

The City of Beacon Council Workshop
Tuesday, October 13, 2009

The Beacon City Council Workshop was held on Tuesday, October 13, 2009 in the Municipal Center courtroom. Present were: Council members Sara Pasti, Randy Casale, Charles Kelly and Deanna Leake. Also in attendance: City Administrator, Meredith Robson. City Attorney, Richard Wolf and Mayor Steven Gold will be delayed. Council members Eleanor Thompson and Marlene Frederick were absent.

The workshop began at 7:05 p.m. The City Assessor, Kathy Martin, was introduced to explain the Certification of Base Proportions. These proportions establish what share of the tax levy is to be paid by the two homestead classes (1, 2 and 3-family homesteads and commercial non-homesteads). There is a standard formula which is used to arrive at the 2 percentages which was established by the 1903 Real Property Law. Ms. Martin provided to Council a copy of the Law as well as a "Cheat Sheet for Current and Adjusted Base Proportions" (see attached). The "Cheat Sheet" clearly states step by step how the assessor's office determines the amounts that are used and changed yearly. Basically, it is the assessor's job to prepare this report for council's approval, the report then is forwarded the City Clerk for Certification. The City Clerk then forwards it to Albany. Ms. Martin offered to have a representative from either the County or the State to come in to explain in further detail, to the council, how some of the figures which she does not change yearly, are arrived at. This Certification of Base Proportions will be on the next council agenda.

Council member, Charles Kelly, next opened discussions on the Nominations for Acting Mayor. Mayor Steve Gold will propose at the next council meeting his nomination of Charles Kelly as acting mayor.

Next discussed was the current Escrow Fee Ordinance which was outlined by City Administrator, Meredith Robson. Our existing Escrow Ordinance retains 6% of estimated construction costs. What needs to be addressed are the many times the City's Professionals are called out to the construction sites for various inspections; consequently the 6% no longer covers the cost of this service. Ms. Robson has asked legal counsel if it is possible to keep the 6% language in the ordinance but to add a clause with regard to additional escrow monies to cover any added work. Ms. Robson would like council to review this increase as soon as possible. Discussed by council was various ways to increase the escrow amounts, i.e. if there is left over money is it then refunded and what are other communities doing.

On the agenda next were discussions with regard to complaints about ATV's on Mt. Beacon. Mr. Kelly stated that the Chief of Police has had numerous complaints about noise and speeding ATV's from citizens living in that area. The main entrance to Mt. Beacon is a gate, on private property, where most ATV users access the mountain. Suggested, is to have a patrol car stationed in that area on the weekends both to act as a deterrent and to issue fines. Also proposed was to move the existing fence from the private property down to City owned property. The City could then put in their own

electronic locks and/or web cameras. There are State and Conservation laws which address this issue and Council suggested enacting a local law as well. In addition, Scenic Hudson and the State of New York have offered to assist the City financially with regard to moving the fence. Ms. Robson will look into this further and will meet with the Police Chief to arrive at additional solutions.

Further discussions regarding the Taxi Cab situation at the Beacon Train Station were addressed next. Council agreed that the law adopted by the City of Newburgh is very concise and effective. Newburgh has a higher licensing fee (\$400.00 presently, however over the course of 3 years the increases were phased in), drug testing is required at the drivers' and/or taxi companies' expense, besides a State inspection all cabs must be inspected at City authorized inspection sites. The cabs are clearly marked, on the door panels, with the cab license number and the driver I.D. number, lights are on top of the vehicle showing availability, the City uses flat rates, only, and separate flat rates for senior citizen and students. The City of Newburgh has designated taxi stands throughout the City. It was proposed that the City of Beacon should also include 5 designated spots at the train station. Mayor Steve Gold and City Attorney, Richard Wolf arrived at the workshop at this time. It was decided that we will draft a new law that will be presented to the several cab companies in the City of Beacon for their comments.

Budget Amendments were then presented by the City Administrator. There are 4 issues that need to be addressed and added to next Monday's meeting agenda. 1) shortage in the Unemployment Expense 2) shortage in the Police Regular Salary Expense 3) Legal Expenses for Hiddenbrooke and 4) the balance needed to pay Frederick P. Clark Associates for TOD Traffic Study consulting services.

Councilmember Kelly announced that starting Saturday, October 17, 2009 Dia Art Foundation will offer free admission on weekends to City of Beacon Residents. Identification is required.

City Attorney, Dick Wolf stated that with regard to a swimming pool owned by a Beacon resident that there is no proof that the City is at fault and no evidence that the City caused any damage that happened.

Mayor Gold opened discussions regarding Cablevision. Mayor Gold has had a recent conversation Roger Connor from Cablevision. To maintain the service of Cable News and Channel 22 airing the Council Meetings the cost would be approximately \$.56 per month, per household. If Council agrees to accept this offer, further discussions need to be addressed at the next council workshop and a resolution needs to be adopted.

There was no further business to discuss and Council went into executive session to discuss possible litigation. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectively submitted,
Barbara Howley
October 19, 2009