

Notes from the Hamilton Town Council March Meeting

Community member Jody Palmer shared concerns about a crisis in the dairy industry. With milk prices so low many New York State dairy farmers, especially those operating small farms, have very real concerns about losing their businesses. The Madison County Cooperative Extension is holding a special meeting to provide mental health and financial counseling for farmers. There is a genuine concern over depression and suicides in the farming community and the CCE-MC has resources to help – www.madisoncountycce.org for more information.

Kyle Sylvester and Vincent Faraone from SOMAC presented updates from 2017 and where the group is today. Good leadership and the addition of a 3rd ambulance and fly car have facilitated improvements in response time and staffing. With the support of paid staff, as well as Colgate student and community volunteers, SOMAC can now run all 4 vehicles, allowing for calls, mutual aid, and transfers.

John Barratinni, the Madison County Emergency Medical Services Coordinator discussed the County's work to increase dispatch efficiency and improve response time between countywide EMS agencies. The County is also encouraging sustainability for Emergency service in local municipalities. He noted that SOMAC is now sustainable because of strong leadership, Town financial support, and volunteers from Colgate students and the community.

Highway Superintendent Jason Florenz could not attend the meeting as he and the crew were out plowing. The crew has made 31 runs between February 10 and March 13. The Town Council will purchase a used pick-up truck to fill a gap in the fleet as part of the vehicle replacement plan. So far Madison County has reimbursed the Town \$71,693 for our crew plowing County roads. Florenz is working with Clerk Reymers on the Bridge NY grant for the Williams Road culvert replacement.

The Partnership for Community Development is working with Town, Village, and Colgate representatives to identify strategies to improve the supply of affordable housing in Hamilton for a diverse mix of community members. The planning firm CZB has been hired to create the assessment and propose solutions based on demographics, market research, and community interviews. Colgate is generously providing funding for this project.

As part of her work on the Youth and Recreation Committee, Councilmember Dinski met with Maria Cassulis from Bridges. Discussion included future plans for a community center.

The Zoning Update Committee continues work on a draft Solar Zoning law and a Right to Farm Law. As solar projects are exempt from taxation under New York State law, the Town Council is considering the use of PILOT agreements (payment in lieu of taxes) for commercial scale solar projects. The Town Board will begin the process of reviewing these proposed zoning laws at their April meeting.

Planning and Zoning Board appointments were announced. Thanks to these members for continuing to serve our community: Bettyann Miller (Planning Board), Jeff Schindler and Harmon Hoff (Zoning Board of Appeals). Coming soon - look for information on how to join a New York State Agricultural District Program on the Town website.

Supervisor Shwartz reported that the County continues its work to bring better broadband to all county residents. The Public Utilities Committee, is looking at the feasibility of building a fiber network in underserved areas of the County and is meeting with Frontier and Spectrum about their plans for broadband expansion. They will also meet with representatives from the Southern Tier Network to learn how those counties about addressed the problem in their area.

The Hamilton Town Council **now meets on the second Wednesday** of the month at the Village Courthouse in the Village of Hamilton at 6:30 pm. **Our next meeting is Wednesday April 11.** We invite and encourage you to join us. For more info visit www.townofhamiltonny.org