

**MINUTES  
OF  
THE TOWN OF RENSSELAERVILLE TOWN BOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING  
DECEMBER 16, 2014**

The Town Board of the Town of Rensselaerville held a Special Meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2014 at 7 o'clock in the evening at the Rensselaerville Town Hall, 87 Barger Road, Medusa, NY. The meeting was convened by Supervisor Valerie Lounsbury and the roll was called with the following results:

PRESENT WERE: Supervisor Valerie Lounsbury  
Councilman Robert Bolte  
Councilwoman Margaret Sedlmeir  
Councilman Gerald Wood  
Councilwoman Marion Cooke  
Town Clerk Victoria H. Kraker

Also present were Investigator Mance and Sergeant Halloran from the Albany County Sheriff's Department and 52 interested citizens.

The purpose of the Special Meeting was to continue the discussion on the Route 85 parking matter.

Supervisor Lounsbury commenced the discussions by making it clear to all involved that the Town *had not taken any action, no resolution was passed, nor were any laws passed* regarding the parking along Route 85 in the hamlet of Rensselaerville. She stated that she has made several phone calls and the bottom line is that the Town is very limited in what they can do. She has also spoken to Doug Rose and he stated that the double yellow lines *will* stay.

Supervisor Lounsbury opened the meeting for public comments. Eighteen concerned citizens signed up to be heard at the meeting and most were relieved to learn that the Town had not taken any action despite the rumors that were being generated. Many citizens that spoke up agree that common sense, consideration, and patience are key and at the very least, vehicles should be kept off the road during snow storms to allow plows to navigate safely and efficiently. It was also mentioned that restricting parking would affect property values.

**Jost Nickelsberg** suggested looking into extending the parking area behind the Hyuck Preserve office building. Supervisor Lounsbury stated that because of its proximity to the stream and for insurance reasons, it cannot be opened up any more than it already is.

**Diana Hinchcliff** stated that she felt it was not a parking problem, but rather a speed and traffic-type problem. She suggested forming a committee to gather community input and to make recommendations.

**Christopher Schiralli** thanked the Huyck Preserve for allowing citizens to park their vehicles in their parking lot during snowstorms. He also stated that limiting parking is an intrusion of daily life, creates a hardship for family and friends and patrons of the business and civic organizations. He stated that he is not aware of any reports from first-responder organizations that the parking on Main Street has caused any diminished response times. Mr. Schiralli directed his final statements to Supervisor Lounsbury as follows: the overwhelming opposition to any action that would prohibit parking or change the current parking pattern, from citizens to civic organizations and local businesses, should be referendum enough not to consider any resolutions that would alter the current parking. He asked that due to the significant hardship that would be incurred, that the Town close these proceedings or at least offer a reasonable solution that would not prohibit on-street parking.

**Barry Kuhar** suggested back in the mid 1990's that the Town Board look into buying property in Rensselaerville for the purpose of parking for the village. Now, twenty years later, the problem remains. The village is congested because people are using it and alternative parking is needed.

**Colin Abele** is concerned about the ethics of the chain of events that have occurred regarding the parking issue. He suggests that the Town Board look into what led an action being taken by the police without any prior Town Board action. He recommends that any committee that may be formed, check into Councilman Bolte specifically because he understands that it was Councilman Bolte that initiated the action of the authorities.

Councilman Bolte answered Mr. Abele by confirming that it was in fact himself that that filed the complaint, however, he did not make the complaint as a Board member. Councilman Bolte stated that when he ran for the office of Town Council he did not give up his private rights. The complaint was neither filed by the Town Board nor was it represented as being filed by the Town. He stated that the fact of the matter is that the Motor Vehicle Law states that if a vehicle is parked on the surface of the pavement, it is illegal; if you cross the double yellow line, it is illegal; and if you get hit while you are over that yellow line, you are the one that is liable, regardless of who is actually at fault.

**Emileigh Tanner** stated that on behalf of the Huyck Preserve, they have been very lenient in allowing people to park in their lot during a snow storm, but it is not a solution. Alternative parking is needed.

**Bob Tanner** stated that as chief of the Fire Department, on occasions, parking on the Grist Mill side has caused a problem. Once they have actually had to stop and ask that a

vehicle be moved so that the fire department could get through; luckily it was not an emergency call. He also stated that for safety reasons, there must not be parking at the foot of Pond Hill nor at the end of Route 85 where larger emergency vehicles need the room to turn.

**Sharon Costello** submitted written comments, but will summarize as follows: most recognize there is limited parking, but they are courteous and work it out. The problem is with those that want to drive through the village at unreasonable speeds. Speed and large vehicles on a roadway that is not designed for them is a problem. Speed is also a concern when it comes to pedestrians.

**Charles Burgess** chairman of the RHDA is in agreement with most of all the above comments and recommends that any action that may be taken in the future take into account the historical essence of the Town of Rensselaerville. He also volunteered to help in any way.

**Dawn**, Executive Director of the Huyck Preserve, confirmed that there simply is not enough space to extend the parking area behind the Mill House. However, there is an unspoken rule that during storms people are permitted to use their parking lot. She stated that she would like it to remain 'unspoken', because if it becomes 'spoken' it would come down to not allowing anyone to park there. However, this is not a long term solution.

**Investigator Mance** began by thanking everyone for coming out for the meeting and for all the emails. She confirmed that a complaint was filed and because it was a legitimate concern, the Sheriff's Department was sent to investigate. She agrees that a blind-eye has been turned to the parking situation in her fourteen-year tenure with the Sheriff's Department. And, although, she has never written a ticket she has had to knock on some doors to have people move their vehicles because they were in violation. She stated that she was not present to provide a solution, but rather to explain and clarify the law. Simply because Rensselaerville is unique, it is still part of New York and the laws of the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law are applicable. She noted that although some laws are black and white, some do fall into a gray area and are open to interpretation. She asked that people keep in mind that if the fire, police, or ambulance were coming to their house, and are unable to get through because cars are parked in the way, and it took even an extra two minutes for them arrive, two minutes is a lifetime.

Investigator Mance explained that Councilman Bolte was correct when he stated that regardless of who is actually at fault, if you are the one on the wrong side of the yellow lines when an accident occurs, you are considered the one at fault.

Supervisor Lounsbury thanked everyone for attending. She stated that there would be no immediate solutions, but asked that everyone to be courteous and use common sense in the meantime.

A motion was made by Councilman Bolte to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 PM; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilwoman Sedlmeir.

*Motion carried: Ayes (5) Lounsbury, Bolte, Sedlmeir, Wood, and Cooke; Nays (0)*

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED;**

Victoria H. Kraker  
Town Clerk