TOWN OF STANFORD TOWN BOARD   
MINUTES of APRIL 11th, 2024

The Town of Stanford Town Board met for their monthly meeting on Thursday, April 11th, 2024, at the Town Hall. Supervisor Burton called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Curtis DeVito.   
 Supervisor Burton spoke of the several residents who have passed in the last month, John Battistoni, Karen Quinn and now Sean McCarthy. Three of the Town flags have been lowered in honor of Sean and Fire Chief Ed Cerul spoke about him: Ed stated that he had the pleasure to serve in the Fire Company with Sean for 16 years and that he set the “gold standard” of being a member of our community; running the pharmacy he would go over and above as the pharmacist, personally delivering prescriptions to people in town and even helping parents of new babies. He served for 35 years as an EMT, interior fire fighter, company president, treasurer, was the grant writer, served on fundraising committees and always gave his time for the people of this community. He will be missed terribly. When he was a new member, Sean personally thanked him for being there after an accident and was so moved by helping me and many others.

Roll call: Wendy Burton – present

Julia Descoteaux – present

Eric Haims - present

Nathan Lavertue – absent

Theodore Secor - present

Also in attendance was Town Attorney Robert Butts.

LIAISON REPORTS: Councilman Secor said that the Zoning Board of Appeals did not have an April meeting but the Climate Smart Task Force met several weeks ago, adding that the current chair was unable to continue so the committee voted to make him the new chair. They had discussed the composting program they were working on and that a greenhouse gas inventory would be presented to the Town Board at their May meeting.

Councilman Haims stated that the Planning Board had one item on their agenda, the final subdivision plat for 6909 Route 82, a 225.2 acre subdivision with four residential lots, a private road, and that 113 acres would be in a conservation easement. The Planning Board was hoping that the Town Board would approve their resolution for this parcel.

Councilwoman Descoteaux reported that the CAC had not yet met this month but that co-chair Curtis DeVito would be speaking later about the upcoming road-side clean-up. She added that the Natural Resource Inventory should be done by the end of the year. For the new SPARC Park project, construction will start next week and they’re in excellent shape, with the materials, equipment and recruited volunteers, Volunteer work will count as $1 million worth of work. As far as food donations, they have 22 meals planned with 200 volunteers already signed up, but more will be needed for the 2nd phase in late April/May so more recruiting will be going on this weekend. A $10,000 donation from Home Depot was received and we are collecting tools and heavy equipment. When all done, this will be a $2 million dollar project. Donations of snacks and drinks are still needed, with Ms. Descoteaux adding that she was honored and humbled to be a part of this project.

Supervisor Burton gave her Supervisor’s report: she had submitted a (perfect) bank reconciliation, a Supervisor’s report and two payroll verifications. At the recent Fire Commissioner’s meeting, Greg Starzyk was appointed to fill the unexpired term of now Town Justice Dennis Buchal, adding that the Fire Company will also be investing their funds in NY CLASS as well. The Zoning Commission met with five members of the County Planning Department and discussed affordable housing, a huge challenge since we do not have central water and sewers. She was also still working on getting a swap shed at the Transfer Station; Bayhorse will give a discount on one of their sheds and deliver it for free as long as we have a concrete pad ready. The HVAC system project bid only received one response, but the Board will have to reject it as there was a problem; the project will be re-bid, and we hope that a local contractor will bid. The Farm Market will open on May 18th from 8 AM to 2 PM. The Hunns Lake Bridge replacement project should be done next week and re-opened. She added that she had spoken with the County regarding the bridge replacement project on Salt Point Turnpike regarding the poor signage and detour routes and they said that those matters will be addressed. Clerk Bell and I are looking into having our town designated a “Purple Heart” Town and we are looking for any veterans that have received a Purple Heart.

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Travis Christian, 166 Charwill Drive – as one of the plaintiffs in the Article 78 against the ZBA and his neighbor, as he stated last month, the Court has ruled that the case will go back to the ZBA and have them more clearly define an accessory use in regard to Rathjen’s Landscaping. The ZBA member had made erroneous statements on the matter, and 158 Charwill does not meet the accessory use definition as that defines an incidental or subordinate use, rather than a primary one. The activity level there is far greater than the primary residential, use with employees, large commercial trucks, deliveries of materials, etc. It would be egregious to define this as an accessory use and should not be allowed in the neighborhood.

Claudia DeBellis, 265 Charwill Drive – added that she was also a petition member and supports Mr. Christain’s statements as the trucks go fast, are noisy and are dangerous.

Councilwoman Descoteaux read a letter from resident Betty Cosgrove who was unable to attend the meeting: the 20 + members of the Charwill Fancor neighborhood demanded that Rathjen’s Landscaping operation be shut down. The town had spent $35,000 on an ineffective Zoning Board of Appeals defense of this lawsuit; one of the ZBA members who is on the board, is benefitting financially from the Zoning Board declaring this as a nursery when it is actually an unapproved land use; the Town Board should have a member or members removed when profiting from this illegal use and then “in effect” supporting their fellow member in this expensive lawsuit. Many of the area’s residents had been living here a long time and did not expect to have a large and noisy commercial business in their neighborhood and requested that the Town Board have this operation shut down.

MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Eric Haims, to approve the agenda with the addition of a #10 on the agenda for a Resolution #4A for the Planning Board. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. APPOINT NEW BOOKKEEPER: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Eric Haims, to appoint Jeann Walsh to take over from Margaret Lera when she leaves in May. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

2. PRESENTATION ON “PURPLE HEART TOWN”: Mary Beth Muir, the Town Clerk in Pleasant Valley, gave a presentation on how her town became a Purple Heart Town. She described what the Purple Heart award means, the history of some famous people who had been awarded Purple Hearts and how she got involved in the project with a small group of local volunteers. She ended with a quote from Calvin Coolidge, “No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave.” The audience gave her a round of applause for her presentation. Mrs. Muir also gave gifts of her Purple Heart tumblers and cookies to the Board members.

3. ROADSIDE CLEAN-UP PROJECT - CURTIS DEVITO – CAC VICE-CHAIR: Mr. DeVito reminded all that the Town’s roadside clean-up sponsored by the CAC would be on Saturday, April 13th. The CAC will be at Roosters at 9 AM handing out garbage bags, safety vests and gloves as well as coffee and doughnuts for everyone that stops by and lets us know what road a person or group would be working on. The last three years the project had covered 18 miles, then 36, miles, then 40 miles of Town roads. All roadside trash will then be accepted at the Transfer Station free of charge. It was mentioned that the County would be cleaning up Salt Point Turnpike and Ben Rathjen has helped with getting more volunteers. Supervisor Burton asked if this clean-up could be done in the early fall as well, but Curtis mentioned that growth of grasses/weeds on the roadsides would make it more difficult then. He added that the clean-up was usually done around Earth Day, but they moved the clean-up day a week earlier so as to not interfere with the new playground build.

4. GRANGE MONTH PROCLAMATION: The following proclamation was read by Councilman Haims:

**PROCLAMATION – GRANGE MONTH IN THE TOWN OF STANFORD – APRIL 2024**

WHEREAS, the Grange’s mission is to strengthen individuals, families, and communities through grassroots action, service, education, advocacy, and agriculture awareness; and

WHEREAS, for 156 years, the Grange has played an essential and lasting role in building rural and small-town America, and ensuring its resiliency through advocacy and direct service; and

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WHEREAS, the Grange today is growing because it is an active, rooted, resilient, and united organization in thousands of communities across the country; and

WHEREAS, the Grange emphasizes civic responsibility and the involvement of citizens in the legislative process; and

WHEREAS, the Grange offers opportunities for civil discussions among people of all viewpoints and opinions, serving as a safe space for exploring important social and legislative issues of the day; and

WHEREAS, even through a worldwide pandemic, the Grange (and our local Stanford Grange #808) continued to promote service to the local community and volunteerism to improve the quality of life and economic well-being of its members and residents across America; and

WHEREAS, The Grange is proud to be “Grange Strong: Rooted, Resilient and United,” and encourages Granges and community members to come together in celebrating hometown pride and sustainability; and

WHEREAS, our local Stanford Grange #808 has been active in our community since its organization in Bangall on January 23, 1896, thus celebrating its 125th Anniversary in January 2021; and

WHEREAS, Stanford Grange #808 has a history of accomplishment and service in its 128 years of existence including the organization of the Stanford Fire Company in 1931 and sponsoring the Annual Stanford Community Day since its inception in 1959; and

WHEREAS, Stanford Grange #808 continues to fill needs in our community and holds community events of interest for Town Residents including Meet the Candidates Nights for local, regional, and state candidates for public office and for Board of Education Candidates for the Pine Plains Central School District, School District Budget Meetings, a Defensive Driving Course, fundraising Penny Socials for charitable causes, sponsoring a St. Pauly’s Textile Shed for clothing donations, helping with food insecurity through their Little Food Pantry, and continues to sponsor the Annual Stanford Community Day with 2023 as the 66th consecutive year; and

WHEREAS, at the 157th Annual National Grange Convention in November 2023 in Niagara Falls, Stanford Grange #808 was recognized and honored as a “Distinguished Grange” by the National Grange – the only Grange in New York State and east of the Mississippi River to receive this prestigious award for fourteen consecutive years;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Stanford proudly proclaims April 2024 as Grange Month, and, in celebration of this, the community is invited to the Grange Month & Distinguished Grange Open House on Tuesday, April 23rd, 2024, at 7 p.m. at the Stanford Grange Hall.

Proclaimed this 11th day of April 2024 on the motion made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Eric Haims.

Roll Call Vote as follows: Wendy Burton – yes; Julia Descoteaux - yes; Eric Haims - yes; Nathan Lavertue - absent; and Theodore Secor - yes. Certified this 11th day of April 2024.

5. PERMISSION FOR THE STANFORD GARDEN CLUB TO HOLD THEIR PLANT SALE ON MAY 11TH: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Julia Descoteaux, to give the Stanford Graden Club permission to hold their annual Plant Sale in the lower Town Hall parking lot on May 11th, 2024 from 9 AM to 4 PM. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

6. REJECT THE BID FROM BOTTINI FOR THE TOWN HALL HVAC PROJECT: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Theodore Secor, to reject the only bid received for the Town Hall HVAC project from Bottini as their bid warranty was contingent upon the Town purchasing the fuel from them on an automatic delivery schedule. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

7. RESUBMIT BID FOR THE HVAC SYSTEM PROJECT: The bid for the re-submission of the HVAC project had already been done and will have a new bid opening of May 2, 2024.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The Minutes of the March 14th, 2024 Town Board meeting were approved as written on a motion made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Eric Haims. Motion carried.

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9. APPROVAL OF APRIL ABSTRACTS: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Eric Haims to approve the payments of the April Abstracts, #4 of 2024 as follows:

General Fund: check #s 7677-7721 in the amount of $47,808.53

Highway Fund: check #s 4521-4539 in the amount of $21,513.24

Stanfordville/Bangall Lights: check #3072 in the amount of $901.84

Ambulance Fund: check # 7722 in the amount of $62,500.00

SPARC Park: checks # 3021-3023 in the amount of $151,047.38

HVAC: check # 3024 in the amount of $1,760.00

Total of April 2024 Abstract #4: $ 285,530.99

Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

10. RESOLUTION FOR THE PLANNING BOARD: At the request of the Planning Board for the Rocky Reef subdivision, the following resolution was offered by Wendy Burton, seconded by Julia Descoteaux: **RESOLUTION #4A OF 2024   
 FOR THE ROCKY REEF SUBDIVISION**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Board of the Town of Stanford waive the applicable recreation fee for the Subdivision and Lot Line Alteration of Rocky Reef Farm, LLC and Helen Watson Blodgett, in the amount of Four Thousand ($4,000) Dollars, in consideration of restrictive covenants limiting further subdivision of the property and restricting +/- 113.12 acres of the project site to open space uses.

Roll call vote as follows: Wendy Burton – yes; Julia Descoteaux - yes; Eric Haims - yes; Nathan Lavertue - absent; and Theodore Secor - yes.

Resolution #4A of 2024 adopted by the affirmative votes of the Town of Stanford Town Board members present and certified this 11th day of April 2024. *Ritamary Bell, Town Clerk*

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

No one addressed the Board.

A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Julia Descoteaux, to adjourn the regular meeting and enter into an Executive Session regarding litigation at 8:00 PM.

A motion was then made by Wendy Burton, seconded Theodore Secor to close the Executive Session and go back into the meeting at 8:30 PM. With no action taken, a motion to adjourn was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Eric Haims. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Ritamary Bell

Town Clerk