

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

March 13, 2008

The regular monthly meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Alfred was held at 7:00 pm Thursday, March 13, 2008 and opened by Supervisor Jeanne Cartwright with the pledge to the flag. Board members present were Jeanne Cartwright, Tom Mansfield, Phil Curran and Jerry Snyder. Also present was Chief of Police Tim O'Grady, Assessor Sue Putt and her mother, Marion Weaver. Janice Higgins-Burdick, and Jamie Mansfield. Representing Sugar Hill Development Corporation were Chuck Jessup, Brent Reynolds, Charles Nissler, Doug Burdick, Bill Hall and Bob Heineman. Arriving at 7:30 pm was Village of Alfred Mayor Craig Clark. Absent was Jeff Johnston.

Guests: Brent Reynolds introduced the members of the Sugar Hill Corporation and explained that it was started in 1994 to promote development in Alfred. It started with 81.3 acres that were divided into 13 lots of 5 acres each. There are 2 ponds on the property and some land that is too steep for development. Sewer, water, electric and the road have all been installed. Originally assessed at \$33,100 now assessed at \$495,000 – an increase of 61%. Currently constructing a 7200 sq. ft. building to hopefully attract businesses to locate there. Mr. Reynolds went on the say that Sugar Hill is a 501(c) 3 Corporation. Therefore they feel they are fully exempt from taxes under the law. Currently members on the board have been giving no interest loans to the corporation to pay the taxes. According to their bylaws no one on the board can make a profit. Mr. Jessup stated that they have two determinations stating they are tax exempt – one from the IRS and one from the NYS Charities Bureau. The corporation was set up for the benefit of the community and all members of the board are former Mayors or Supervisors. When any of the land is sold to a public entity that money has to go to develop the next lot. When the lots are all developed any money then goes to the NYS Job Development. If the corporation dissolves the land goes back to the Town of Alfred. When the corporation was first started three of the members contributed \$5000 each, whenever money was needed, they put it in. They now have invested \$56,000 and can no longer afford to pay the taxes. Bill Hall stated that there is a lot of brain power in the County and Sugar wants to provide a place where these new businesses can develop and stay in Alfred. The Corporation would like to establish a PILOT with the Town of \$100/year.

Supervisor Cartwright commended them for what they are trying to do. Assessor Sue Putt also stated she commends them. No one is denying that they are exempt from Income tax purposes but doesn't mean they are exempt from property taxes – they don't fall into Charitable under the Real Property Tax Law. Mrs. Putt added that she has consulted with the State Lawyer. The only way to get a PILOT is if you are tax exempt to begin with. Mrs. Putt stated that she has worked really hard on this and investigated it but they just don't fit into a Charitable Organization – usually a hospital or school. If a PILOT is worked out the Assessor is not involved – it is done by the Town Board.

Brent Reynolds asked how the land was assessed. Mrs. Putt stated that she hasn't reviewed the assessment yet but it is probably assessed as commercial land. Mrs. Putt was then asked if they were to go to the Board of Assessment Review, can they lower the assessment to anything they want Mrs. Putt stated yes – but she can then change it the next year. Mr. Reynolds asked why it couldn't be left at the assessment the Board of Assessment Review lower it to.

Brent Reynolds added that over the years they have sat many, many hours meeting with people to market Sugar Hill. Without a building they are not interested. They want something they can move right into. Also have had help from Cathy Young, Randy Kuhl and Dan Burling.

Mr. Jessup thanked the Board for their time and encouraged them to review the packet Sugar Hill prepared for them.

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Approval of Minutes - The minutes of the February 14, 2008 meeting were approved with a motion by Tom Mansfield, seconded by Phil Curran and carried 4-0.

Police - Reviewed the written report for February. Marion Weaver announced that this is the last Town Board meeting she will be attending since she is not running for reelection on the Village Board. The Board thanked her for coming and wished her well.

Codes Enforcement – Reviewed written report. Mr. Kilmer called NYSDEC again regarding the Alfred Collision property and has no response to date.

General Abstract #3-2008 – Vouchers #35-47 in the amount of \$17365.67 were approved with a motion by Tom Mansfield seconded by Phil Curran and carried 4-0.

Highway Abstract #3-2008 – Vouchers #26-41 in the amount of \$26504.87 were approved with a motion by Phil Curran seconded by Jerry Snyder and carried 4-0.

Highway Report

- Reviewed written report.
- Jamie Mansfield reported that they have been out 30 times plowing and sanding.
- Patched potholes on nice days and checked sluice pipes, cleaned snow out of ditches.
- Town of Andover is borrowing our backup sander.
- Letter from resident on Fisher Road thanking the crew for keeping the road so good.
- Teitsworth online auction – would like to put the pickup and the Drott on the online auction. If sells for under \$5000 cost to the Town is \$50.00 if over \$5000 - \$100.00 . They have already taken pictures and once it sells the Town has 48 hours to accept or reject the high bid. It is the responsibility of the high bidder to come and get the equipment. They estimate the Drott will bring between \$2000 and \$3000 and the pickup – whatever we can get. The next auction in the 1st week in April. Doug Burdick asked why not just advertise it locally? A motion was made by Phil Curran to sell the two pieces on the online auction, seconded by Tom Mansfield and carried 4-0.
- Grant for Excavator – no news yet. Almond received one bid from Milton CAT for \$175,002.00

Supervisor: Sent letters to businesses and Planning Board members.

Met with Mayor Craig Clark and Alfred State College President John Anderson regarding a wind energy project. Tom Golisano is interested in helping communities develop wind farms. As an alumnus of Alfred State, he is interested in working with the College and putting windmills on the farm property. The Village, Town and College would share the profits. An engineer will be coming to talk to the two Boards. They still have to determine if there is enough wind and whether or not they can hook into a substation. The engineer will be attending the Village meeting on April 8 and the Town Board is invited to attend.

Supervisor Cartwright stated that she feels it is important to talk about this – important to let people know how this could benefit the community. Right now it is in the very initial stages.

Town Clerk – Resolution changing Home Rule in regards to changing Tax Collectors from elected to Appointed with no residency requirements. The Resolution was passed with a motion by Tom Mansfield, seconded by Jerry Snyder and carried 4-0.

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Other Business:

Phil Curran asked what direction the Board feels they should go in regards to Sugar Hill. One of the options mentioned was for the County IDA to take it over; if that happened it becomes Tax Exempt. Mr. Curran added that he doesn't want to see it fizzle up and die. If they dissolve the corporation, the Town takes it over. Jeanne Cartwright asked if there is anything the State can do to help? Doug Burdick replied that this is such a small area plus two colleges, state looks at that we don't need anymore help. Phil Curran stated that if it were to come off the tax roll, it won't be that much of a burden. Jerry Snyder stated that if it were turned back to farm land, could get a lease and used for Ag purposes and then get an Ag exemption. Have to commit for 5 years. Craig Clark stated that he would be willing to approach the College and see if that would be feasible.

- Tim O'Grady informed the Board that Alfred University is looking into conducting a Soap Box Derby on County Road 12 in the fall as part of the National Gravity car.
- County Courthouse – now looking at a 3 story addition behind the current Court House. Cut down 8500 sq. ft. Cost would be \$13.8 million for new construction plus the cost of renovations to the old jail.
- The Assessor has inquired about house numbers? It was suggested that this would be a good Eagle Scout project.

A motion to adjourn at 8:40 pm was made by Tom Mansfield, seconded by Phil Curran and carried 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janice Higgins-Burdick
Town Clerk