept up over the years. He understands that there is a shortage of manpower. There have been massive ruts in the field from the construction of the new Briarcliff little league field.

Lisa Moore stated that two boys play baseball. She has concerns regarding the use of the fields and having to share the fields with other teams. She feels that this is not fair. The league also inquired about using the high school field and was told that they would have to pay extra.

Supervisor Donnelly explained that Ryder Park field is not exclusive to Briarcliff. We will put the Ryder Park Field topic on the Worksession Agenda for Tuesday April 3rd.

Janet Zarowiter questioned if Supervisor Donnelly has spoken to the agency. Ms. Zarowiter stated that the parking is better however, there are noise and behavioral issues. Ms. Zarowiter had three police reports to provide to Supervisor Donnelly.

Supervisor Donnelly explained that Westchester County Police does keep her up to date on the issues are happening with the group home.

Mary Ann Southwick stated that she was present to hear the Board's update regarding the group home issue. Ms. Southwick would like to hear what is happening. The group home issue has challenges for the whole community not just for my neighborhood.

Bill Jaeneki stated that the Town use to have a program called "Getting To Know Your Cop" where every home owner would have a police officer come to visit and have various discussions. Would like to know if this program is still in effective and if not he would like it to be reestablished.

Lt. Nick Alonghi explained that this program is still in existence. If any of the residents have anything to report please contact Lt. Nick Alonghi at 914-864-7880 or email naa5@westchestergov.com

Supervisor Donnelly explained that she will send out an e-mail with all the contact information.

Andy DeSandre noted that there are many issues with the group homes. Ossining has approximately thirteen group homes. Mr. DeSandre was not aware of the group home task force that was put together.

Supervisor Donnelly explained that this particular meeting we are having now is with a neighborhood that is having issues with a group home in their area. When we have our Town Hall meeting regarding group homes.

Mr. DeSandre feels that we are getting inundated with group homes. Our taxes are increasing and we are not getting much more for what we are paying for. Mr. DeSandre was also confused about the redistricting.

Supervisor Donnelly reiterated that the redistricting was for the State Senate only. We are still Westchester County. Same zip code, same school, etc...There are other areas that are far worse than what Ossining has been through. Supervisor Donnelly urged residents to continue writing to our elected officials.

Tony Garbarino stated that he is still very confused over the redistricting. Why would it be only Ossining and not any other Towns? How was Ossining singled out?

Supervisor Donnelly advised that this was a terrible thing that happened and explained how the redistricting happened in detail. They actually configured the maps so that the senators could be re-elected. She urged residents to write to Governor Cuomo to veto this.

Maryanne Tighe stated that she had emailed Supervisor Donnelly regarding Hawkes Crossing. She also wanted to discuss issues on Thorton Hill. At his time, there is an appeals lawsuit pending. For about a year we have been living patiently with debris and felt that this is becoming a dumping ground and feels someone needs to clean it up. This is effecting neighborhoods and she questioned if someone can look into this situation and speed up the process.

Supervisor Donnelly explained that we have been on top of this lawsuit and Sandy Galef's office is working on it for the last week. We are aware that the builder would like to continue building.

John Hamilton Building Inspector commented on this situation and he advised that the house has been boarded up and they are in compliance with NY State Law and we are in the process of reaching out to the current owner of the property and ordering him to continue cleaning up the process. Since the utilities have been turned off the building is in compliance with NYS law. We are currently setting up a time frame to start cleaning up the property.

Supervisor Donnelly hopes to see this situation resolved quickly with Sandy Galef's office working on this.

Matthew Lenaghan thanked every one that was present and thanked all of his neighbors, friends and colleagues. Mr. Lenaghan was present at this meeting because he is concerned about how our government works and how our local government works. Mr. Lenaghan also feels that his concerns regarding baseball fields are not being heard. Mr. Lenaghan would like to know when decisions are made regarding field usage? Is our Town and Local government serving our Town constituents?

Mr. Lenehan is requesting the following:

- **How are decisions made that allow the Briarcliff Little League to spend money on the field at Ryder Park? How was this decision made and approved? Do these issues go to Mr. Atterbury or to the Town Board?**
- **Until this past fall the use of the field was exclusive. Recently, the field has been padlocked. Why?**
- **Mr. Lenehan would like to research to be done regarding the demographics. If research has been done I would like it to be shared.**
- **It seems that someone has attempted to create a solution. At this time there is a field that is rapidly being changed and that is the field at Nelson Park. The Nelson Park field is being changed from a full size ball field for older players to a smaller field for younger players. This poses a problem because the kids who are older players are wondering where they are going to play in the spring. Infact, the high school coach did not know that this field was being converted and had already planned for some events to take place at the Nelson Park field. Again, how do these decision get made?**

Supervisor Donnelly will place this topic as the first item on the Work Session agenda for April 3, 2012.

Marc Hoeflich has three questions:

- **Last year the zoning board voted against 120 Morningside Drive for some of the work that they have done there and we have not heard anything on wheather or not they are proceeding.**
- **Want to make sure the Town is not selling the police station for less than what we have paid for.**
- **If the police will not be living there any more where will they be going?**
- **Would like to know what the status is with the pond at Ryder Park. The pond is in horrible condition.**
- **Would like to know about the prostitution issue on Sunset.**

Sueprvisor Donnelly stated that we have a fiduciary responsibility to get the correct dollar amount for any properties that we sell. Right now, some of the Police Officers come out of the North State Rd. facility but a lot of them come out from Hawthorne.

The issue for the zoning is in state supreme court (120 Morningside Drive) - Town Attorney Wayne Spector stated that 120 Morningside Drive was a zoning matter. The owner is now appealing at the appelet division.

Lt. Nick Alonghi commented on the prostitution on Sunset Drive and he advised that he did go in to the establishment recently and it appears that nothing illegal is going on. We will keep an eye on the location and will speak with his Detectives.

Supervisor Donnelly spoke about the pond at a recent eginerring meeting as potential way of stopping some of the flooding on North State Rd.

Mindy Lamare feels that the term "Outside" is very exclusionary and suggested changing it. Ms. Lamare questioned what has the Town Board done us? The Town Board took the Cedar Lane pool away from the Town residents, took our Police Department away and promised to save residents \$900,000 a year. We have not seen any tax decrease as of yet. If we town residents want to participate in activiites at the recreation center we are paying 900% more than a Village resident. Also, Town residents pay 30% more. Ms. Lamare questioned what has the Town Board done for us and why are we defraying the costs for the people who live in the Village of Ossining.

Supervisor Donnelly explained that hurricane Floyd took Cedar Lane pool. The Town is currently in a second year of contract with Westchester County Police. Supervisor Donnelly would like to here what Ms. Lamare's pobjections were. Currently we are starting to get some of the problems resolved in the unicorporated

part of the town such as infrastructure problems. The Town chose not to participate in the funding of the pool and that is why there is a difference in rate. Supervisor Donnelly stated that the taxes did not go up at all this year. The Town Board is focusing on different programs such as group homes. There are serious issues with road flooding, etc...

Andrew Lamare questioned if it's true that the Village and the Town have the same amount of group homes? Mr. Lamare suggested the Town forms a recreation committee made of people in the Town to help supervise the efforts that is done by recreation chairman.

Supervisor Donnelly advised that that we do have Recreation Advisory Group that listens to all the different programs that are put forth at the Recreation. The Recreation Advisory Group consists of people who live in the Village, Town, and Village of Briarcliff.

Abby Bergman questioned the mailings that we received approximately two years ago pertaining to the two election districts. He has heard nothing since and was wondering what the status was.

Supervisor Donnelly stated that he was referring to election districts 17 and 20. Supervisor Donnelly stated that she has not heard anything further on this.

Gerry Gershner indicated that a few comments have been made tonight regarding our real estate tax not being increased. He feels that the reason that the taxes did not increase because the budget may not be realistic. Mr. Gershner gave some examples of questionable items in the Town Budget:

- Mortgage Recording tax-Revenue in 2011 was in the amount of \$345,000 and the amount budgeted for 2012 is estimated to be \$620,000 and this indicates a lot of increase in houses sold.
- Sales Tax revenue- is up 50% from 2011. In 2011, the Town of Ossining received \$520,000 from Westchester County and 2012 we are budgeting \$800,000 in sales tax revenue.
- Town Building Department-according to the budget we pay \$150,000 in rent for the office at the Armory. He feel that this rental amount is high since there are only two rooms.
- There is a new line item in the budget-Traffic Violations Bureru. 2012 expense of \$173,000. Is there an offsetting revenue?
- The Town has numerous IMA's with the Village of Ossining such as for Finance and IT, etc...The total of IMA's are three quarters of a million that is paid to the Village of Ossining. We could hire people to do these functions for the Town for a lot less money.
- School Resources Officer in the Police Department Contract. The Police officer that is assigned to AMD is paid by the Town Of Ossining and only 10 to 15% of the students who attend the middle school live in the unincorporated town. The Village of Ossining/Briarcliff/New Castle residents do not pay for this officer. Mr. Gershner feels that the school should fund this police officer.
- Police Building, North State Road. Mr. Gershner is happy that the building is up for sale. Who is paying for the water bill, exterminator bill, copier bill, phone bill and maintenance bill?

Budget Officer, Madeline Zachacz invited Mr. Gershner to the Supervisor's office to review the 2011 budget since he had specific revenue questions.

Supervisor Donnelly stated that there are some high revenues in 2012 budget. We are currently working on the budget to revise it. Supervisor Donnelly confirmed that the Police Station is on the market and we are in negotiations with the County Police regarding who should pay for the bills that come out of the Police station. Supervisor Donnelly will be meeting with the school board to discuss the resource officer.

Alan Marzelli was present to promote the concert at the Ossining Public Library – James Maddox will be playing this Sunday, March 25, 2012

Sondra Ridley stated that she never received an e-mail response from Westchester County Police. Lt. Alonghi will look into this for her.

Ms. Ridley explained Studio Hill was closed off at one point for safety reasons. If Ms. Ridley would want walk to go to Ryder she would have to take an unsafe route. Ms. Ridley questioned if there could be a walk access to be granted to walk through a private drive?

Supervisor Donnelly explained that she will look into this for her.

Mr. Katz stated that commuters are speeding down White Birch and was wondering if we could have a police car visible.

Arthur Sullivan commented that he knew why Studio Hill was closed and advised that the wner of Mason brought a truck up with stones with no permission and was legally closed.

Rob Lowenthawl spoke about the sewage project and questioned when could we expect that to be totally finished? The previous Town Supervisor advised Mr. Lowenthal that the pond at Ryder Park would be cleaned up. Are these projects on board.

Sueprvisor Donnelly advised that the sewer projects are completed. We do have some options for the pond.