

## VILLAGE OF CORNWALL-ON-HUDSON BOARD OF TRUSTEES

July 2, 2007

A Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees, a Special Meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M., at 325 Hudson St., Cornwall-on-Hudson, N.Y.

The following Board Members were in attendance:

Mayor Joseph J. Gross  
Trustee Charles R. Hahn  
Trustee Mark J. Edsall  
Trustee Peter J. Miller  
Trustee William T. Fogarty

Also present was: DPW Superintendent Robert Gilmore, Police Chief Charles Williams, Deputy Village Attorney Howard Protter, and Village Clerk Jeanne Mahoney

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS – VILLAGE MUNICIPAL LOT**

DPW Superintendent Gilmore provided an overview of the proposed improvements project which was introduced at the June 18, 2007 regular meeting.

Trustee Edsall stated he has concerns regarding a safe bus egress. When the survey is completed, he would like to look at the grading. DPW Superintendent Gilmore replied that Mr. Brisman of West Point Tours looked at the site and indicated that he finds no problems with buses making the necessary turns.

Trustee Miller stated that parking has been an issue for a long time now and this plan seems like a good solution. It will increase surface and reduce maintenance costs for the municipal lot. In addition, the creation of sidewalks for school children drop-off will improve safety. The Village Board must always take into consideration the overall good to the entire Village of Cornwall-on-Hudson not just what might or might not benefit a few.

Trustee Fogarty stated that the Village may never get a “present” like this again. The focus should be on helping the Village’s long range plan by increasing parking and improving traffic flow. He further stated that, in hindsight, the plan should have been discussed with the Board prior to a request being made for a state member item grant, but that DPW Superintendent Gilmore has the best of intentions when it comes to Village wide improvement projects.

Trustee Hahn stated that he was pleasantly surprised by the plan. Over the years, there have been many requests for additional parking in the municipal lot. In addition, this plan addresses safety of school children all at no cost to Village taxpayers.

Deputy Village Attorney Protter stated he has no legal comments on the proposed plan.

Mayor Gross stated that he has given this matter a great deal of thought over the past couple of weeks. Residents claim there is no parking problem. There are too many unanswered questions for him to be enthusiastic about the plan. He met with David Church of the Orange County Planning Department and learned that money is available for improvements to the Village Square. The school board should be more involved in the process. He suggested that a small citizens group be appointed to produce a plan covering the entire Village Square area.

Mayor Gross opened this item for public comment.

Jeffrey Small of 97 Duncan Avenue agrees that more parking will help local businesses as long as any plan is in keeping with Village's character. He appreciates the generous donations. However, he has serious concerns. First, the plan should go before the Planning Board along with a traffic study for review. Second, he doesn't see a need for paving and tree cutting in order to gain parking.

Gary Curasi of 42 River Avenue states that this plan will contribute to an ongoing safety problem of having traffic exiting on to River Avenue.

Susan Gagliardo of 17 River Avenue asked why this plan was presented after assurances had been made to River Avenue residents that parking issues could be resolved by re-stripping the municipal lot. The new plan will increase noise near her home. She feels that a traffic study is necessary prior to the approval of any improvement plan.

Margo Connell of 21 River Avenue stated that she would rather see the Village property on River Avenue become a parking lot rather than an exit road.

Steven Rice of 22 Duncan Avenue stated that traffic should exit onto Hudson Street rather than River Avenue. The proposed plan might only make the traffic problem worse.

Andrew Maroney of 4 Barr Avenue stated that he has done random evening checks of the municipal lot and found ample parking available. Also the Village should make sure it has clear title to the River Avenue property before proceeding.

Deke Hazirjian of 5 Grandview Avenue stated that a traffic study is needed. The public should be involved in any decisions regarding infrastructure because it is a quality of life issue.

Grace Lewis of 16 River Avenue is the tenant of Phyllis Pryne. She stated that she is a bus driver for West Point Tours. There is already a problem for buses exiting the municipal lot onto River Avenue in part because of the new patio at the Riverbank Restaurant. In her opinion, the proposed lower exit onto River Avenue will have visibility problems because of the hill and a large tree that will block views.

Rob Kirshner of 19 River Avenue stated that this is the worst plan yet. Traffic flow onto River Avenue is not the issue. Extra striping of the Village municipal lot would solve the parking issue. The Village Board needs to take time in making a decision and consider the concerns of residents.

Phyllis Pryne of Derby Lane stated that a traffic study would ensure student safety. To provide a plan that requires a 30 day commitment is wrong. A plan of this magnitude needs time and proper planning.

William Larkin, State Senator stated that DPW Superintendent Gilmore presented the improvement plan to him and requested assistance. He was told to put the request in writing because grant money might be available in the 2008 to finish the project. The overall goal is to return money to the taxpayers for plans that are for the good of all, not just a few.

Discussion followed between Senator Larkin and Mayor Gross regarding streamlining the process of requesting grant money to include Village representatives. Mayor Gross suggested a future meeting.

Lucy Swift of Deer Hill Road stated that skateboarders would look at the proposed improvements to the municipal lot as an opportunity to pursue their sport.

Simon Gruber of 77 Duncan Avenue agrees with the public comments. The Village Board should not be held to a 30 day deadline. Real thought and planning is required. The problem could be resolved with better signage and new striping. There is no need to remove trees. In addition, discussion with the school board should take place before any plan is formalized.

Kristine Williams of 98 Boulevard stated that she has safety concerns with the point where traffic will meet and the property grade vehicles and buses will have to navigate. A fence will be needed to protect the school property from the traffic. The plan will take away trees that provide shading to the playground. She sees no benefit to anyone with this plan.

Robert Gosda of 19 Homeland Avenue asked if a drainage study has been addressed. This can be an expensive problem.

Andrew Argenio of 18 Church Street stated that the plan should require more citizen input. A committee makes good sense.

Brendan Coyne of 13 Paula Court is the current School Board President. He stated that the School Board would like the opportunity to study the plan and provide input. He has concerns regarding the plan and its process.

Rick Gioia of 167 Hudson Street states that he finds it amazing that this has gone from a business parking issue to a school safety issue. The Village Board and Village department heads need to stand behind the Mayor.

John Donnellan stated that he walks throughout the Village and often finds the municipal lot empty during evening hours.

Joseph Suto of 10 Washington Street stated that the Village property on River Avenue should be left as a buffer zone. No improvements are necessary.

Cathy Tubridy of 10-12 River Avenue stated that if the proposed plan is implemented, her property will become surrounded by roadway. A problem already exists with partying and noise in the municipal lot. In addition, inclement weather makes the incline on River Avenue difficult. This plan would present a quality of life issue.

Jerry Gage of 17 Maple Avenue feels this is a “shotgun plan”. He is thankful that the Board did not vote last month. This plan needs public input.

Kate Benson of 2 Washington Street stated that due process must be followed because the plan affects a lot of people. This is a growing area. There is a need to preserve open/green space. She wonders if the ends justify the means here.

George Burger of 17 Vinebrook Avenue stated that the Village Board needs to work together as a team. Rather than making improvements to help a few local businesses, the Board should be taking public sentiment into account.

Peter Duggan of 3 Deer Hill Road stated that he has enjoyed listening to the public comment this evening.

David Carnright of 51 Duncan Avenue is a member of the School Board. He feels that the Village Board should proceed with caution. The State Education Department should have the opportunity to review the proposed plan first. A change in the character of a neighborhood needs to be considered. The former Library lot is unused after 5:00 PM and is within walking distance of local restaurants. It could provide ample parking.

Having no further public comment, Mayor Gross asked the Trustees for their response to the comments made this evening.

Trustee Edsall thanked everyone for coming this evening and sharing their concerns. It is important to work together and that is why this Special Meeting was called. The Village Board did not want to move forward without first hearing from the public. He shares many of the concerns addressed this evening and would like to see a completed survey plan before any action is taken. The issue of providing additional parking by enhancing the existing lot vs. expanding it and changing traffic flow is a valid alternative. He also has concerns regarding the grading and impacts (drainage) to adjoining properties are open items. Better signage is needed regardless. The safety issue regarding school children drop off has been discussed by the Board over the past year. The traffic study proposal, which he had the opportunity to review, was not just about a parking lot, but also about doing a traffic overview of the Village Square area (i.e. site issue problem at Duncan Avenue and Hudson St.)

Trustee Miller agrees with Trustee Edsall's remarks. He now has additional concerns based on tonight's public comments. In order for the Village Board to make decisions on agenda items, it is important to gain as much information as possible before proceeding. He also thanked people for coming out this evening and providing their input.

Trustee Fogarty also thanked the audience. He took copious notes and learned a lot this evening.

Trustee Hahn stated that it is great to see such a large public presence. The Board appreciates hearing everyone's thoughts and concerns. It will help the Board make a decision.

Phyllis Pryne offered to purchase the vacant lot owned by the Village at fair market price. She will keep it nicely landscaped and procured. In addition the deed will stipulate that it never become a building lot.

#### RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION – STORAGE SHEDS/EXEMPTIONS TO YARD REQUIREMENTS

Trustee Miller introduced the following resolution and moved for its adoption.

WHEREAS, an Introductory local law entitled “STORAGE SHEDS – EXCEPTIONS TO YARD REQUIREMENTS LOCAL LAW” was introduced before the Board of Trustees of the Village of Cornwall-on-Hudson on May 21, 2007 and upon notice duly published and posted, a hearing was held on June 18, 2007 before the Board of Trustees; and

WHEREAS, public discussion was heard at such hearing concerning the merits and environmental significance of said introductory local law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the adoption of the Introductory Local Law is hereby determined not have a significant effect on the environment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Introductory Local Law entitled “STORAGE SHEDS – EXCEPTIONS TO YARD REQUIREMENTS LOCAL LAW” of the Village of Cornwall-on-Hudson be and hereby is adopted as Local Law #2 of 2007 of the Village of Cornwall-on-Hudson on July 2, 2007.

The foregoing resolution was seconded by Trustee Fogarty and carried by a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays.

Having concluded the business set before them, Trustee Fogarty moved to adjourn the meeting into Executive Session to discuss the hiring of two (2) Seasonal Workers in the Department of Public Works at 8:45 P.M. which was seconded by Trustee Miller and upon a vote of 5 Ayes and 0 Nays, the meeting was adjourned.

The meeting was reconvened at 9:00 PM.

#### DPW SEASONAL WORKERS

Trustee Miller made a motion to appoint Robyn Fiedler and Nickolas LoBlanco as Seasonal Workers in the Department of Public Works effective July 5, 2007. The hourly pay rate will be \$10.00 and each will not exceed twenty (20) hours of work each week. The motion was seconded by Trustee Edsall and carried by a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays.

Having concluded the business set before them, Trustee Hahn moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 P.M. which was seconded by Trustee Miller and upon a vote of 5 Ayes and 0 Nays, the meeting was adjourned.