

Town Board Meeting
January 6, 2020
6:30 p.m.

Present: Supervisor Aaron, Councilor McCormack, Councilor Tucker, Councilor Alexander, Councilor Legg, Attorney Smith.

Also, Present: Sue Murphy, Bridgett Winkelman, Beth Battle, Jason Gabak (Skaneateles Press), Martin Dillon, Allan Wellington.

Supervisor Aaron welcomed new Board members, Councilor Christopher Legg and Councilor Courtney Alexander to their first meeting on the Town Board.

Highway, Water, Transfer Station: Highway Superintendent Allan Wellington reported the plows had been out 13 times since the last Town Board meeting making that 53 times for the season, compared to 43 times last year to this date, they received the delivery of a new all-wheel drive plow truck, made equipment repairs, cleaned catch basins and cleared culvert pipe. He stated they also had done some housekeeping and changed some office space at the Highway Garage. He reported the Water Department repaired several water meters and repaired a meter pit that was damaged by the snowplow. At the Transfer Station they compacted the brush pile to make room for Christmas trees, scheduled a baled cardboard pickup for Thursday and met with Abundant Energy and National Grid to determine a location for a new electrical service line.

Planning & Zoning: Councilor Tucker reviewed Karen Barkdull, Planning and Zoning Clerk's 2019 recap. The reported stated all Planning Departments show an increase in activity in comparison to 2018. Single family dwelling permits remained relatively stable for the last three years.

*see attached

Councilor Tucker reviewed the new Open Projects Report stating there are currently 2, an application for a subdivision at 3406 West Lake Road, Kenan 2012 Family Trust and an application for a lot line adjustment at 2833 Shamrock Road, James Tracy. He reviewed the report of existing projects still open ; Hidden Estates, Skaneateles Aerodrome, Zechman Subdivision, Chris Graham, Steve Datz, Woodbine Group, Lakelawn, Sennett, Keefhus and Meunier. Councilor Tucker stated the Planning and Zoning Departments are working on the draft Zoning Code, conducted three pre-application meetings, filled two FOIL requests and provided historical information on three properties. They had also attended a meeting on the Eastern Gateway and provided research on equestrian overlay districts.

Supervisor Aaron reported to the Board that in 2019 Karen Barkdull and Ben Garrett in the Planning and Zoning and Codes Offices had completed the classes and certification to be a Codes Enforcement Officer with the Town of Skaneateles. This gives the Town three certified Codes Enforcement Officers. Supervisor Aaron thanked Karen Barkdull for completing this training.

Supervisor Aaron stated Karen Barkdull had been working with Howard Brodsky, Planner and Attorneys Smith and Molnar to complete the review of the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning. Attorney Smith stated they are almost done with their review. When completed, the documents will go back to Planner Joel Russell for his final review then it will be presented to the Board and public informational meetings can be scheduled.

Supervisor Aaron reviewed the charts provided by Karen Barkdull in her report. The charts show the spike in Planning and Zoning applications in 2007 and 2008 then level off. Supervisor thanked Karen Barkdull for this report.

Codes: Councilor Tucker reported the Codes Office had issued 7 new permits in December, 7 Certificates of Completion, 1 violation and 3 fire inspections.

Budget: Budget Officer Winkelman reported Water District #2 had been billed and she was preparing for the auditors that will be here to complete their 2019 audit at the end of February. Budget Officer Winkelman also announced there will be two abstracts at this Town Board meeting and at the January 23rd meeting to pay the bills that were part on the 2019 budget.

Historian: Town Historian Beth Batlle gave her 2019 Annual Report stating she had attended various meetings through-out the County, written 12 articles and researched and wrote the history of the Hazard House on West Lake Street and a booklet on military nurses in Skaneateles.
*report attached

Resolution #20-001

Recognition 25 Years of Service – David Bader: Supervisor Aaron recognized Highway Department employee David Bader. She stated David had worked for the Town since January 1, 1995. Supervisor Aaron stated Russel Masters, who at the time ran the Transfer Station hired David in 1995 and when David took the position at the Highway Department in 1996 Russel stated David was a “great employee” and would be transferring to the Highway Department. Supervisor Aaron thanked David Bader for his years of service to the Town and its residents. She stated it is employees like David that make her, and the Board look good. Supervisor Aaron read the following certificate and presented it to Mr. Bader with a gold watch:

As an Official Commendation and Recognition of your 25 years of
Honorable Service to the Town of Skaneateles and commitment to our community
with the Skaneateles Highway Department

Transfer Station January 1st, 1995 – November 5th, 1996
Highway Department from November 6th, 1996 – Present

In Grateful Appreciation for Dedicated Service to the residents of our community

David Bader thanked the Board for all their support and he also thanked his family and especially his wife Brenda Bader for all their support over the past 25 years.

Minutes of December 16, 2019: On a motion of Councilor Tucker, seconded by Councilor McCormack, and with a (3-0) affirmation of the Town Board the minutes of December 16, 2019 were accepted as presented.

Resolution #20-002

Lead Agency Designation – Woodbine Hotel: Supervisor Aaron stated they received a letter from the Planning Board and their attorney, Scott Molnar that an application had been submitted by Woodbine Group, Inc to the Skaneateles Planning Board for their approval of a Major Special Permit and Site Plan Review permitting construction of an 88 room hotel on a 30.97 acre parcel located at 1046 Old Seneca Turnpike, Tax map #s 028.-01-03.0 and 028.-01-01.0. He stated in his letter that the project is being reviewed by the Planning Board and they are requesting approval to act as lead agency for coordinated review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (“SEQR”). The project has been classified as an unlisted action subject to coordinated review under SEQR due to the size of the project relative to the size of the community.

Attorney Smith stated this is a SEQR review and the Planning Board is requesting the designation as Lead Agency on this project. They have also sent this request letter to a list of potential interested agencies. He recommended the Board fill out the enclosed State Environmental Quality Review Act Lead Agency Determination Form designating the Town of Skaneateles Planning Board as Lead Agent regarding the Woodbine Hotel Major Special Permit and Site Plan Review applications. The Planning Board is the issuing and approving Board therefore they should act as Lead Agent.

On a motion of Councilor McCormack, seconded by Councilor Legg and with unanimous (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board, Supervisor Aaron was authorized to sign the form consenting to the Town of Skaneateles Planning Board being Lead Agency in the Woodbine Hotel Project at 1046 Old Seneca Turnpike for coordinated review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (“SEQR”).

Resolution #20-003

Memorandum of Understanding – Mirbeau Gateway Project: Supervisor Aaron stated the Town had been working with Mirbeau and the Village of Skaneateles on the Mirbeau Gateway Project. This project involves a Town water main that runs diagonally across Gary Dower's property from Fuller/Franklin Street to Route 20. Mr. Dower wants to remove this main in order to build townhouses on Fuller Street. The Town needs Mr. Dower to reconnect the Town water main to the Village system at Rt. 20 and at Fuller and Highland Streets. Supervisor Aaron stated they had been discussing this with Gary Dower and the Village of Skaneateles for several months.

Supervisor Aaron explained the Memorandum of Understanding requires that the applicant pay the entire cost of this project. The reconnection to the Village system will actually benefit our water system and provide for an emergency connection to the Village water system at Highland Street if there is a water break. She stated Mr. Dower wants to complete this project in early spring and has agreed to all the terms of this agreement. Dennis Dundon, Village of Skaneateles has reviewed our most recent changes with the Village's engineer, GHD, and they did not object.

She stated this will require Town Board approval of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) plus the removal of the easement that the Town has across the Mirbeau property. Mr. Dower's attorney will be drafting the release of the easement to be reviewed by Town Attorney Brody Smith before the Town Board is asked to approve the release.

Supervisor Aaron stated the Board and Allan Wellington had reviewed the Memorandum and had some additional comments. Highway Superintendent Wellington stated the work on connection #2 at Route 20 and Fuller Street should be completed prior to the work on connection #1 at Fuller and Highland Streets to insure there is minimal interruption of service to Town water customers. He also recommended under section C of the MOU in the following paragraph the word "tapping sleeve" should be removed.

Mr. Wellington stated the tapping sleeve will not be necessary if the connection at #2 is done first, before the connection at #1.

Supervisor Aaron also added Onondaga County Department of Health and NYS Department of Transportation's approval of the Memorandum of Understanding should be required prior to beginning this project.

Attorney Smith asked if there would be any interruption of services or issues to other customers besides Mirbeau that receive water from the water main. Highway Superintendent Allan Wellington stated there are other customers serviced from the water main and there would be minimal service interruptions for these customers. Attorney Smith asked if this document adequately described the connection of the pipes concerning this project. Mr. Wellington stated yes, this adequately describes the project and the connections. Supervisor Aaron stated in-house engineer Miranda Robinson, Town Engineer John Camp, Water Department Foreman Joe Dwyer and Highway Superintendent Allan Wellington have all reviewed this plan and the MOU document and are comfortable with it. Supervisor Aaron stated we are only taking the pipe off of Mr. Dower's property and going around it, the water customers serviced by this line will continue to be serviced.

Councilor Legg asked if the language in the MOU should reflect this change to have connection 2 done before connection one to eliminate the interruption to other Town customers. Mr. Wellington said yes, this agreement should be changed to reflect these changes before approved by the Board.

Councilor Tucker asked if the old pipe would be removed from the ground and is it specified in the agreement that the Town will not be responsible for the removal of the old water line. Mr. Wellington and Supervisor Aaron stated if the applicant wants the pipe removed it is their responsibility and it states clearly the cost of the project will be with Gary Dower and Mirbeau and not the Town of Skaneateles.

Supervisor Aaron stated Mr. Dower's attorney is working on the easement and would submit the documents to the Board and the Town Attorney when they were complete and will be approved at a future meeting.

Councilor Legg stated he would like a clear statement added to the Memorandum of Understanding that clearly states the Town is not responsible for removing the old water main nor any cost associated with the removal. Supervisor Aaron agreed.

On a motion of Councilor Tucker, seconded by Councilor Legg and with unanimous (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board, the Memorandum of Understanding with Gary Dower/Mirbeau Water Main Project is approved contingent on the following conditions:

1. The work on connection #2 at Route 20 and Fuller Streets should be completed prior to the work on connection #1 at Fuller and Highland Streets to insure there is minimal interruption of service to Town Water Customers.
2. The removal under section C of the Memorandum of Understanding of the “tapping sleeve”. The tapping sleeve will not be needed if the connection at #2 is completed before the connection at #1.
3. The addition of the following: Approvals from Onondaga County Department of Health and NYS Department of Transportation of the Memorandum of Understanding be required prior to beginning this project as well as the property owner, Gary Dower.
4. The Town of Skaneateles will not be responsible for the removal or cost of the removal of the old main.

Resolution #20-004

Authorization to sign – Initial Customer Installation Commitment with NY Power Authority Town of Skaneateles LED Street Lighting: Supervisor Aaron stated the Town of Skaneateles needed to authorize the “Town of Skaneateles LED Street Lighting Initial Customer Installation Commitment”.

Supervisor Aaron reviewed with the Board that the Town of Skaneateles LED Street Lighting Project began about 4 years ago. The Town had met all the requirements required by National Grid now the Town needs to complete the requirements of the NY Power Authority to move forward. This request is a placeholder for the grant funding. The project total is \$382,272.96 which includes allowance for \$100,000 for the “Smart Cities” technology. We automatically receive \$20,000 in grant funding through NYPA, if we install the “Smart Cities” technology on all the lights we would get an additional \$60,000. Each light will have a smart streetlight node. Each node will allow us to know the condition of the light and the cost of these is \$37,100. She stated also deducted from this project is \$50,000, which the Town received for the Clean Energy Initiative through the NYS DEC.

Supervisor Aaron said the NY Power Authority is asking the Town to sign this authorization to keep the \$60,000 in grant money if the Town decides to go with the Smart Cities Technology on the lights.

Budget Officer Winkelman stated the Town has not discussed with the New York State Power Authority (NYPA) yet to decide what lighting package and what extras the Town would like to add to each fixture. We are prepared to move forward with the Smart City Technology on some of the lights. This Initial Customer Installation Commitment with NYPA is needed to continue the process.

Supervisor Aaron stated these Smart Technology nodes will help with the radio and Wi-Fi connection in the remote parts of the Town for the water readings to the water tower. These smart nodes will enable the Highway Superintendent to monitor the roads through an internet application and will know quicker if there is blowing or drifting snow.

Budget Officer Winkelman reviewed the funding of the project. She stated the total of the lighting

project would be approximately \$282,000. Of which \$50,000 is deducted from that amount by our qualifying for a Clean Energy program through the NYSDEC. If we apply for the Smart Cities Technology and install on some or all the lights in the Town we will receive \$20,000 with an possibility of an additional \$80,000 matching grant depending on how many lights we install with the Smart Nodes, the Town will provide up to \$40,000 and NYPA will match that up to \$40,000.

Budget Officer Winkelman stated this is all in the Budget and will not be a project that is bonded. Supervisor Aaron stated the savings per year with the LED lights is approximately \$36,000.

On a motion of Councilor Alexander, seconded by Councilor McCormack, and with a (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board the Board authorized Supervisor Aaron to sign the Town of Skaneateles LED Street Lighting Initial Customer Installation Commitment with the New York Power Authority for the Smart Technology grant.

Resolution #20-005

2020 Annual Resolution: Supervisor Aaron reviewed the 2020 Annual Resolution. She reviewed the new appointment of an in-house Engineer, Miranda Robinson, the Board reappointed Don Kasper to the Planning Board, Denise Rhodes was reappointed to the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Skaneateles Press will continue to be the Town's official newspaper.

On a motion of Councilor Legg, seconded by Councilor Tucker and with unanimous (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board the 2020 Annual Resolution was adopted.

Resolution #20-006

2020 Procurement Policy: Supervisor Aaron stated to the Board the Town's Procurement Policy is reviewed and approved every year stating the policies and procedures of purchasing in all departments of the Town of Skaneateles.

On a motion of Councilor Tucker, seconded by Councilor Alexander and with unanimous (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board, the 2020 Town of Skaneateles Procurement Policy was adopted.

Resolution #20-007

Official Undertaking: Supervisor Aaron reviewed the Official Undertaking stating that certain elected and appointed officials have to sign the Official Undertaking that they will faithfully perform and discharge the duties of their office. She said that while the Town needs either an Official Undertaking to be filed with the Town Clerk or an individual Blanket Dishonesty Bond issued by the Town's insurance company, the Town has both.

On a motion of Councilor Tucker, seconded by Councilor McCormack and with unanimous (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board in attendance, the 2016 Official Undertaking was approved.

Resolution #20-008

Reschedule February 17th Town Board Meeting: Supervisor Aaron stated in February there is a Town Board meeting scheduled for February 17th, which is Presidents Day and the Town Hall is closed therefore the Board would have to reschedule the meeting date. The Board decided to reschedule the February 17th Town Board meeting to February 20th at 6:30 p.m.

On a motion of Councilor Legg, seconded by Councilor McCormack, and with a (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board, the February 17, 2020 Town Board meeting is rescheduled to February 20th, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

Resolution #20-009

Delegate to NYS Association of Towns Annual Meeting: Supervisor Aaron reported to the Board that Tax Collector Lori Milne is attending the 2020 NYS Association of Towns Annual Conference in February. Since no Board members are attending a delegate needs to be chosen to attend the Annual Business Session of the Association of Towns in New York City to cast the vote for the Town of Skaneateles.

On a motion of Councilor Alexander, seconded by Councilor McCormack, and with unanimous (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board, Lori L. Milne, Tax Collector was designated as the delegate to attend the 2020 Annual Business Session of the Association of Towns in New York City to cast the vote of the Town of Skaneateles.

Announcements/Correspondence/Updates

- *Upstate Freshwater Institute 2019 Monitoring Report for Shotwell Brook and Skaneateles Lake:* Supervisor Aaron stated the Town had received the 2019 Monitoring reports for Skaneateles Lake and Shotwell Brook.
- *January 20th Town Board meeting rescheduled to January 23, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.*
- *2020 Transfer Station permits on sale – At the Transfer Station -January 11, 2020:* Supervisor Aaron stated the 2020 Transfer Station Permits will be on sale at the Transfer Station this Saturday, January 11.

Public Comment: No one commented.

Resolution #20-010

Budget Amendments – Abstract #19-25: On a motion of Councilor McCormack, seconded by Councilor Tucker and with unanimous (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board the following budget amendment was approved:

General Fund

\$ 150.00	Increase	011104.01.004.00	Justice - C/E
\$ 150.00	Decrease	011104.01.004.67	Justice – C/E - Training
Yearend Subscription			
\$ 120.00	Increase	013554.01.004.00	Assessments – C/E
\$ 120.00	Decrease	013551.01.001.00	Assessments – P/S
Additional expenses associated with training			
\$ 2,765.00	Increase	013904.01.004.00	Bank Charges - C/E
\$ 2,765.00	Decrease	019904.01.004.00	Contingency – C/E
Additional expenses associated with Letter of Credit			
\$ 2,525.00	Increase	014404.01.004.00	Engineering – C/E

\$ 2,525.00 Decrease 019904.01.004.00 Contingency – C/E
 Cost of C & S support provided to Town Board

\$ 500.00 Increase 016704.01.004.00 Central Print – C/E
 \$ 500.00 Decrease 019904.01.004.00 Contingency – C/E
 Cost associated with new copiers

\$ 1,275.00 Increase 051824.01.004.00 Street Lighting – C/E
 \$ 1,275.00 Decrease 019904.01.004.00 Contingency – C/E
 Cost of doing business – costs associated with monthly charges

\$ 575.00 Increase 065101.01.001.00 Veteran Services – P/S
 \$ 575.00 Decrease 067724.01.004.00 Programs for the Aging – C/E
 Cost of Doing business

\$ 60.00 Increase 070204.01.004.85 Rec. Admin. – C/E - Telephone
 \$ 60.00 Decrease 070204.01.004.00 Rec. Admin. – C/E - Telephone
 Cost of Doing business

\$ 600.00 Increase 071104.01.004.52 Summer Recreation – C/E – Supplies
 \$ 950.00 Increase 071404.01.004.48 Winter Recreation – C/E - Utilities
 \$ 1,550.00 Decrease 071101.01.001.00 Summer Recreation – P/S
 Cost of Doing business

\$32,000.00 Increase 081604.01.004.00 Refuse/Garbage – C/E
 \$ 3,500.00 Increase 081604.01.004.64 Refuse/ Garbage – C/E – Monitoring
 \$35,500.00 Decrease 071101.01.001.00 Summer Recreation – P/S
 Costs associated with contracts – 2019

Part Town

\$ 75.00 Increase 080204.02.004.58 Planning - Legal
 \$ 2,800.00 Increase 090308.02.008.00 Social Security
 \$ 45.00 Increase 090458.02.008.00 Life Insurance
 \$ 2,920.00 Increase 001170.02.000.00 Franchise Fees
 Cost of doing business

Highway Town Wide

\$ 18,700.00 Increase 051421.03.001.00 Snow Removal – P/S
 \$ 18,700.00 Decrease 081421.03.001.55 Snow Removal – P/S – Equip Repair
 Balance Payroll activities

Water

\$ 500.00 Increase 090308.08.008.00 Social Security

\$ 12.00	Increase	090458.08.008.00	Life Insurance
\$ 512.00	Decrease	083204.08.004.00	Source of Supply
Cost of doing business			

Resolution #20-011

Abstract #19-25: On a motion of Councilor McCormack, seconded by Councilor Legg and with unanimous (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board vouchers #19-1745 - 19-1808 were authorized from the following funds:

General Fund:	\$ 68,770.41	Street Lgt.:	\$ 1,297.94
Highway:	\$249,147.14	Water:	\$ 7,445.83
Highway PT	\$ 39.14	Part Town	\$ 829.89
T & A	\$ 515.88	Sewer	\$ 1,924.92
TOTAL:	\$330,156.16		

Resolution #20-012

Abstract #20-01: On a motion of Councilor McCormack, seconded by Councilor Tucker and with unanimous (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board vouchers #20-0001-19-0015 were authorized from the following funds:

General Fund:	\$ 19,933.63	Limeledge Wtr.	\$ 778.93
Highway:	\$ 6,431.71	Water:	\$ 15,233.39
Highway PT	\$ 5,634.62	Part Town	\$ 6,106.52
TOTAL:	\$ 54,178.80		

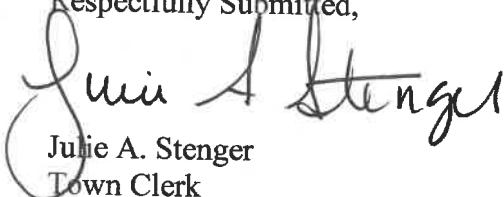
Resolution #20-013

Executive Session: On a motion of Councilor Alexander, seconded by Councilor Legg and with unanimous (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board the meeting was adjourned to Executive Session at 7:40 p.m. to discuss contract negotiations.

On a motion of Councilor McCormack, seconded by Councilor Tucker the meeting was returned to open session at 8:55p.m. .

On a motion of Councilor McCormack, seconded by Councilor Tucker and with unanimous (5-0) affirmation of the Town Board the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


 Julie A. Stenger
 Town Clerk



January 3, 2020

TO; Town Board

From: Karen Barkdull
P&Z Clerk

Re: 2019 Recap

Planning and Zoning Highlights:

- 62 Pre-Application Reviews
- 61 Concluded resolutions issued to date
- 11 open applications to date
- Planning Board and ZBA total of 19 training hours
- CEO certification completed in February 2019 (Karen), June 2019 (Ben)
- Additional Training:
 - DEC soil and Erosion Control Training in April 2019
 - Cornell Septic and Well water training September 26, 2019
 - Cornell Shorescaping workshop November 2019
 - IPS training(free) for Planning Zoning and Codes November 2019 (\$1,700 savings)
- Coordination of 2011-2012 building permits sent to scan into Laserfiche
- Draft Zoning Code
 - Comparison of 2019 draft to 2017 draft completed
 - Comparison of 2019 draft to existing code completed
 - Sectional analysis chart for reference material of 2019 draft to existing code completed
 - 5 zoning committee meetings held between May and August to completed zoning review and changes
 - 3 zoning committee meetings held between November and December to review Joel's comments

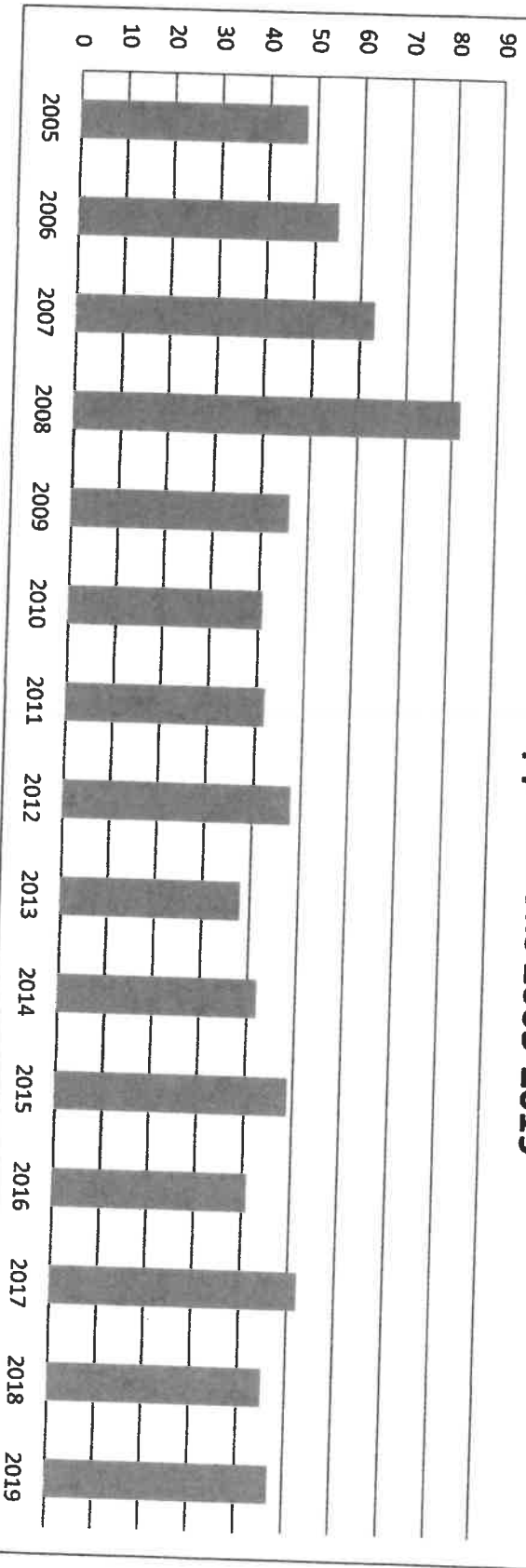
Upcoming Projects:

- Zoning committee meeting January 15, 2020 to complete review of Joel's comments
- Finalize zoning code draft to present to the Town Board
- Prepare 2013-2014 building permits to scan into Laserfiche

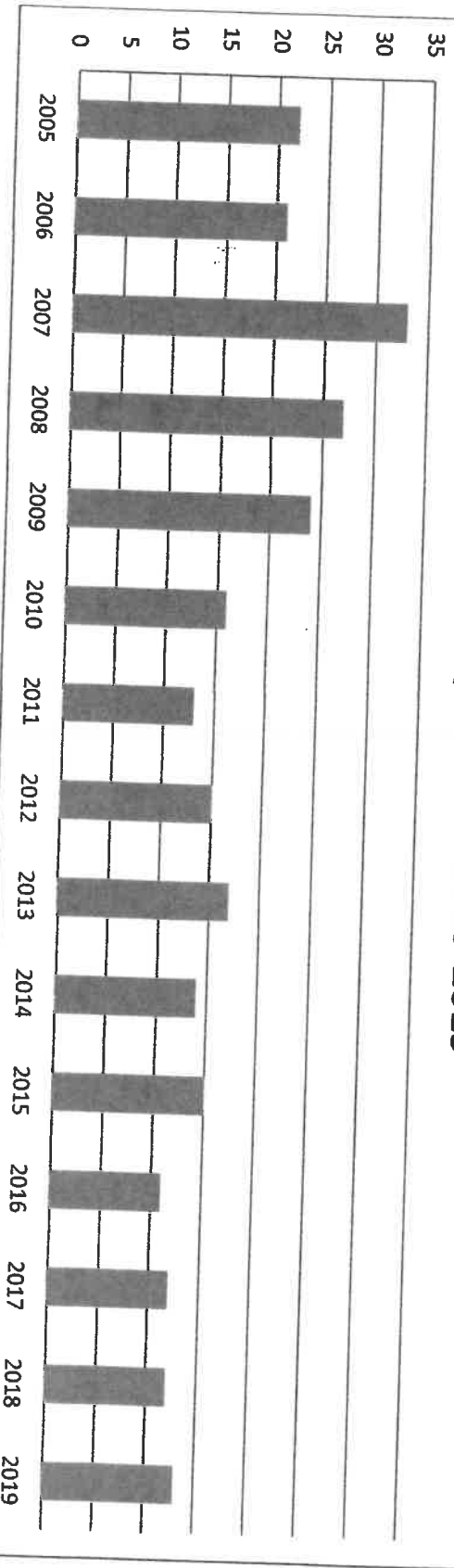
All Departments show an increase in activity in comparison to 2018 (see attached graphs).
Single family dwelling permits are remaining relatively flat for the last three years (13 for 2019)

282,000

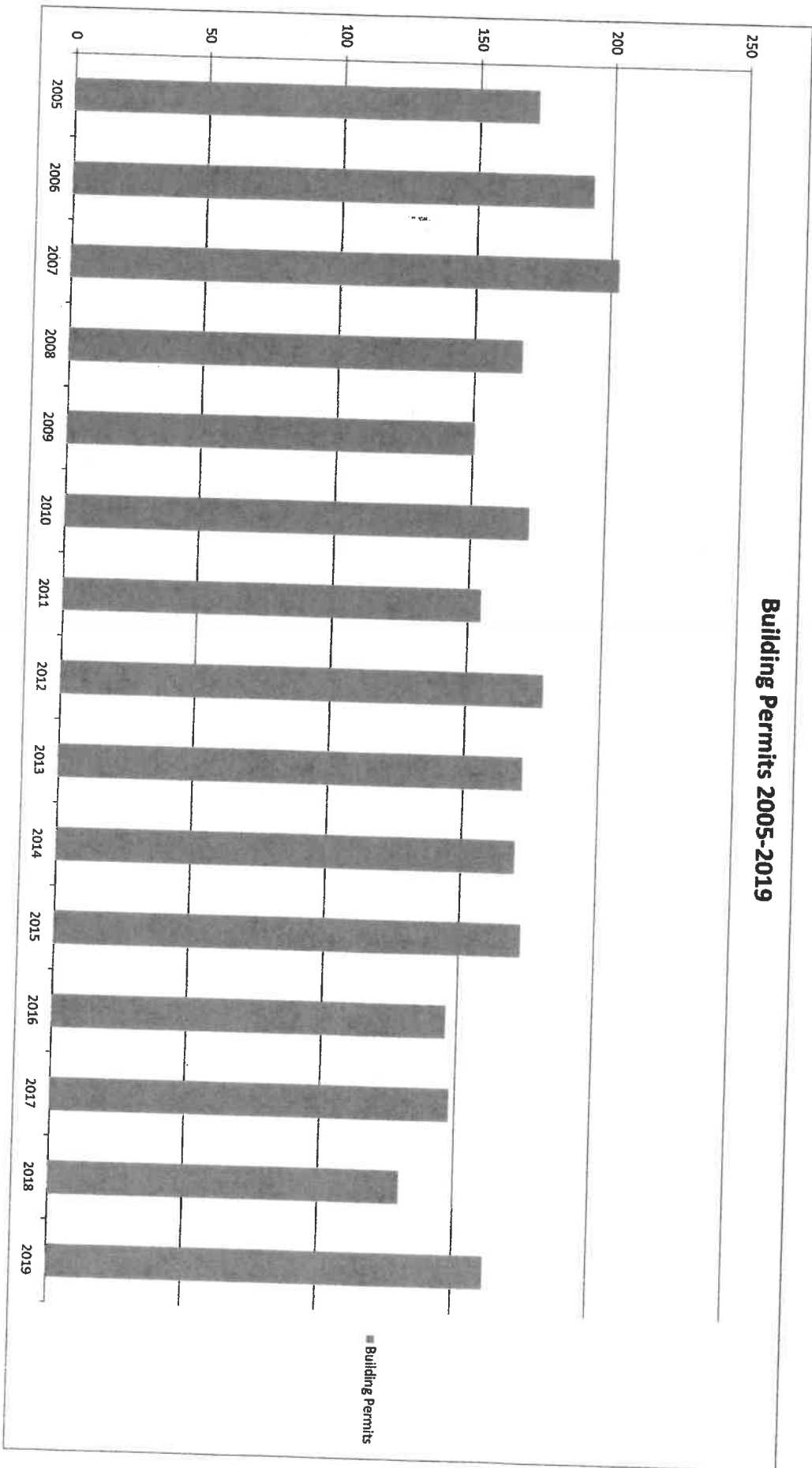
Planning Board Applications 2005-2019



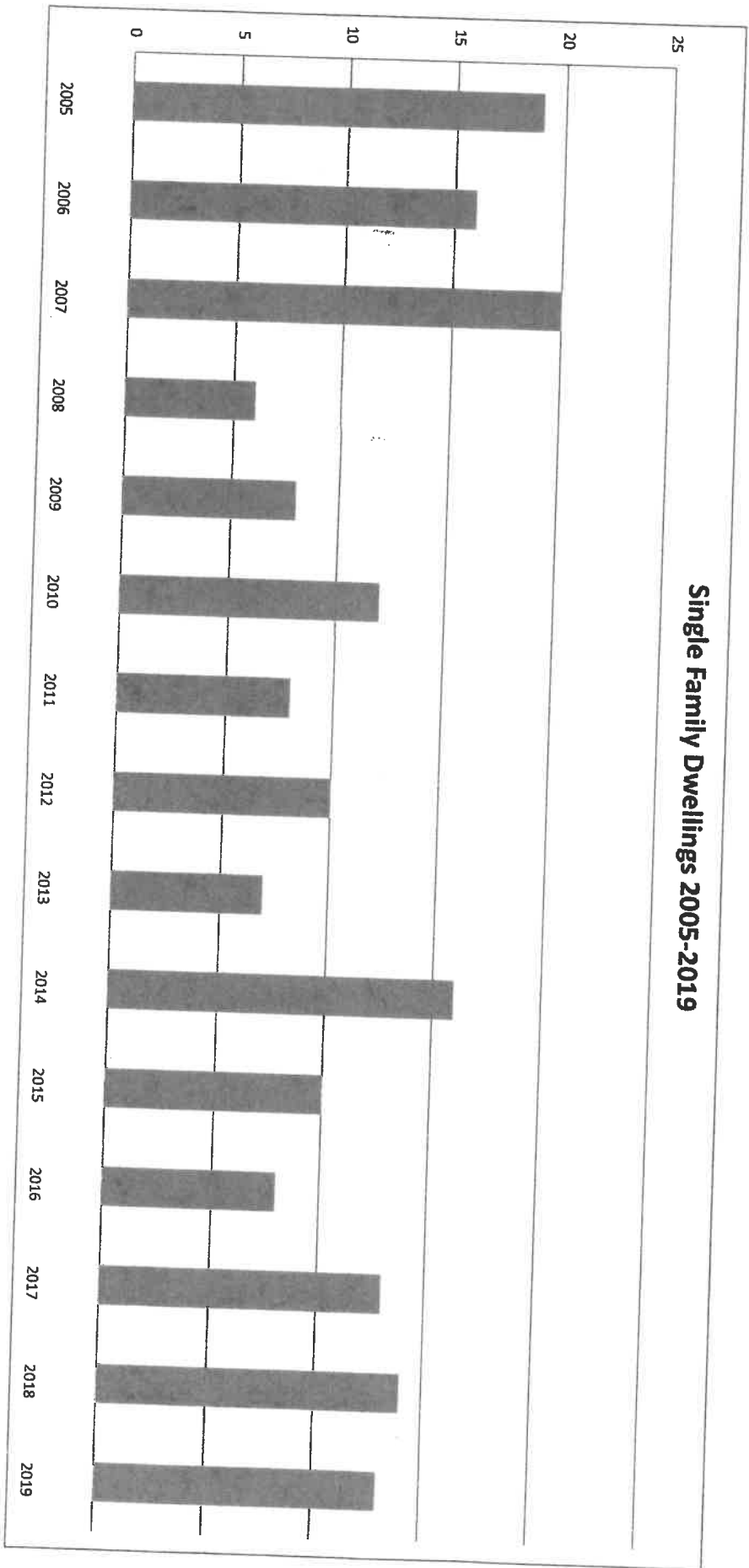
ZBA Applications 2005-2019



Building Permits 2005-2019



Single Family Dwellings 2005-2019



Annual Report – 2019
Beth Battle
Skaneateles Town Historian

Member of APHNYS – Assoc. of Public Historians of New York State
Member of OHA & Municipal Historians of Region 9

Meetings attended:

Town Board – 12
Hamlet – 7
Skaneateles Historical Society – 12
Skaneateles Historical Society Board - 12
Spafford Historical Society – 1
Clay Historical Society – 1

Programs attended:

Spafford – History of Steamboats on the Lake
New Hope – History of Carpenter Falls
Skaneateles Historical Society Retreat

Researcher at Creamery – 2nd Fridays of all 12 months - 3 hour + sessions

Historic Articles Written – 12

Bells End WWII
Lincoln Experience
Frank Lillyman
Fuller Letter
2 Eccentric Men
The Glen Haven
Schools of Skaneateles
Cooking for Washington – Nellie Randall
A Washington Connection
License Plates
The Unknown Soldier

Town Newsletter articles – 4

Researched & wrote 4 page history of Hazard House for new owner David Muir

Researched & wrote a 5 page booklet about Military Nurses from Skaneateles who served during WWI, WWII, Korea, & Vietnam & had a plaque containing their names placed on the Memorial Walkway at the American Legion

Other projects:

- Answered 56 requests for local or family history
- Researched 6 other house histories – 3 for house plaques
- Conducted 4 tours of the Creamery for 88 of the 4th grade students & their teachers
- Interviewed by Channel 9 for program regarding Frank Lillyman
- Worked Historical Society booth at Antique Show
- Assisted with preparing models of Village business for display at the Creamery
& supplied written material for each business
- Assisted with installation of metal shelves on 2nd floor of Creamery & moved
20 or more boxes of old newspapers, dating back to the 1830's to these
metal shelves along with old Skaneateles Town tax rolls

Respectfully submitted by
Elizabeth Battle
Town of Skaneateles Historian

New York is the only state requiring a public historian in every municipality – city, town, village, county and state. There are in New York state:

61 City Historians

567 Village Historians

938 Town Historians

57 County Historians

1 State Historian – Devin Lander

Among the jobs the historian is required to do is to conduct research and write, teach, do public presentations, advocate for historic preservation and be involved in historic promotions.

We are not simply a collector of facts, an archivist or record manager, or a genealogist for hire.

Alzina Loveless, a former 4th grade teacher and a telephone operator, was appointed as the first Town Historian in 1968. She held this position for 12 years, retiring in 1980. She did not consider her job as a glamorous one, but one that took her to hot, cramped attics or to gravestones in a grassy cemetery in her search for information.

In 1980 Helen Ionta, also a teacher, took over the position of Town Historian. She was very active in the Skaneateles Historical Society, serving as the president, vice president and board of directors. She wrote many papers and books, including the “Sinclair Chairs” which was published in 1988. She died on August 16, 2000.

I was the third to be appointed as Town Historian, in November of 2000, I previously was a Lt. in the Navy Nurse Corps, then a nurse at Community Hospital. As a former reporter for the “Skaneateles Press” and the “Auburn Citizen” then president of the Historical Society. I too, as historian, have written several papers and books about Skaneateles history.