

Notes from the Town of Hamilton Council - June 5 & 12, 2019 meetings

The Town of Hamilton has 3 cemeteries without ownership which have some historical significance to the area. Roger and Catherine Hawthorne presented information on the Bishop Peck Burying Ground on Barnard Road where Catherine has ancestors buried. The couple requested help with removing a large fallen tree which is close to the graves. A conversation ensued about these burying grounds and how they might be cared for.

Highway Superintendent Jason Florenz updated the board on general repairs including paving, ditching, mowing, and driveway pipe installation. Because the last plow date was in April, the Town has exceeded its projection for plowing revenue for the County by close to \$45,000.

The Codes Officer report shows that new home construction is up in the Town, with 6 residences in various states of progress. The Planning Board has been reviewing for 4 subdivisions applications. These are for properties to be divided and sold, not for housing developments. The C.Hubb project in Hubbardsville has withdrawn its request for a Special Use Permit.

SOMAC members will attend the July Town meeting to present their capital plan. Madison County recently completed a study on the feasibility of consolidating Onondaga and Madison County 911 emergency services in order to promote cost-savings and efficiency. SOMAC reps will attend informational sessions on the study and provide feedback to the Town.

The Town Council resolved to increase our allocation to the Partnership for Community Development (PCD) by \$10,000 in the 2020 budget. Both the Village and Colgate have been asked to increase their allocations to support a new administrative position, allowing the PCD to keep up its excellent work of gaining grants for our community and providing support and training to local businesses.

The Zoning Update Committee is finalizing changes to the Site Plan procedure. The group is editing the document to make the process easier for everyone to understand and follow.

The Hamilton Climate Preparedness Working Group (HCPWG) recently hosted a climate resiliency visioning workshop with local community members from the Town, Village, and University. Through discussion the group created a vision for the Town & Village of being "climate responsible" with proposed actions such as supporting local energy saving measures, more walkability, and expanded public transportation options. The Town is grateful to have the help of an Upstate Institute Summer Fellow to log our progress towards a Climate Smart Communities Bronze Certification.

Town Office Building Phase 1 has started with foundation work underway. The phase 2 planning process will be discussed later in the month, including the heating system, finish work, and plumbing.

The Town Garage Geothermal Project went out to bid. A pre-proposal mandatory meeting for interested NYSERDA approved companies is scheduled for June 19. The deadline for proposals is July 22 with a bid chosen by August 9.

After more careful consideration by the Assessor, it was suggested that we wait on a Town revaluation until there is adequate and dedicated space in the new Town Office to accommodate the many anticipated property owner meetings with the Assessor. That pushes the timeline to begin the assessment update to 2021. Currently our equalization rate is 91.5%. Although the Town wants to keep our valuation as close to 100% as possible, we understand the need to wait until the work can be done well and meet our residents' needs.

Rochelle Harris was reappointed as Assessor for a new term-6 years (10/1/2019 - 9/30/2025). Board of Assessment Review (BOAR) Appointments included Michael Craven for a new 5-Year Term: (10/1/2019 - 9/30/2024). Our thanks to Sandra Holbrook, who has served on the BOAR, but is unable to finish her term. The Town Council needs to appoint someone to finish her term, which will involve training.

After almost three years as Town Highway Superintendent Jason Florenz is leaving to return to the Village of Hamilton DPW. The Town is grateful for his excellent work and wish him well in his new position. Erick

Wilcox, our current Deputy Highway Superintendent will become the temporary Superintendent while the Town completes a search for a permanent replacement.

The Town Council held a special meeting on Wednesday, June 5, 2019 to pass a resolution to change the term of the Town Supervisor position from every two years to every four years. Given the complexity of NYS laws and the ever-increasing demands of local government, a four-year term is needed to master the complexity of Town government in the 21st Century. Many other Towns in Madison County and NYS have adopted a four-year term for Supervisor and Town Council positions are already four year terms. The resolution will be voted on as a ballot measure at the upcoming November 5, 2019 general election. If passed by the voters, the four-year term will not go into effect until the next general election for Town Supervisor in 2021.

Please Note: The next Hamilton Town Council will meet on **Wednesday July 10** of at the Village Courthouse in the Village of Hamilton at 6:30 pm. The meeting is moved to a Wednesday, so it does not conflict with the Symphoria concert on Thursday July 11. We invite and encourage you to join us. For more info visit www.townofhamiltonny.org

Submitted by Chris Rossi, Hamilton Town Council