

To: Ancram Town Board

From: Art Bassin



Date: 1/11/2015

Subject: Supervisor's Report – January 2015

Town Issues

1. Financial Report – The 2014 financial situation turned out better than we had expected. We ended 2014 with about \$630,000 in the bank, after prepaying the \$240,000 balance of the garage loan back in September, and before receiving the 4Q sales tax payment, which should be about \$65,000, and which we will receive late in January. Once we receive the 4Q sales tax money, our cash on hand will be about \$700,000. Our better than expected financial situation resulted from about \$95,000 in better than expected revenues (sales and mortgage tax receipts, building permit fees, CHIPS revenue) coupled with about \$50,000 of lower than expected legal, retirement fund and health insurance costs.

2. Subdivision Law – We will hold a public hearing on the proposed subdivision law at 6:45 on January 15, will do a SEQRA review on the law, and will consider this law for adoption at the February Town Board meeting, after we hear back from the County Planning Board.

3. Puppy Mill and Tethering Law – Ann Rader and Tina Aiken plan to present their thoughts on specific puppy mill and tethering law language at the February or March meeting. I suggest we wait until we have had a chance to review their proposal before we decide if we want to develop a local law covering puppy mills and tethering, or if we want rely on the NYS Ag & Markets Law

4. Unsafe Building Law – Building Inspector Ferratto will have a list of the properties he would consider candidates for action under an unsafe building law. We will also review the criteria that would qualify a structure for action under the unsafe building law, and at what point in the deterioration of a structure the Town should act to demolish the structure at the property owner's cost. The important part of the proposed law is the provision that allows the Town to recover its costs if and when it is required to act to demolish a structure that has collapsed or has become a threat to public safety. The question is whether any of the buildings on Ed's list present enough of a public danger at this point to justify the Town taking action to demolish or repair them. I will be circulating separately for your review two versions of an unsafe building law -- one is a modified version of the law we looked at last fall, and the other is the law from the Town of Cortland, which Paul McCreary of Morris & Associates has recently share with us.

5. Retaining Wall behind Simons – DOT had planned to fix the retaining wall behind Simons that holds 82 in place last fall, but did not get around to it. If that wall collapses, it could be a major problem.

County Issues

1. Airport – Still waiting for FAA approval to reclassify the airport from D II to B II. FAA has indicated it could be a 60 - 90 day process. County has hired Passero Associates to be the Airport consultant for the County for a five year term.

2. Pine Haven – Two private firms interested in buying Pine Haven will be invited to present to a public meeting in January or February. If we decide to sell, NYS Department of Health approvals could take up to a year. More important than the immediate and long financial benefits to the County of a sale to a private operator, a private operator skilled in operating nursing homes will be able to improve the scope and quality of resident services and care. All three interested private operators serve the same mix of Medicaid, Medicare and private pay residents as PH does, so access to Pine Haven by County residents should not change or be an issue we decide to sell to a private operator.

3. County Priorities 2015 – In addition to the possible sale of Pine Haven and the reclassification of the Airport to B II, the County will explore a variety of other issues in 2015, including 1) the possibility of appointing or electing a County Manager or Executive, 2) cost savings opportunities related to for coordinating or consolidating county and town services.