

Village of Liberty Planning Board Regular Meeting April 8, 2010

Present:

Don Nichols, Chairman
John Webber
Steve Green
Carlton Fritz
Dan Ratner

Absent

Also Present:

Langdon C. Chapman, Village Attorney
Pam Winters, Code Enforcement Officer
Michael Weeks, P.E. McGoey, Hauser & Edsall (Village Engineers)
Dawn Kalisky, P.E. Lanc & Tully
John O'Rourke, P. E. Lanc & Tully
Corky Chanov, Liberty Fire Chief

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Chairman Nichols calls the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomes the two new board members, Mr. Carlton Fritz and Mr. Dan Ratner, Sr. As a matter of record for the file, a letter was sent to Mr. Adrian Gonzalez from the Village Board thanking him for his time served on the Planning Board. A copy of said letter is included in this month's minutes. A copy of John Nichols resignation, for personal reasons, is also enclosed, as is a letter from the Village Board thanking him for his time served as well.

ON A MOTION BY JOHN WEBBER, SECONDED BY STEVE GREEN AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 11, 2010 MEETING ARE APPROVED AS SUBMITTED.

Chairman Nichols: I'd like to thank each of the engineers here tonight for agreeing to this meeting with regard to Liberty Commons. I'm sure you've seen my letter to the Village Board as well as a letter from the past Fire Chief with regard to the availability of water at this complex.

Dawn: Yes, we have.

Chairman Nichols: And you've seen the letter from an independent testing engineer, Terry Kelly, regarding the results of the tests he did.

Dawn: Yes, we have a copy of all of the correspondence.

Chairman Nichols: I'll speak for me in this matter. Most of the Board agrees with me but, now, here, I'll speak for me. The place (Liberty Commons) does not have enough water for adequate fire suppression. Period. It can't be done. Let me start off by asking what is the criterion for a place like that?

Dawn: For single-family units, NFPA standards require 250 gpm at 20 psi per minute. Beyond that, you can get into other standards and recommendations. Using ISO recommendations for single-family housing, 500 gpm is required. The hydrants are rated. They're shy of the ISO recommendations but still meet NFPA standards.

Chairman Nichols: It meets the minimum but for what?

Dawn: It meets the minimum of 250 gpm at 20 psi.

John: If you run through the calculations that Kelly Engineering did, he basically confirmed our calculations.

Chairman Nichols: I understand but we shut it down; we went from 105 psi to 20 psi in less than 30 seconds. Now for one, you cannot hook a fire truck to any of those hydrants out there. They should be black-bagged because what will happen is that we'll suck those hydrants and the lines dry just like that. There's no way that there's enough water there for a fire truck to hook to those hydrants.

Dawn: I understand how you might feel that way but the numbers meet the minimum standards.

Chairman Nichols: When you have a fire truck that can pull 1,000 gallons of water per minute, there's not sufficient water at that hydrant system. It would collapse the system and ruin the fire truck because when you start drawing a vacuum; something's going to break.

John: We didn't extend the existing lines; we replaced what was there. There were hydrants there. There were single-family homes there that didn't meet the recommendations.

Chairman Nichols: Nobody is saying that Carrier Street has enough water with the line that's there. I guess what I'm saying is that that hydrant system should not be there because you cannot use it.

Dawn: You're not going to be able to pull 1,000 gpm in the lower area of Carrier Street

Chairman Nichols: We're not saying we could.

John: But those hydrants can be rated because they meet minimum flow test standards so whether you bought fire trucks for better capacity down here....

Chairman Nichols: But that should've been taken into account when the place was designed.

John: What we've taken into account is that we meet the design standards and we exceed the minimum flow standards. You're right. We didn't do any analysis, we weren't asked to, of your fire trucks. But typically, no municipality, very rarely would ask us to do so on a private project.

Chairman Nichols: Well, that's wrong. I'm a past fire chief and he's (Carlton) has been a fire chief, and our newly appointed fire chief (Corky Chanov) is sitting right there. Had I

known that there was not enough water for fire suppression in that development, I never would have agreed to allow this project to be approved.

John: Wait a minute, a point of clarification. There's a difference between not enough water for fire suppression and not enough water to feed your fire trucks. We meet the minimum flow requirements. We have a sprinkler system in the senior building. The design of the sprinkler system was done so by a professional given the results of the tests. The system has been certified to by State standards.

Dawn: Pam that was submitted to you by Sullivan County Fire Protection, Ira Gold?

Pam: Yes, I have that.

Chairman Nichols: If one of those buildings catches on fire, that you cannot use those hydrants, water will have to be brought in with tanker trucks. I feel the hydrants should be black-bagged.

John: What you could do, what's been done in other communities is to color-code the bonnets of the hydrants to let the fire department know what they can pull out of the hydrant. I'm just afraid that if you put a black bag over them, that'll be good for the first six months or so until winter weather causes them to rip and tear.

Pam: And the tenants will call me to complain that the hydrants are broken.

Corky: What I have a question about is this, there's a sprinkler system in the senior building but no sprinklers in the townhouses. Why is that?

Dawn: the State Building Code of New York does not require it.

Corky: OK.

Steve: What about the line? Did you leave the old one and just put a new one in or did you actually replace it?

Dawn: We replaced it. We removed the old line and installed a new 8" one. You have a 4" line on Carrier Street.

Steve: I think what Don's getting at is that it's not whether the line is capable of handling it, it's a matter of the supply getting to it. When you did the test, was it 4' of silt inside the line.

John: We did the design. We put the system in. And the design test came back within 10 psi of the standard.

Chairman Nichols: Well, I don't want to beat a dead horse to death on this.

Dawn: All of this, even before it was submitted to the Health Department was submitted to your Department Heads for review and comments including the Water Superintendent and all those numbers were there then.

Chairman Nichols: Yes. I understand that. We at the Board, we distribute it to the Water Department, the Street Department and the Sewer Department and when they come back and OK it, we don't look at it any further. And I fault myself for that because had I known this, I surely would've questioned this.

Mike Weeks: There's no fault here because, as consultants, we do the same thing here that they do. Here's the line we have to meet. They meet it. It may not be the best results but they meet the line.

Chairman Nichols: I can only suggest that for future developments, that you look at fire suppression as well as just making sure the damn toilets flush.

Dawn: We do.

John: I design these things where there is no water for fire suppression, with no hydrants, with the understanding that tankers will need to be brought in to fight a fire.

Chairman Nichols: And that's fine. I don't have a problem with that. We have places that we know we'll have to use tankers for. But the expectation is when I have a fire hydrant system, I'm going to use it, and I can't use this one.

Mike: In a perfect world, we'd have water everywhere. We'd have new water lines running down Carrier Street. We just don't have it.

Dan: But the public perception is false. The public sees the hydrants and believes that they can be used as a form of fire protection and that's not the case.

The discussion continues regarding an alternate route using a 10" line, the use of grants to upgrade the line in the future, etc.

Chairman Nichols: Well, there's nothing we can do to rectify this now. We all know this now and the Fire Department is aware of this now, too. Corky, do you have anything to add?

Corky: Yes, Thanks for having me. I'm the newly elected Fire Chief in Liberty but I have 31 years in as a fireman up through the ranks. I'm also a union carpenter for 30 years. I understand what Donny's trying to say. When we see a fire hydrant, it's natural for us to hook a hose to a hydrant and not worry about the flow coming out of it. It's a false sense of security for the folks to see the dire hydrants all around their building. God forbid, if one of those buildings ever got fully involved, we'd have to shuttle water in, and that's going to be our practice now up there. It's great that the water system around the building is new but it's not going to serve our purpose. Being that the complex is being occupied more and more, it's a concern for us.

Dan: From a legal standpoint, how does it affect the Village?

Attorney Chapman: You've met your standards. You've fulfilled your obligation. What I want to hear their engineer say is that they've met the minimum standards. And they have, emphatically.

Dan: So there's no expectation from the people living there that those fire hydrants are adequate to our fire department.

Attorney Chapman: They're not entitled to those expectations. There might be expectations but they're not entitled to them.

Chairman Nichols: And why is that? Why are they not entitled to them if they're (the hydrants) physically there on site?

Attorney Chapman: If I'm in my home, I could be robbed. I expect the police department to protect me but they may not necessarily be there to do so. I have the expectation that the police will be there to protect me but that doesn't necessarily guarantee that they can or will. It's the same thing.

The discussion again continues regarding applying for a grant to upgrade the lines in Carrier Street, the cost involved and the future development of the area. There was also a discussion about a fire protection district which some other municipalities have. Mike Weeks will forward a sample copy for review.

ON A MOTION BY JOHN WEBBER, SECONDED BY CARLTON FRITZ AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THE MEETING IS ADJOURNED AT 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Winters, Clerk

Date Accepted: May , 2010