

Regular Meeting

These minutes are for the regular meeting of the Beacon City Council, held in the Municipal Center at One Municipal Plaza on April 1, 2019. Please note that the video recording of this meeting is available at <https://vimeo.com/327857817>

Council Members Present:

Lee Kyriacou, At Large
George Mansfield, At Large
Terry Nelson, Ward One
John Rembert, Ward Two
Amber Grant, Ward Four
Randy Casale, Mayor

Council Members Absent:

Excused: Jodi McCredo, Ward Three

Also Present:

Anthony Ruggiero, City Administrator
Nick Ward Willis, City Attorney

A moment of silence was observed for those who serve and have served in the US military.

The Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of a Fire Recruitment Coordinator was pulled off of the agenda and will be workshopped and a later date.

First Opportunity for Public Comments: Each speaker may have one opportunity to speak up to three minutes on any subject matter other than those which are the topic of a public hearing tonight.

Speakers:**Lou Amoroso Sr.**

Mr. Amoroso Sr. discussed the Certificate of Occupancy Law. There are many code violations throughout the City. For example, the hedges are too high on Rector Street coming out onto Wolcott Avenue. Further, there are tree houses that may not have permits. Many houses are being sold via cash so they may still have violations and are not being inspected.

Theresa Kraft

Ms. Kraft spoke out against the sale of property near 351 Tioronda Avenue. She cited the fact that sidewalks should be put there instead. She told the Council to start looking at the big picture. The Ferry Landing project is going to cause the City to lose a historic viewshed. The City Planner, who lives in the Village of Rhinebeck and is on their Planning Board, is hypocritical because he is allowing out-of-scale construction in Beacon that he would never allow in Rhinebeck.

Stosh Yankowski

Mr. Yankowski spoke about the RF Engineer's report regarding Verizon Wireless facilities. The RF Engineer's study was not an independent study. He should have tested to see if there really were any gaps in coverage instead of basing his conclusion on Verizon's data. Once Verizon has one facility, they will pop up all over town and we'll have hundreds of them especially when Verizon goes to 5G. Why are they taking down the antenna on Mount Beacon? The emissions can be changed remotely, is this safe?

Elaine Ciaccio

Ms. Ciaccio spoke about abolishing the need for special use permits and site plans for accessory apartments and structures. It surprised her because she hasn't seen anyone complain about the process. The building inspector did not provide data to back up the need for this. He knew of only one person who had been refused. This may be a solution to a problem that does not exist. It will not help with affordable housing. It will disrupt the neighborhoods.

Ms. Ciaccio went on to say that changing setbacks is ecologically unsound. Short term rentals should be regulated.

Arthur Camins

Mr. Camins spoke about affordable housing. The housing for about 50 percent of Beacon is either unaffordable or severely unaffordable. The efforts being made are not good enough. Government intervention and regulations are needed to create affordability. He asked for four things to be done: (1) increase the set aside for below market rate housing for all new construction of 4 units or more to 30 percent (2) authorize an independent study to determine what can be done to ensure residential and commercial affordability (3) at public hearings before the Planning and Zoning Board the City needs to create an independent and impartial way to address the expertise imbalance between the City and the developer. The developer brings their own expert with respects to SEQRA and the impact of development of schools and zoning variances, meanwhile the tax payers cannot afford their own expert, and (4) institute a residential building moratorium.

Tara Vamos:

Disagreed with the Danskammer expansion. Burning more natural gas will lead to higher rates of asthma, lung disease, heart disease, and premature births. Global warming is also a tremendous threat. She asked the Council to push back against Danskammer.

Community Segment

Danskammer Construction Update

The presentation was given by Bill Reid, CEO of Danskammer

Danskammer is an oil and natural gas plant in Newburgh, New York. When Indian Point stops running new generation of energy will be needed. Danskammer is looking to create an upgraded, more efficient facility that would run 10 – 15 times more than they are running now. Their new facility would result in an 80 – 90% emissions reduction. Their output would power more than 500,000 NY homes. No new infrastructure will be built. Benefits include the following: over \$100 million spent locally during construction, 40 local, high-paying operations jobs, more than 400 union construction jobs, and over \$50 million in property and school taxes over the next 20 years. They will be able to help Central Hudson lower the price of residential energy consumption. Before the facility is built, several independent studies will take place including: traffic counts and analysis, noise monitoring and modeling, cultural resource consultations, visual simulations and analysis, wetlands delineation, air emissions modeling, economic modeling, electric system impacts, electric interconnection system impacts and reliability.

Council person Mansfield: What is River Keeper's position?

Bill Reid, Danskammer CEO: River Keeper has asked Danskammer for funding for a study to determine if what we say is true.

Council person Nelson: Isn't this going to create more air pollution?

Bill Reid: On a gross basis we will emit more air pollution but we are going to be more efficient. In terms of health of the community we have to be in compliance with state and federal regulations.

Council person Grant: Please describe the chart in your presentation that displays how much more efficient the new plant will be compared to the old one.

Bill Reid: He explained that the chart displays the difference between the efficiency of the existing facility versus the proposed facility.

Mayor Casale: Asked Mr. Reid if the existing facility will continue to run if they are not approved to build a new one. He also asked what will happen to the coal ash field adjacent to the existing facility.

Bill Reid: The existing facility will continue to run and will likely be doing so at a much higher rate to compensate for Indian Point's upcoming closure. Therefore emissions will be high from an inefficient plant with high levels of production. Therefore, not building a new facility may result in worse pollution. Further, he noted that a solar farm is likely to be placed atop of the current ash field.

Council person Lee Kyriacou: Asked Mr. Reid if he could provide New York State's energy production plan that would include how much the State plans to run the existing facility versus the new facility once Indian Point comes off line.

Bill Reid: Yes, you can find the State's reports, called the *Load and Capacity Data Report (Gold Book)* at this website <https://www.nyiso.com/library>

Council Member Reports

Council person Grant

Ms. Grant asked what are the City's vacancy rates? What are the City's median rental rates?

Council person Rembert

Mr. Rembert would like to continue talking about affordable housing in the next workshop. April is Autism Awareness Month. He asked everyone to be aware that autism doesn't just fall under the special education kids from high school, for all we know the people next to us could have autism and they should be known for who they are and not just as a person who may have made a socially awkward comment.

Council person Kyriacou

Mr. Kyriacou called for an immediate and careful review of the Linkage Zone and the language for and additions to protected viewsheds, if necessary, he is willing to attach a short-term moratorium to get this done.

He proposed adding two viewsheds, one at the top of where Ferry Street used to meet 9D - south of the church just past the new development, and a second one at the north end of Bayview Avenue.

He showed a map of the area and pointed out the two locations where he is suggesting for viewshed classification. He also provided a brief history of the linkage district and how it has led to some unforeseen outcomes that he would like to correct. To view his presentation, please go to the 43:40 mark of the meeting video which is linked at the top of these minutes.

Council person Mansfield

Mr. Mansfield thanked the Highway and Water department for their response to a water main break on Route 52.

Council person Nelson

Mr. Nelson talked about the importance of affordable housing and called it the most important item on the Council's agenda.

Mayor Casale

Mayor Casale thanked the Public Works Department for their efforts on the water main break on Route 52.

He made an announcement on behalf of the Beacon Volunteer Ambulance Corps telling residents about the event “Helping Mature Drivers Find Their Safest Fit” which will be held on April 6, 2019 at the Ambulance Corps. If anyone has questions, call his office at 845 838 5010.

Mayor Casale also noted that on April 7, 2019 there will be a brunch to help fundraise for the Beacon Volunteer Ambulance Corps. The first serving will be at 10:30 and second at 12:30.

Water and Wastewater Superintendent, Ed Balicki

Mr. Balicki addressed the Council and residents to keep them up to date on the work being done by the Water and Waste Water Department. He described the water main break on Route 52 and thanked the Departments of Public Works, Fire and Police for their hard work. Also, he described the work that is being done on the Fairview water tank replacement. He went onto discuss the sewer main break on Wilson Street. He stated that the project is ongoing due to the unique size of the pipe that broke.

Resolutions, Ordinances and Local Laws:**1. A Resolution Authorizing Sale of City of Beacon Property Adjacent to 351 Tioronda Avenue**

- Motion by Council person Nelson
- Second by Council person Mansfield
- Resolution passes 7-0

Council person Kyriacou

Stated that if a resident has a sliver of property that is not in their name and wishes it to be in their name, please come forward. If you are interested in owning that property, speak with the City or State about acquiring the land.

2. A Resolution Supporting Universal Rent Stabilization and Control

- Motion by Council person Nelson
- Second by Council person Rembert

Nick Ward-Willis

The City Attorney stated that the essence of the resolution would extend the New York State Emergency Tenant Protection Act (NYSETPA) to areas outside of the greater New York City area, should such areas wish to opt in.

During the discussion it became clear that the Council was not well versed on the intricacies of the law. Council person Kyriacou made a motion to table.

Motion to table the Resolution for two weeks by Council person Kyriacou

Second by Council person Rembert

All present Council members were in favor of tabling.

3. Approval of City Council Meeting Minutes March 18, 2019

- Motion by Council person Rembert
- Second by Council person Mansfield
- All present Council members approve

Second Opportunity for Public Comments: Each speaker may have one opportunity to speak for up to three minutes on any subject matter on which the Council can take action.

Speakers:

No speakers

Adjournment:

- Motion by Council person Rembert
- Second by Council person Mansfield
- All present Council members approve

Next Workshop: April 8, 2019

Next Meeting: April 15, 2019

Retreat with the City Council, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Planning Board on April 22, 2019