

Village of The Branch – Board of Trustees Meeting
February 13, 2024
Track #82

The monthly meeting of the Village of The Branch was held at 40 Route 111, Smithtown, NY, seven thirty p.m. on February 13, 2024. Mayor Delaney, Trustees Carro, Botto, Damm, Ryan, Village Attorney Ring, Treasurer Mequia, and Village Clerk Cozine were present.

Mayor Delaney called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm with the pledge of allegiance.

Trustee Carro made a **motion** to approve the January 2024 Board of Trustees minutes. Trustee Botto seconded the motion which was approved unanimously. Trustee Ryan abstained since he was not present at the January meeting.

Trustee Carro made a **motion** to approve the February 2024 Board of Trustees work session minutes. Trustee Botto seconded the motion which was approved unanimously. Trustee Ryan abstained since he was not present at the meeting.

Trustee Carro made a **motion** to open the public meeting. Trustee Botto seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.

Robert Madden & Michelle Zarifis – Representing National Grid; came in to inform the Village of work that will be done on Main Street which is permitted through NYSDOT. They are upgrading the infrastructure on the Main. Replacing old steel with new plastic. Will use the red alert system with the Town of Smithtown. They will be starting on the west end of Main Street and there will be one lane closures from time to time.

Deacon Jerry Reida – St. Patrick’s Church in Smithtown have a tentative date of September 26-29, 2024, for a carnival with the Newton company to take place on their premises.

Monsignor Brian McNamara – 280 E Main Street St Patrick’s Church- introduced himself and started his position on October 1,2023 and wants to have a feast with mechanical rides. Msgr. McNamara has been involved in feast for 25 years with other parishes and it had to be cancelled due to covid, but it is a great community event. He feels they are good neighbors, and the villagers use their fields. He feels this will help parishioners and our church along with the community.

Mayor Delaney said there was a lot of time discussing the idea of allowing an exception to current village law banning mechanical rides. Informal discussions amongst the board reveal support for the fair but differing points of view on mechanical rides. The Smithtown Historical Society has adhered to our code for years. Some of the members feel it might be unfair for us to allow mechanical rides for St. Patrick’s and not the Smithtown Historical Society as one example. The Board is open to conversations and will consider an application once one is submitted.

Msgr. McNamara then asked what is the nature of the dialogue to move forward?

Mayor Delaney said he would love for the affected parties to come down to a public meeting and discuss why mechanical rides are necessary and hopefully we can come to a consensus.

Msgr. McNamara

said you voted without our constituents to come in front of you and plead our case. We have 19 acres in the Village of The Branch, which makes us different and feels its unfair to hold us to the same standards.

Rebecca Darmain – Principal of St. Patrick’s school asked why was this law enacted in the first place? Trustee Botto answered that the village was incorporated in 1927 and that these laws were made a long time ago.

Mayor Delaney said we are open to changing the rules, but you needed a quick response so you could plan accordingly.

Trustee John Carro mentioned he has been parishioner for 38 years and wanted to know why they needed mechanical rides?

Deacon Reida said it was a financial decision. It is a difference between 5-10K without rides or 100-120K with the rides. The Deacon would have hoped we could have listened to the community.

Gerard Reilly – resident of Hemlock Lane asked has anyone applied for mechanical rides in the past 20 years? Mayor Delaney and Trustee Carro both said that the Smithtown Historical Society asked and that they wanted to know what they could do within the code to raise monies. Mr. Reilly also mentioned the lights from the fields don’t bother them or the noise either from the kids.

John Vigilante – owner of Branch Funeral Home – commented the concerts at the library effects the businesses along Middle Country but knows that it is good for the community.

Deacon Reida asked about the boundaries of Historical Society. Also asked if St. Patrick’s is in the Historic Area? Are the fields open area? How many families reside in the village? What if we had over 270 families come in.

Mayor Delaney said there are 3 ways to look at this. We could put it up for a vote once the application is submitted. We could delay it, or lastly, we could do it attorney to attorney.

Deacon Reida said they will come back in 30 days with a petition with a majority signatures.

John Vigilante said SHS doesn’t have the parking to accommodate mechanical rides which makes St Patrick’s unique that you can have the rides and still park on their premises.

Gerard Reilly commented that the Lantern Festival that the SHS had was dangerous with the parking across the street, where as St. Patrick’s has ample parking.

Deacon Jerry suggested we leave this open for this meeting and they will go door to door and ask neighbors and bring a color-coded chart with everyone’s opinions.

Mayor Deaney said he is not always influenced by outside opinions of villagers.

Trustee Ryan asked if this was going to be an annual process? Deacon Jerry answered that is would not be a bridge but a filler. Msgr. McNamara said the kids absolutely love it and Mayor Delaney agrees the kids would love it.

Principal Darmain asked if the Village would be willing to relook at the code? Mayor Delaney said yes.

John Vigilante said maybe the church could put a blueprint up so you can see exactly where the rides would go.

Louis Cona – Priest of St. Patrick’s Church – quoted was man made for the sabbath, or the sabbath made for the man? Felt it was in the interest of the Village to promote and reasons to stay in the village.

Doreen Haberfield – 3 Village way resident asked what is the purpose of the code? Mayor Delaney thought it had to do with traffic, noise, and large events.

Lisa Fogarty – 8 Dogwood resident- asked what is the process to change the code? Attorney Ring explained.

Rich Bernardi – resident of St. James and part of the St. Patrick’s Fathers Guild mentioned the church is promoting families and the spirit. This code does not promote families.

Valeri Benati – 21 Carmens Lane – current 8th grader thinks it would be good to have feast because it would bring people together.

John Benati – 21 Carmens Lane – current 5th grader appreciates everyone’s opinions. This event we want to ask, not beg.

Trustee Carro asked Deacon Reida if they would have the event without mechanical rides. He answered no only because it will help to raise more money.

Lauren McGowan – 1 Whitebirch Court resident – the feast is much more of an experience, which is what we are looking to do. It is a bog community event, and the kids want to go every night.

Mayor Delaney said we will keep dialect open, and you do what you need to do and we will meet back up in March.

Trustee Carro made a **motion** to close the public comment portion of the meeting. Trustee Botto seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Mequia reported that:

- Quiet month, auditors done, and no changes needed. I asked them to change something in their report that was incorrectly listed as covid aid.
- Budget numbers ready for work session in March.
- Waiting for the new tax system to transfer the information. There is a long line of other villages waiting for the same thing.
- Need to do a Fire Department voucher, so if I have permission to cut them a check without it and do voucher next month, and permission was given by Board.
- Receiving lots of interest from NYCLASS.

Mayor Delaney made a **motion** to accept the treasurer’s report as submitted and direct treasurer to pay all the bills on Abstract #2205 totaling \$234,815.72. Trustee Carro seconded the **motion** which was approved unanimously.

Attorney Ring's Report

Attorney Ring reported that:

- Procurement policies, looking to update the wording by checking out other villages.
- Looking into changing the term of office from 2 years to 4 years. Need to do a resolution or public law, Village of Belletair did it recently.
- Called and left numerous messages for the Hazardous Mitigation Plan and have not heard back from anyone.

Building Inspector Arico's Report

Building Inspector was not present to report:

Trustee Carro's Report

Trustee Carro reported that:

- Justice Court – did well
- Pothole on Singer Lane

Trustee Botto's Report

Trustee Botto left early and did not leave a report:

Trustee Damm's Report

Trustee Damm reported that:

- Tried 7 other bridge manufacturers and nobody returned his calls.

Mayor Delaney made a **motion** to accept the bid from Rolling Barge Bridges for \$13,26.00 for the old route 111 bridge. Trustee Carro seconded the **motion** which was approved unanimously.

Trustee Ryan's Report

Trustee Ryan had nothing to report:

Mayor Delaney Report

Mayor Delaney reported that:

Special Use Permit – SHS- Car show 09/14/2024– Approved.

Mayor Delaney made a **motion** to close the meeting at 9:03pm. Trustee Carro seconded the **motion** which was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Cozine
Village Clerk