

VILLAGE OF PALMYRA BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Regular Meeting August 19, 1996 7:00 p.m.
Palmyra Fire Hall

PRESENT: Mayor Wilson, Trustees Gunkler, Salomon, and Celentano, Attorney John Nesbitt. Trustee Guest absent.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Wilson called the meeting to order at 7: 00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be Tuesday, September 3, 1996 due to the Labor Day holiday.

The Palmyra Community Center will be accepting donations towards Muscular Dystrophy the weekend of August 24th at the intersection of Routes 31 and 21.

ABSTRACT #6: Mayor Wilson moved to accept Abstract #6 for vouchers 248, 297 and 307-373 for \$33,753.04. Second by Trustee Gunkler. Vote, 4 ayes. CARRIED.

MINUTES OF AUGUST 5: Motion by Trustee Celentano to approve the minutes from August 5. Second by Trustee Gunkler. Vote, 4 ayes. CARRIED.

PLANNING STUDY: Mayor Wilson moved to adopt the following resolution:

RESOLVED that the Village Board herewith adopts the Downtown Palmyra Planning Study as the Village's conceptual plan for downtown improvements and to provide the basis for specific capital projects. Second by Trustee Celentano. Vote, 4 ayes. CARRIED.

WORKSHOP TOPIC: CANAL DREDGING: Mayor Wilson asked the representatives of the agencies to introduce themselves. Present from the NYS Thruway Authority, Office of Canals, were John Dergosits, John Zmarthie, and Michael Bopp, from the DEC there was Bob Shearer, Matt Sanderson, Joe Hamm, and Dave Woodruff. Jim Columbe represented the Wayne County Planning Board. Mayor Wilson outlined the sequence of speakers, first the DEC and Thruway Authority would make their presentation, then Bruce Wideman with a 15 minute slide presentation. After Bruce's presentation, the floor will be opened to questions and comments from the public.

Bob Shearer, Deputy Regional Permit Administrator from the DEC said that state regulations must be complied with by the NYS Thruway Authority. This drainage facility was designed for this purpose and it will be a Type 2 "maintenance" activity. Type 2 does not require public notice which they gave anyway after receiving petitions against this project. The application process continues following this meeting. The DEC has been working with the Army Corp of Engineers at Syracuse as well.

John Dergosits with the NYS Thruway Authority, Office of Canals, addressed the issue of need first. There have been reported groundings in the area where Ganargua Creek empties into the Canal. A shoal of sediment has built up of about 4-5 foot in depth and less than 8 feet of water. In 1994, they determined there was 75,000 cubic yards of material in the stretch of canal from the Route 21 bridge to Lock 29. He showed the contract drawings, the first of which was dated Feb. 12, 1910 showing the initial use of UDS 616 for dredge spoils. There was also a notation which showed the disposal of 344,000 cubic yards of material at the location of the current UDS. The most recent use of this site was in 1968 and 1969. It is also believed that some dredging was done in 1974 although they are not sure how much was placed there at that time.

Prior to making the application to DEC for UDS 616, the Canal Corp evaluated alternative locations as potential disposal sites. The Aqueduct Park and the future home of the Palmyra Marina are areas already owned by the Canal Authority. The Aqueduct Park was ruled out as it is used for recreation. The Marina has been ruled out as it includes federal and state wetlands as well. The third location looked at was the Walton farm. However, it is not owned by the Canal Authority and they do not have the funding available to purchase it.

Mr. Dergosits explained the sequence of priorities as they related to use of UDS 616. He referenced a 1995 map from Sneider Associates, the village engineering firm for the storm water project. At location # 1, they would replace the culvert or clean it out so water could flow to the eastern side of the upland disposal site and still supplement the federal wetland site. At location

#2, the culvert on the western end, would be removed and or plugged and would cease to drain into the upland disposal site. Location 3; the culvert would be checked for adequacy to handle the drainage from the village's discharge into the abandoned canal during the re-routing. At Location #4 they would build a new spill box control structure to regulate the amount of storm water allowed out of the abandoned canal into the upland disposal sight in between dredging activities. The berm at the other end by the canal which has been breached will be replaced with a new spill box. This would give further control over the water allowed out of the sight. The NYS Thruway would use the sight for one year, letting it drain and then allow the village's storm water to re-enter. Mr. Dergosits then showed two other disposal sites several months after they had been used.

Matt Sanderson, Division of Fish and Wildlife, explained that his bureau's primary responsibility was to review projects and discover the impact from these projects on the environment. The material that will be put into UDS 616 will be largely organic.

Next on the agenda was Bruce Wideman. He gave a slide presentation of the restoration of the old Canal. In July of 1975, Mr. Wideman was authorized to clean up the old canal bed. Several organizations pitched in to clear the towpath and in 1977 they received a \$25,000 CETA grant. The work was completed with these CETA grants. Bruce also showed excerpts from Village Board minutes showing that the area in question, 22.5 acres, had been declared a wetlands by the DEC. In 1976, he quoted documents that explained why the dredging that was taking place was suspended. He also shared correspondence stating that a permit for dredging was denied in 1978 by the DEC and Army Corp. of Engineers. Bruce questioned what has changed since 1978 in order for the DEC now to allow the Canal Corporation to dredge. He feels the only thing that has changed is that the wetlands are even better and the Canal Corporation has taken over. Bruce feels their only objective is to get 14' in the Canal so commercial vessels can pay their tolls. He closed with a strong request that the Canal Authority be denied the right to dump in UDS 616.

Mayor Wilson called a recess at 8:20 pm. The meeting was reconvened at 8:40 for the question and answer period. When asked if the decision to grant the permit had already been made, Bob Shearer from DEC responded that they were only in the technical review stage and the decision had not yet been made. John Hudak, chair of the Village Planning Board, suggested that residents should contact elected officials about their displeasure if the permit is considered.

Someone asked why it would be necessary to go down to 14 feet when there is no commercial vehicles using the canal. The reply was that there is an extra 2 feet dug as an over dredge so they don't have to come back as soon to re-dredge. There are some boats now using the canal that draw close to that. It is the Canal Corporation's vision to open the Canal up to increase tourism up and down the line such as tour boats.

Mr. Burcroff thought that perhaps the area would be worth just as much for tourism as a wildlife habitat such as Montezuma Swamp. The DEC said that Montezuma is a managed wetland much like what is being proposed. Mrs. Burcroff questioned if other alternative sites had been considered like the one that was just offered. John Zmarthie said no but it will be looked at.

Mary Courtney asked again what had changed since 1978 when the permit was denied, have wetlands changed or the impacts changed? The response cited four differences now as compared to them. First of all, the wetland act has matured and regulations have changed. Secondly, DEC was not the lead agency then. Thirdly, DOT never submitted an application. Lastly, the Corp of Engineers reviewed the permit and has determined that these areas "heal" quickly.

Former mayor, Jim Elliott, a proponent for Canal usage, felt the Canal Authority had lost credibility because he had been assured several months ago that the Canal Authority had all the necessary permits. He also wondered why the disposal site behind Breen's couldn't be used. That site is too far away and the material is too sloppy to transport by truck.

Pam Hughes expressed the opinion that the wetlands has high educational value and the school children tour it each year.

Ellie Drake asked what type of chemicals would be part of the sludge material. The DEC said it is mostly organic material and will not contain any PCBs. There was a discussion and description of clam-shell dredging versus hydraulic dredging. There will be about 100,000 yards of material pumped into the 16 acre area which equates to approximately 1 foot over the entire surface of the disposal site.

Steve Hays wondered what the Board's position was. Mayor Wilson stated that the Board needs to give the Canal Authority and DEC all the input possible. He would like to see them come up with an alternative site but if that's not possible he feels that the dredging will probably have short term impact with long term benefits.

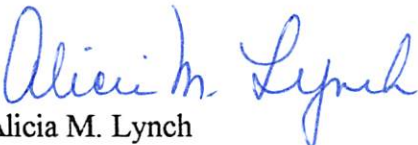
Sharon Vanderwege wondered who had authorized the drainage that took place last fall. This being a new administration, this could not be answered. Mr. Wideman stated that he knew who had done it. It had been reported to DEC by a fisherman at the park that the draining had been done by the Village.

It was suggested that a wetlands advisory committee be formed. Mayor Wilson concurred as perhaps it would facilitate matters.

Bruce Wideman closed with another request to the DEC to protect the wetlands.

Mayor Wilson thanked residents and the representatives from the agencies for attending and then motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:55 pm. Second by Trustee Celentano. Vote 4 ayes. CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,


Alicia M. Lynch