



GOVERNMENT

Town of Mamaroneck Board Meeting

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The original Section 231-1 of the Town Code is focused solely on drought situations. The amended section goes on to include "local problems such as low water pressure...in limited areas...that may over tax [only] those limited areas."

"It assumes sufficient water pressure in all areas," O'Keefe countered. "Typically it's only a problem in the summertime when people are sprinkling their lawn."

The new law grants the Town Supervisor authority, if warranted, to impose restrictions on portions of the unincorporated areas of the Town in situations where Town-wide restrictions are not necessary," according to the relevant document.

This would simultaneously ensure Town residents access to water even in emergency drought situations while also addressing water pressure issues - whether due to seasonal overuse of water or broken water pipes - and would grant O'Keefe broad discretion in those matters.

The Public Hearing was finally called to a close and a motion to amend said legal Chapter was seconded. A tally of the Board member votes led to a unanimous passage of the updated water restriction laws.

Following water on the agenda was fire - as in business of the Town Fire Department. After reviewing expenses by the Department, a Report of Bids was discussed regarding contract "TA-11-07 Furnishing Fire Hose."

On March 30th, the Town publicly read bids for said contract which sought to purchase several different sized hoses for use by the Fire Department, along with any accompanying accessories.

Bids for this two-year contract

were received by two companies. AAA Emergency Supply of White Plains, New York came in with the lowest bid. The company's price quotes came in at \$8,844.00 for 2011 and \$8,699.00 for 2012, for a grand total of \$17,543.00.

"This is a bid we open every year to replace the fire hose and it's all in the budget already," Altieri told the Board.

A motion to accept the bid was made and seconded and led to another unanimous Board decision.

Next order of business: to set a Public Hearing to amend a special permit issued to a company contracted to construct 149 residential units on Madison Avenue. The company in question, Byron Place Associates, had made promise to submit construction drawings for said project by mid-April.

Byron Place Associates has informed the Town that due to financing problems in this tough economic climate, they will require an extension for submission of the construction drawings to August 1st.

The Board seemed to empathize with these contractors and they decided to set a Public Hearing for April 20th to discuss the issue further. Mamaroneck residents can rely on the Westchester Guardian for updates and information on the situation as they occur.

Next up: Request for & Report of Proposals to price the demolition, removal and replacement of the stone stairwell at the west end of the Town Center building. This outdated structure has deteriorated to the point of being hazardous and unusable to building visitors.

The Town received only one proposal for this job. It came from Acocella

Contracting of Scarsdale, New York with a price tag of \$29,750.00.

"Acocella has done a fair amount of work in our Town and we're always pleased with it," Altieri said. "So, I recommend we accept their proposal."

The Board concurred, a motion to accept the bid was put forward and one more unanimous decision was added to the night's count.

On a related note, the next agenda item was to authorize a Bond Resolution for the evaluation and necessary reconstruction of the Town Center building. The Bond is for \$130,000.00 and will cover payment for evaluating and fixing the entirety of the building, as well as reconstruction of the previously mentioned stairway.

"We renovated this building in 1984 and since then there have been changes in the use of the Center," Altieri said. "We now need changes in heating and air conditioning, the roof needs to be replaced, the retaining walls are deteriorating in the rear of the building...there are major components that need to be looked at."

Altieri also noted that any leftover money from the Bond could be used to make future improvements to the building as well. Motion to authorize said Bond Resolution was seconded, voted on and passed with quickness. Unanimous, of course.

And that brings a close to the business portion of the evening. There are just a few community announcements that you Mamaroneck residents may want to hear about and then it's a wrap.

First up, Renee Morrison of the Larchmont Gardens Civic Association came forward to invite the Board and general public to two upcoming events. May 23rd at 7:00pm is the Association's Annual Meeting - an event that should prove to be exhilarating. On May 21st from 1:00-4:00pm is the group's Spring Fling. Feel free to bring your friends and family for what's sure to be a great time as well!

Second to speak, Councilmember Phyllis Wittner informed the audience of Mamaroneck's upcoming Memorial Day Parade on Monday May 30th. Marchers will meet at Mamaroneck Avenue School for formation at 4:30pm and the parade is scheduled to start at 5:00 sharp.

Lastly, Councilmember Nancy Seligson sold us on the Town's 350th Anniversary Celebration, which is slated to go down on September 17th and is scheduled to run for two full days of festivities.

"It's glorious history on day one and a parade on day two," Seligson sang.

So there you have it, Mamaroneck... Until we meet again.

BATTLING INJUSTICE

Darrell Davis Holds the Line



By Abby Luby

Steadfast and calm, Darrell Davis stands in front of the Peekskill Common Council and intones a message that has been his mantra for the past 30 years: treat African Americans fairly, or we will retaliate.

Over the last year, issues of racism, discrimination and unfair employment practices have repeatedly brought Davis and several Westchester residents to the town hall podium decrying the unfair treatment of black city employees, illegal

and scandalous activities by the public housing director, and the city's alleged redaction of free speech.

Davis initially reached out to Peekskill administrators including Mayor Mary Foster, Public Housing Director Harold Phipps, various council members and the local clergy for a constructive dialogue to ease tensions. After vague appeasements, Davis says the issues remained. The city's defensive posturing has fed the ire of many Peekskill blacks

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Darrell Davis Holds the Line

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injustices by first reaching out to policy makers, to sit down, and peacefully right the wrongs.

As a native of Peekskill, Davis grew up with his finger on the pulse of the black community. At the age of 24 he became the chairman of the Peekskill Housing Authority, which oversees public housing at Bohlmann Towers. A few years later he organized tenant associations for both Bohlmann and Dunbar Heights apartments. He appealed to then Peekskill Mayor, George Pataki, to rectify deleterious conditions; a move that garnered Davis an appointment to Housing Authority Commissioner by Pataki. He was petitions chairman for presidential candidate Jesse Jackson and has been rally organizer and point man in various political campaigns.

Although Davis has seen his popularity and political connections grow, he has never sought public office. "I've never had a political agenda other than bettering our community," he says.

A juxtaposed to him, aspiring politicians have sought Davis' endorsement, urging him to show up at rallies flanked with blacks at his side. He helped launch the political career of Peekskill Deputy

City Mayor Don Bennett, the only black on the city council.

"When I founded the African American Culture Society, I appointed Don to head it up. I got him to appear at "Rap against Crack," and I would give him 10 minutes on my radio show."

But Bennett has been mute over the latest issues, says Davis, who has seen other politicians dance the dance of promises at election time but once elected, take a back seat on the issues. With the current racial controversy in Peekskill still unresolved, Davis continues to get the cold shoulder from Bennett, Foster, and Phipps. Since Davis is currently a resident of Mt. Vernon, New York, Foster has labeled him an "outside agitator."

"It's the city's only defense," asserts Davis. "It's a big stretch to call me an outside agitator. I was born and bred in Peekskill. My children and my family still live here."

The clergy also turned their backs.

"A year ago, before I went public with these problems, I went to the Peekskill Pastor's Association, a group I've always worked with. They refused to put me on the agenda at their monthly meeting; they didn't even want to hear what I was asking them to do. So many of the clergy are doing business with the mayor and they are on the other side of the table."

It pushed Davis to hold the line.

Repeatedly, with a contingent of vocal supporters, Davis stodgily appears at council meetings, leads a reading of the 14th amendment en masse, stands in silence at the podium illustrating the council's passivity for dealing with racism, and speaks over the allotted three-minute time slot (it used to be two time slots) during public comment. Foster has called the police several times. Meetings have been stopped.

About eight years ago Davis hit rock bottom. He lived on the edge, neglecting his health in lieu of being "on call" to help people of color. One night Davis stopped breathing, collapsed and ended up in the hospital for 10 days with high blood pressure, an enlarged heart and damaged kidneys. Over-medication caused a frightening bout of blindness and the near death experience was a wake up call.

"Things flashed before my eyes that told me my work wasn't done here. I knew I needed to get my act together."

When he got out of the hospital, he was unable to work. With no income, he got evicted. "I was homeless, didn't have money for my medication. I was living off of peanut butter and bread and all the time people didn't know it. I was still speaking at meetings, folks were still bringing their problems to me."

He began to focus on what could most help Westchester blacks and poor. He started to connect to the Internet, developed a strong cyber presence and ventured into Internet marketing. He sees the cyber world as an empowering tool.

"There are two things African Americans don't do. We don't work on personal development enough and we don't leverage the power of the Internet."

Davis says his blog, "Required Reading" (<http://Darrelldavis.wordpress.com/>) is geared to help African Americans and the poor.

"In a year I want to have taught a lot of people the power of the Internet – how to get educated and learn how to make money."

Abby Luby is a Westchester County based freelance journalist who writes about current, local news, environmental issues, art entertainment and food.

OPED

Destroying One Koran vs. Destroying Many Christians. Which is Worse?



By Raymond Ibrahim

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The now infamous Koran burning by Florida pastor Terry Jones has created hysteria in the Muslim world. In Afghanistan alone, some twenty people,

including U.N. workers, have been killed and beheaded to screams of "Allahu Akbar!" Western leaders around the globe—including Obama and members of Congress—have unequivocally condemned Jones' actions (without bothering to point out that freedom of expression is a prized American liberty). Many are even blaming the deaths in Afghanistan directly on Jones; Bill O'Reilly says he has "blood on his hands."

Yet, as Western leaders rush to profess their abhorrence at what one American did to one inanimate book, let's take a quick look at what many Muslims are doing to many living and breathing Christians around the Islamic world—to virtually no media coverage or Western condemnation:

Afghanistan: A Muslim convert to Christianity was seized and, according to sharia's apostasy laws, awaits execution.

Bangladesh: A Christian man was

arrested for distributing Bibles near Muslims. Since Wednesday, thousands of Muslims have been rioting, injuring dozens—not because of Jones, but in protestation of women's rights.

Egypt: A Muslim mob burned down another Coptic church and dozens of Christian homes; when Christians protested, the military opened fire on them while crying "Allahu Akbar," killing nine.

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