

Present: Mayor Robert Yerick, Trustees Richard Moore, William Murphy, Kelly Myers, Michael Campbell and Suzanne LeBlanc

Absent: Trustee Jeannine Dirie

Others: Alex Wade, Maryann Wrolsen, Karen Trent, Cal Hackett, M/M Brian Wilson, Richard Frisbee, Judith Spektor, Barry Benepe, Rosemarie Brackett, Heather Plonchak-New Saugerties Times, students from the SHS Government Class, Robert Hauge, Paul Korzak, Will Myers and others

Mayor Robert Yerick opened the Public Hearing at 6:30pm. The purpose of the Public Hearing was to discuss proposed Local Law #3/2009 and Local Law #4/2009.

Trustee Kelly Myers explained Local Law #4/2009 – the Village Shade Tree Ordinance. The law will establish a “Shade Tree Commission” that shall oversee the Village trees located between the curb and sidewalks throughout the Village. The Commission will establish a responsible program to manage the public trees. The Commission will work closely with local utilities and monitor any trimming work required.

Judith Spektor spoke supporting the proposed law. The law will protect the trees and put everyone on notice that the Village oversees the public trees. She suggests that when a tree is removed, another is planted. She would like to see that stumps are cut to grade when a tree is removed. Funds should be put in the DPW budget for the replacement costs of trees along with the already funded budget for the removal of trees. Trustee LeBlanc asked who would serve on this Commission – Ms. Spektor replied that the community is full of landscapers and gardeners. Trustee LeBlanc asked if the Beautification Committee could handle this responsibility – the consensus was that there should be two separate committees.

Mayor Yerick commented that he was proud to announce that the Village of Saugerties was chosen as one of the top ten “coolest” places to live and visit by Budget Magazine.

Karen Trent, of 71 Elm Street, spoke. She is concerned about the trees on Elm Street. Central Hudson recently trimmed on Elm Street and cut out the middle of some trees. Trustee Myers responded saying that Central Hudson contracts out their tree trimming work. Discussion followed with Ms. Trent commenting that the trimming is not always the best for the tree.

Richard Frisbee commented he was in favor of the 30 day notice to the Village for any work that would involve a Village tree. He also inquired about trees on private property. Trustee Myers said that the property maintenance laws already in place cover trees on private property that pose safety risks. Mr. Frisbee said that in Woodstock, the Woodstock Tree Registry must be notified in advance before any tree is worked on. Trustee Myers said she feels the Board must first deal with Village trees and then in the future deal with trees on private property.

Cal Hackett said trees on private property should remain the homeowner's private property.

Trustee Myers advised the Board that she has met with Central Hudson representatives and made it clear to them that the Village must be notified when any project is undertaken in the Village that would affect the trees. She said she has established a good rapport and that Central Hudson has been responsive and helpful. Central Hudson does have a legal right to trim trees in their "utility corridor" however; they will be sensitive to Village requests. A list of trees that should be planted in the utility corridor is available on the Central Hudson website and they have certified arborists on staff willing to help. Trustee Myers was pleased with their cooperation.

Barry Benepe spoke thanking Trustee Myers for her effort in writing this proposed law. He feels that 1000 additional trees could be planted in the Village. He encouraged that stumps be cut to grade and urged the Board to "keep a green crown" in the Village.

Mayor Yerick asked anyone else with additional suggestions to call the Board. The public gave Trustee Myers a round of applause for her work on the Shade Tree Law.

The Public Hearing then went on to discuss proposed Local Law #3/2009 – the revision of Village Law 66-11 through 66-17 "Keeping of Animals". Trustee Myers explained the revisions. The current law calls for permits to be issued for the keeping of most animals in the Village with the exception of dogs and cats. The law requires that the Village residents apply to the Village Board if they wish to "breed, raise, harbor or maintain" any poultry, fowl, swine, horses, cows, or similar livestock or animals, and must obtain permission from the Village Board to do so. Trustee Myers wants to set standards for the keeping of animals in the Village. She has spoken with Marie Post and others in the community regarding this issue and looked into many different aspects. She met with Chief Kimble and said he is comfortable with the proposed law. Attached to the law is a set of procedures that deals with feral cats, animal welfare, abandonment and more.

Karen Trent spoke saying she has a neighbor whose cats wander onto her property and "do what cats do" in her yard. What should she do?

Cal Hackett spoke saying cats are considered to be free roaming animals and are covered by NYS Law. Trustee Myers said she did look the NYS "Ag and Markets Law" while researching the proposed law.

Robert Hauge agreed that cats are free roaming animals and neighbors should be helping neighbors as they do in his neighborhood.

Rhonda Joseph does not like to idea that cats will not be able to roam freely however she does like the suggestions that cats have identification.

Karen Trent said her neighbor's cat is a nuisance.

Ken Whyte said cats must be neutered if they are allowed to roam. The feral cat problem is county wide. Dogs are also roaming on Elm Street – owners let the dogs out to defecate on neighbor’s property. He suggested exploring a “dog run or dog park” along with the Town of Saugerties. Trustee Myers urged Mr. Whyte to call the Town Dog Warden for dogs roaming in the Village – the Warden is paid for through your Town taxes.

Trustee Campbell spoke saying that Chamber receives many inquires regarding the Village and Town – one of the questions asked is if there is a dog park available. He thinks the dog park suggestion is a great idea.

Brenda Wilson spoke saying she also has a problem with roaming cats. Pet owners should be made to keep any pets in their own yard. She suggested limiting the number of cats or dogs one person could own.

Tom Macarille spoke saying he was a member of the Town Board 6 years ago. The Town did investigate constructing a dog park. They found it would be very expensive, a lot of land was required and the park would be difficult to maintain. Mayor Yerick agreed that constructing a dog park would be expensive and would be difficult to do in these tough economic times. Trustee Myers suggested charging membership fees for a dog park.

Richard Frisbee commented that cats run loose all over his neighborhood. Neighbors should not be permitted to infringe on neighbors.

Rosemarie Brackett spoke saying this was a complex problem. Last year she captured 23 feral cats in her neighborhood. She took them to clinics and had them either spayed or neutered, then tagged (to identify that the animal had been spayed or neutered). The cats were then released. People are just not responsible.

Trustee Myers said her proposed law has a spay/neuter program. The Village would budget to spay 20 cats per year at a cost of no more than \$20.00 per cat.

Trustee LeBlanc spoke saying that in these economic times, if the Village were to consider employee layoffs, spending money to spay or neuter cats would not be popular. She also pointed out that if this proposed law is passed, the Village Board would loose all control as to what kind of animals would be allowed in the Village. The proposed law would also remove a neighbor’s ability to speak about what kind of pet they would like in their neighborhood.

Mayor Yerick said the public has given the Board some great ideas.

Trustee Myers thanked all present for their valuable input. She does not want to put the burden on the residents to have to apply to the Board for permission to have animals.

Trustee LeBlanc said she does not agree because people are not always respectful of their neighbors.

Alex Wade spoke saying he felt the key phrase was “raising” animals. Mayor Yerick said the Board would look again on the proposed law.

Richard Frisbee said he does not think releasing spayed or neutered feral cats back into neighborhoods is a good idea.

After more discussion, motion was made by Trustee Moore, seconded by Trustee Campbell, to close the Public Hearing. Carried. The Public hearing closed at 7:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Frank  
Village Clerk