

Hoosick Falls & Surrounding Areas News

Chickens Are Now Legal Residents

by Doug La Rocque

While perhaps not the most important development to come out of the Village Board meeting on Tuesday, June 8, nonetheless it has finally put to roost an issue the Village has been dealing with on and off for some-time. Local Law # 1 of 2021 was passed unanimously after a public hearing at which no opposition was voiced. The law also included an environmental statement that the decision to allow residents to raise chickens within the village confines had little or no impact.

There are several conditions to becoming a Hoosick Falls Chicken Keeper including no roosters in the hen house. The details of these conditions are spelled out in the law, which is on the Village's website. Codes Enforcement Officer Mark Surdam is charged with issuing the permits and enforcing the rules. He joked with the trustees he will need a "new badge in the shape of a chicken," to formally decided if any issues that arise are simply "Chicken Little" or chicken big.

Woods Brook Buyout Discussion

Mayor Allen announced they have received an extension for the project through the end of 2021. He also announced that the Village is seeking title to two of the identified properties to be demolished from Rensselaer County. 115 Main Street and 114 Church Street fell into the County's hands because taxes on these properties were not paid. They were scheduled to be auctioned off, but have been pulled. It was the 114 Church Street building that was the subject of a lengthy discussion, with Trustee Kevin O'Malley wondering about its possible historic significance, and asking the Village look the property over to see if it is salvageable. His position was supported by Trustee Deb Alter. Mayor Allen, with backing from Village Attorney Andy Gilchrist, reminded the Board the Woods Brook Buyout monies could not be used for anything but the purchase and demolition to aid flood control measures along the Woods Brook.

Trustee Craig Pine pointed out the building has gone up for taxes before, and those that purchased it did nothing to stop its deterioration. He was in favor of moving ahead with a resolution that would authorize the purchase from the County. He was supported by Trustees Emily Marpe, Bob Decker and Deputy Mayor Bob Ryan. In the end, it was determined there was still time before the Board needed to act, and that the village would ask the County for permission for CEO Surdam to look the structure over and report back to the Board at its July meeting. The resolution will be back on the agenda at that time.

Not Buying, But Selling A Structure

The building is at 62 Mechanic Street and owned by the Village. A previous attempt to sell the building with some conditions found no takers. This time, those conditions have been removed and the sale is labeled "as is." The Village is also entertaining engaging an auction service to help facilitate as sale.

Garbage Pick Up Can Be A Hot Issue

Mayor Allen announced the Village has been discussing some changes in days when refuse is picked up Village wide by County Waste, perhaps adding Wednesday collections to the current Thursday and Fridays. They feel the Friday collections would be less concentrated and perhaps eliminate the need for the occasional Saturday pickups. This would be at no additional charge to the Village or residents.

The Mayor also cautioned residents not to overload garage containers, and watch just what you throw away. Something hot was recently put in such a container, creating a fire which caused the truck to dump its contents on Munsell Street to extinguish the blaze and be cleaned up by Village DPW. The driver told *The Eastwick Press* "this is not the first time it has happened."

Crime Is On An Up Tick

Police Chief Bob Ashe told the board their amount of calls in May were up significantly over April, a total of 181. He said the largest amount were domestic related, but also says his department is seeing a noticeable increase in drug related activity. He pointed to a recent raid on a house in the Village, which he said was used more as a sort of halfway house than for local sales. He feels most of the illicit drugs are coming in from Vermont and New York City. He also said one officer was injured in a crash, suffering a broken leg, but is recovering.

Fireworks are also a problem. The Chief told the trustees a 31-year old village man was seriously injured on Saturday night, June 5, when some fireworks he was setting off in a field along Fairbanks Road struck him in the face. The victim had to be air lifted to the Albany Medical Center.

It Was A Long One

The meeting took about three and a half hours to complete the four page agenda. Here are some of the other important points.

Rogers Avenue Water Tank - The Village was not awarded a 2020 Community Development Block Grant, but is re-applying for the 2021 program to replace the troubled tank.

PRAP Preparation - Mayor Allen says the Village is in the process of completing their comments on the Proposed Remedial Action Plan (PRAP) regarding a new water supply for the Village. He feels that response will be ready in about a week. In the meantime, the Department of Environmental Conservation has extended the time frame for public comments on the plan to June 25,

County Civil Court - Village Judge Harold McClellan says Rensselaer County Court is considering using their chambers for



The garbage in the back of County Waste trash truck had to be dumped out on Munsell Street in Hoosick Falls last Thursday when it began to burn in the receptacle. The driver, who said this has happened several times, opened the gate and let it out. Had he not it would have eventually set the truck on fire. Police and firemen arrived at the scene and quickly put the smoldering pile out, then a frontloader was used to put it back in the truck. Photo by Steve Bradley.

a remote location for county civil court proceedings, perhaps twice a week. While the presiding judge would take part virtually from their Troy chambers, those involved would be present in Hoosick Falls along with their attorneys. He said while the discussions are still in the early stage, he felt it would be a tremendous resource for residents in the eastern portion of the county.

Buildings And Codes

CEO Mark Surdam updated the Board on several properties, including the sidewalk issues at 54 Classic Street. The difficulty here is that the Village's local law covers what can be done with a problem structure, as far as going onto the site, repairing it and doing a tax charge back. It is not really clear if a sidewalk would be covered, and will take more investigating. CEO Surdam also says he is asking a consultant to study the complaints about propane storage tanks behind a building on John Street, and what exact requirements must be met. He is also resuming biannual inspections.

Quick Notes - The Board approved Local Law # 2 relating to a minor zoning change for 17 Carey Avenue. Attorney Gilchrist said he believes there will be more concrete guidance in July as to how American Rescue Funds can be spent. The trustees approved hiring a full time DPW employee and two individuals for summer help. They will seek a quote to replace the flooring in the Gazebo in Wood Park with Trex lumber, the cost of which will be split 50/50 with Hoosick Falls Community Band. They also talked about working with the Town of Hoosick to install four electric car charging stations in the village lot by a power pole on the corner of the Trustco Parking Lot.

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