

Town of Red Hook

TOWN BOARD MINUTES

Volume IX RECORD SERIES DESCRIPTION

1974 - 1977

Volume IX of the Town Board minutes is post bound with leatherette binding in good condition, but with some scuffing. There is an index in the beginning, with headings for A -Z, including Mc. There are no entries for headings I, J, K, Mc, N, Q, X or Y. Entries were made in several different ways - by general subject (appointments), department, or person's name. They may be listed under one or another, but not necessarily under all. For example, Board of Ethics is entered under B, and not under E, but appointments to the Board of Ethics may be listed under A (appointments), or the person's name. The index does not appear to be complete,

There are 165 pages of records with printed numbers. They are typewritten and in good condition. There are some smudges, stains and corrections. Typographical errors and misspellings are common.

There are many inserts, typewritten, photocopy, newsprint or carbon copy. They are all loose and in fair condition. Some have been folded and crumpled; some have been torn or have trimmed margins. Pencilled numbers were added for purposes of microfilming, and to prevent loss of order. A few inserts that had no corresponding relevance to the minutes were removed. Many inserts were not found in an appropriate location; they were relocated to the most appropriate area, with a notation of where they were found. In some cases, information that was mentioned in the minutes as being attached to the minutes was not found; notation has been made where this occurs. The types of documents included as inserts were appointment lists, bids, accomplishments, public notices, resolutions, memorials and miscellaneous correspondence.

STRUCTURE: There are some changes to the structure of the minutes during this time period (1974 - 1977). As the minutes are now typewritten, they are no longer recorded as is at the meeting; they are typed at a later time from notes. The meeting is noted as a special or regular meeting, followed by location (at the Grange Hall, moving to the Village Building in March, 1974), time, date and list of Town officials present. The Supervisor's monthly report was read and approved. Correspondence was read. Bills were audited and paid, by abstract number and Fund

(By the end of 1976, this activity was moved to the end of the meeting.). Appointments were made and transfers of funds were approved. Business brought before the Town Board was discussed and either referred to another agency, tabled or acted upon. Much of the business discussed at the meeting is now in the form of reports from Departments or Committees. The minutes of the meeting were approved. When notation was made that the minutes were approved with corrections, the corrections were not detailed (By 1976, the approval of minutes is made at the beginning of the next meeting). The meeting was adjourned, followed by the signature of Town officials.

These minutes contain more descriptive and personal details. Names of public attendees are included. Proclamations, thanks and memorials are recorded. For public hearings, discussion and opinions are recorded, along with the names of the person giving them.

The reorganization meeting held at the beginning of each year included a list of all appointments to expiring Committee positions and deputies for the Town Clerk, Supervisor and Registrar. Town Board member assignments were listed. Committees included the Visual Environment Committee, Conservation Advisory Council, Senior Citizens, Recreation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board, Assessment Review Board and Board of Ethics. By 1977, the Recreation Park Commission and Steering Committee were added.

The business of any particular issue or decision is increasingly spread over a period of time before any decision is made. Issues are discussed, tabled, referred to another agency, reported on, and sometimes postponed before action is taken. There is more public participation through public hearings or public information meetings. There is more influence of, and some opposition to, Federal, State, or County programs. There is increased use of consultants and contractors.

CONTENT:

DOG CONTROL: The Local Law regulating dogs is readopted.

ELECTIONS: The Town Board establishes Election District #7, designates polling places and appoints and pays election inspectors.

HIGHWAYS: Highway matters continue as an important matter of business. A reconstruction project for Rockefeller Lane requires lengthy negotiations. Roadside clean-up is a necessity. The Town Board accepts several new roads and approves several name changes of roads.

A major development in highway business is a Town/Village Highway Consolidation Program. An agreement to establish this program of combining the resources of Town and Village employees and equipment for maintaining roads is drawn up in 1975. After a pilot program, the Town and the Village of Red Hook (Tivoli declines) implement a consolidation program, which reports a saving of money for both municipalities. However, the program is discontinued in 1977.

Speed limits and highway safety continue to be an issue. The Town settles a lengthy court suit from a fatal accident on a County Road plowed by the Town. NYS Department of Transportation approves lower maximum speed limits and 30MPH limits in designated areas. There is a request to close the Barrytown grade crossing and limit parking on Annandale Road for safety considerations. The Town Board accepts the County Highway Specifications and passes an ordinance requiring prior notice of road conditions as an element of liability.

PUBLIC SAFETY: A lighting survey is conducted; additional street lights are requested and approved. Fire Company contracts are approved. Other public safety issues are addressed, as the Town Board adopts an ordinance requiring the fencing of swimming pools in 1975.

Vandalism complaints, particularly at Halloween call for increased police protection. In 1977, the Town Board establishes a Police Department with Constables and the Supervisor acting as Police Commissioner (a more formal police power, as Constables have existed since the formation of the Town.) The State mandates police training.

COURTS: The Town Board opposes a State proposal to eliminate the local court system.

TAXATION: There is discussion and approval of income limit increases to the Senior Citizens' Tax Exemption. The Town Board approves two Agricultural Districts. The Town begins computerization of assessments and resolves to microfilm property assessment cards.

The Town Board appoints an Industrial and Commercial Incentive Board for recommendations on granting tax exemptions to new businesses; it rejects such exemptions in 1976.

FISCAL/PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY: Annual fiscal reports of the Town Clerk and Tax Collector are accepted, but no details are included. Supervisor's monthly fiscal reports are detailed.

The Town Board adopts the Freedom of Information Law and

Open Meetings Law. It approves a policy for Public Official Liability Insurance.

FRANCHISES: The Town Board addresses a request for increase in cablevision rates.

BUDGET: The established budget process continues in the Fall, with approval of preliminary budget, public hearing and adoption of final budget. Though the minutes note that the budget is to be entered in detail, it is not.

PERSONNEL/PAYROLL: Salaries, Town Board assignments and appointments are listed at the reorganization meeting, usually in January. Departments now often have secretaries.

RECREATION: Public Recreation business expands from recreation programs to recreation facilities. The Town Board agrees to a 99 year lease of the Recreation Park and establishes a Recreation Park Commission in 1975. It hires a Recreation Park Director and an engineering consultant to draw up an improvement program.

PLANNING: Planning issues increase; the Town Board adopts revisions to the Subdivision Regulations and sets fees for planning review, as recommended by the Planning Board. The Town Board adopts a Comprehensive Plan, an oversight in 1969. The Planning Board presents the first completed land use maps done by the Dutchess County Planning Department in 1975.

Approval of a Property Homeowners' Association is considered, and the Town Board directs the Planning Board to develop recommendations for a local law. The Town adopts the National Flood Insurance Program.

ZONING: There are more Zoning issues for the Town Board to address. The Town Board appoints a Zoning Commission in 1974 to recommend boundaries and regulations, and subsequently adopts a revised Zoning Ordinance, which it amends in 1976. Some rezoning requests are denied, following public hearings and recommendations of other agencies.

Regulation of building increases as the Town adopts the State Fire Prevention Code (1976) and State Building Code. Zoning Enforcement is an additional part of zoning business.

WATER SUPPLY: In response to residents' concerns, the Town Board discusses limits of the water service of Annandale Water Works (private) and directs the Zoning Enforcement Officer not to issue any further building permits (later rescinded).

ENVIRONMENT: Environmental issues require more time and

attention. the Town Board establishes the Commission for the Conservation of the Environment in 1974 (previously appointed Conservation Advisory Council). The Town Board begins to deal with the State Freshwater Wetlands Act and State Environmental Quality Review Act. The Town Board appoints members of the Hudson River Shoreline Task Force.

The 1976 proposal by Consolidated Edison for construction of a power plant in the Town creates the need for a Steering Committee and many extra public informational meetings.

Visual environment is a separate item of business handled by the Visual Environment Committee. Cornell students produce a study of landscaping and recommend beautification efforts.

PURCHASING: Advertising and acceptance of bids for equipment, materials and fuel oil are routine, though in this time period, they are likely to be tabled for further study before acceptance.

TOWN CODE: The increase in Town regulations leads to the adoption of the Code of the Town of Red Hook in 1976.

Volume IX of the Town Board minutes shows that more and more influence of State and Federal regulations and programs define Town business- National Flood Program, Federal Community Development Funds, State Freshwater Wetlands Act, State Environmental Quality Review Act, and Federal Revenue Sharing, among others. The Town hires a Grant coordinator to seek and apply for funds. Interaction with Town Committees and outside agencies occurs frequently in the form of referrals and recommendations made prior to decisions on important issues. As the scope of Town Board business broadens, there is even evidence of considerations that would seem to be outside of the area of Town Board responsibility, such as a discussion of unit pricing and opposition to a State proposal to close the maternity wing of the area hospital. The varied issues considered give much indication of concerns of the time, though details of those issues may not be included.

END VOLUME IX RECORD SERIES DESCRIPTION