

Westerlo Town Board Workshop
of
Tuesday, August 16, 2016

The Town of Westerlo Town Board Workshop was opened by Supervisor Rapp at 7:00 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Attending were: Supervisor Richard H. Rapp
Councilman William F. Bichteman
Councilwoman Amie L. Burnside
Councilman Anthony W. Sherman

Absent was: Councilman Joseph Boone

Also attending were: Deputy Supervisor/Code Enforcement Officer Edwin H. Lawson, ZBA Chairwoman Virginia Mangold ZBA and ZBA member John Sefcik, Deputy Town Clerk Karla Weaver, Town Clerk Kathleen Spinnato and one resident.

Councilman Sherman advised that a discussion concerning a proposed solar moratorium was scheduled for the last Town Board Meeting on 8/2/16. This discussion was not held, it was instead delayed due to the fact that ZBA Chairwoman Virginia Mangold was going to be attending an educational meeting about it. Later, Virginia notified the Town that solar was dropped from the agenda of the educational meeting so she did not attend. Discussion followed regarding whether or not the Town of Westerlo needs a proposed moratorium on solar for ground mounted solar panels and/or solar farms or if an adjustment can just be made to the Zoning Laws.

Virginia provided the Town Board with a copy of the Town of New Baltimore's Zoning Regulations on Solar Collection Systems. Councilman Bichteman commented that paragraph #3 in New Baltimore's document seems misleading and confusing; Westerlo may not need to call it an expedited process. The Zoning Regulations on Solar Collection Systems for the Town of New Baltimore was then discussed. Code Enforcement Officer Edwin Lawson indicated he never felt the need for the proposed moratorium since the special use permit and current setback requirements of our Town are already 50'. He felt that the setback distance required for ground mounted solar panels should be measured from the outermost part of the unit which would be the panels and not the pole. He also stated that all codes for NYS have been updated and will take effect on 10/3/2016. Councilman Bichteman felt the Planning and Zoning Boards should work out the guidelines and bring that to the Town Board. When fees were discussed, it was suggested to do a sliding scale. Virginia Mangold will inquire about fees charged by other Towns and discuss this at the next ZBA meeting. She will then bring the information to the next Town Board Workshop meeting to be held on September 20th.

The subject of Drone use was also briefly discussed in regards to responsibility and no fly areas. Councilman Bichteman expects that the FAA will be involved and that there is a liability with it. Virginia Mangold commented that some Town's have specific rules and regulations. Councilwoman Burnside mentioned her family's experience with small drones with cameras on them but due to battery size, they cannot fly high. Councilman Sherman stated that the FAA has already imposed regulations. If drones are over 5 ounces they need to be registered. There is a registration fee and a specific number that must be physically applied to each drone so it can be identified. He believes the drone operator/owner is held responsible not the landowner. There are also a lot of no fly zones. In his travels Councilman Bichteman has seen very large drones fly above crowded areas, there is a safety concern to take into account.

There being no further discussion, Councilman Bichteman made a motion to adjourn the Town Board Workshop meeting, Councilman Sherman seconded the motion, all present in favor, motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Spinnato Town Clerk