

TOWN OF GLEN ECHO
COUNCIL MEETING
APRIL 9, 2018

ATTENDANCE: Willem Polak, Mayor
Nancy Long, Councilmember
Matt Stiglitz, Councilmember
Dia Costello, Councilmember
Dan Spealman, Councilmember
Julia Wilson, substitute for Clerk-Treasurer

VISITORS: Renny Springuel
Anna White
Laetitia Anderson
Gloria Levin
Emily Parsons
Mary Parsons
Matt McFarland
Curt Wahl
Pete Epanchin
Vanessa Sax
Blair Anderson
Edie Springuel
Michelle Brafman
Aaron Hirsch
Speke Wilson
Mitchell Strauss
Norm Bernhardt
Debby Beers
Elka Dietsch
Cris White
Henry Barrows
Robin Kogelnik

Mayor Polak called the meeting to order at 8:05 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the 2/12/2018 minutes as amended and the motion passed unanimously. A motion was made to approve the 3/12/2018 minutes as amended and the motion passed unanimously.

TOWN ISSUES

Mayor Polak reported that the termite company sprayed the affected areas in the Town Hall and Council Chambers. The area will be checked again in two months.

The Town Hall air conditioning unit was repaired and new freon was put in.

The Park Service report was emailed to the mayor. The Park Service is still waiting for the boulders that will make a border at the edge of the field at Oxford Rd. They are expected in late May or June. The work on the Clara Barton House roof is ongoing.

DISCUSSION OF CHANGES TO ORDINANCES

Councilmember Stiglitz introduced the discussion by giving some background. The Council began the process 18 months ago, discussing making cosmetic changes made to the existing code because some of the language was no longer relevant.

All the ordinances were revised, some at the suggestion of the town attorney, and public hearings were held. Last month the Council finished up the last working group meeting.

However, since there was considerable concern from residents about the proposed changes, no votes on the ordinances were planned for this meeting. The Council planned to accept comments only. All changes are available online or residents can get a hard copy from council chambers.

Councilmember Stiglitz acknowledged that many residents attended the meeting to discuss the possibility of changing the ordinances to allow for ownership of chickens. As it stands now, chickens are not allowed in the town. A separate meeting will be scheduled on the animal control ordinance, either April 24, 2018 or May 17, 2018 at 7:30.

Six residents also expressed interest in allowing beekeeping in town, which will be discussed at the same meeting, under the same ordinance.

Blair and Tisha Anderson, who twice acquired chickens, said the issue has been put off long enough and should be discussed as soon as possible.

Town attorney Ron Bolt explained that the town adheres by county laws unless the town passes a more restrictive law. Currently, the county allows residents to keep chickens and bees but the town has had an ordinance on the books disallowing chickens and bees, along with some other livestock.

Resident Robin Kogelnik proposed the town follow county ordinances in terms of animal control, since the county has already put regulations in place.

Resident Debbie Beers questioned the ordinance that limits the number of curb cuts (to allow for off-street parking or a garage) for each residence to one. She also questioned why there is no provision to apply for a variance. Town Attorney Ron Bolt said the purpose of the legislation is to avoid restricting street parking with too many cutbacks. Councilmember Stiglitz said he was prepared to draft legislation to allow for a requesting a variance.

The Council and the audience then proceeded to discuss how to address the ordinance changes and the reasoning behind the changes. Some residents asked for an explanation of each change if it differs from county regulations.

Resident Pete Epanchin suggested a simple matrix comparing county and town regulations.

Attorney Bolt said that the town only has to enforce regulations which are stricter than county regulations. Otherwise, the county is responsible for the enforcement. Councilmember Stiglitz pointed out with the proposed changes the town is maintaining much less and ceding more to county.

Resident Steve Ryan suggested an explanatory note at beginning of the document and to publish the document 30 days before the vote is held.

Councilmember Stiglitz requested residents email any comments on the proposed ordinances to the town email.

Depending on the comments received, the Council may vote on some of the ordinances next month. If the motion is not voted on within 60 days from introduction, the motion needs to be reintroduced.

To cover that possibility, Councilmember Stiglitz made a motion to reintroduce the Building Article (18-01) and the remaining ordinances (18-02) with the following amendment adding Article 17, Section 17.2.A.2(c):

(c) Waiver. The Town Council may waive the requirements of subsection (b) on a finding, after a public hearing, that the regulation would create an unusual practical difficulty or undue hardship, based on an extraordinary condition of the subject property.

The motion passed unanimously.

Resident Tisha Anderson suggested that at the upcoming meeting to discuss the

animal control ordinance anyone can submit written comments but spoken comments should be limited to 3-5 minutes. She also suggested the town invite an employee from the county animal control office.

Attorney Bolt mentioned the county office of conflict resolution will facilitate meetings for free.

TREE REMOVAL, PLANTING

To widen Vassar Circle, Aaron Hirsch requested permission to remove some trees on town land on the inside of Vassar Circle. Councilmember Stiglitz made a motion to allow Mr. Hirsch to remove any town trees needed to widen street. Motion was seconded. Councilmembers Stiglitz, Spealman and Costello voted in favor; Councilmember Long opposed the measure.

Councilmember Stiglitz plans to remove a pine tree in his back yard which is leaning over road. He requested a waiver of the 60-day waiting period. Councilmember Spealman made a motion to waive the waiting period, which was seconded and carried unanimously, with Councilmember Stiglitz abstaining.

Resident Andy Malmgren plans to remove a large hickory that is leaning over power lines and their driveway and a dutch elm that is diseased and is requesting a waiver of the 60-day waiting period. Councilmember Spealman made a motion to waive the waiting period. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Resident Matt McFarland has asked to plant four or five trees in the Wellesley Circle right of way to replace trees he had to remove. Attorney Bolt reminded the Council that, under the agreement with Mr. McFarland, the town is responsible for maintenance of the trees. Mr. McFarland suggested that he would be willing to work with Town attorney Ron Bolt to amend his license to use the right of way.

MISCELLANEOUS

Resident Aaron Hirsch told the Council the Glen Echo Fire Department will have an event June 2 at 5 pm at the Inn. The event is to commemorate the anniversary of the fatal Moxley fire, which spurred the origination of the fire department in town. A time capsule will be opened. Mr Hirsch gave the fire department the original bell.

A motioned was made, seconded and passed to adjourn the meeting at 10:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Wilson, substitute Clerk-Treasurer



Willem Polak
Willem Polak, Mayor

4/12/18
Date

approved

5/12/18