

Minutes of the Community Development Agency Meeting held by the Town Board of the Town of Riverhead at Town Hall, Howell Avenue, Riverhead, New York on Tuesday, May 6, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:**

Sean Walter	Chairman
John Dunleavy	Member
James Wooten	Member
George Gabrielsen	Member
Jodi Giglio	Member

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Diane Wilhelm	Town Clerk
Robert Kozakiewicz	Town Attorney

**Resolution #9**

Chris Kempner: “CDA Resolution #9 Authorizes Transfer of all Title, Interest and Possession in Property Situated on Grumman Boulevard Know as Former Grumman Guard House and Commonly Referred to as Henry Pfeifer Community Center from Town of Riverhead Community Development Agency to Town of Riverhead.”

Member Dunleavy: “So moved.”

Member Wooten: “Seconded.”

Chairman Walter: “Moved and seconded. Vote please.”

The Vote: “Giglio.”

Member Giglio: “I’m going to vote no because I thought this should have been discussed at a public work session which it was not. It was e-mailed to all Board members on Thursday afternoon after work session and there was no room for discussion so I’m a no.”

Vote Continued: “Gabrielsen.”

Member Gabrielsen: “I think there’s a couple of issues that came up with me on this and I thought, hoped we would have had more discussion at work session but it is what it is, it’s here now. One of them was the direct funds that went into this project but I think we’ve worked that out. I think we worked out something where the Rec Committee and the Rec Committee is happy (inaudible) I think that’s a big deal.

The other one is, actually there are three of them. The other one is the location. I think for a dog pound I personally feel that’s kind of a hostile environment out there. I think the area is too small; there’s no real room for expansion. I mean where are you going to walk the dogs? So I think there’s a number of issues as far as that location I don’t think is really ideal. I just want to go back in the minutes when this was redone. The money went into rehabbing this building and this goes back to 2003 and Councilman Lull had made a statement at that time and

he said at this meeting; *a question was asked of me once why don't we consider this building for a new dog pound and the simple fact is it's too small and always has been too small*; so I kind of echo the sentiments he had that it's not really ideally a good location. We may have a freight unloading area right behind it which I think would be quite a disturbance so that's my second issue.

The third issue is and maybe the most important I think, looking at the bigger comprehensive plan that we're doing at EPCAL; let's look at the subdivision, we have to look at the energy park and we say what here would contribute to the success of possibly the energy park and to build that ultimately the subdivision and I really feel there was a lot of interest and there could be a lot of interest in the Henry Pfeifer Center and I really look at the Henry Pfeifer Center as being the gateway to that energy park and let's just say if it's sold the numbers we may look at. We haven't had it appraised. I was hoping (inaudible) to get a number on it. I'm just saying out loud it may be worth a million dollars ok? I also know that at that point the tax revenue that would come in would be substantial; I think it would really be a big deal. So as a Town Board I'm just hoping that we look at this a little closer in reacting and passing this like this so I'm going to vote no."

Vote Continued: "Wooten."

Member Wooten: "I'm just going to say and I'm pretty good at formulating my thoughts but I did take the time to write them down because I don't want to miss anything. This has been a two decade battle with the Town and the animal care.

I had the pleasure of being friends, good friends, with Councilman Lull long before he was elected until the day he died and during his tenure and years after, he paved the way and changed the care and welfare of the dogs under the charge of the Town. Shortly after I was elected and being assigned as liaison to the animal shelter; I learned firsthand the issues and inconsistencies in the Town's ability to deal with animal control and all the emotions and passions of animal advocates and humane societies.

I truly don't think that any member of the Town Board, at least not back then and not now, understood the complexities and related to the care and welfare of the animals. I am pleased that the Supervisor and I recently began to work together and agreed that the privatization would best serve the public. The reputation of North Fork Welfare Animal League is an ideal fit for the services we, the Town, have long needed and desired. This move to contract with North Fork was supported by the Animal Advisory Committee.

I have to also thank and credit Denise Lucas of MTAS, a 501(c)(3) not for profit, for her dedication and fund raising work to raise money to relocate the animal shelter and improve the facility. Denise has been very vocal and supportive of the Town's goal to move the animal shelter. She represents dozens of residents who are passionate and care about the welfare of lost, abandoned and animals in need of care and rehabilitation.

For years, I on behalf of the Town, have expressed a desire and intention to address the Town's animal shelter and improve services related to that shelter and to town residents, including spay and neuter clinic, improve kennels, training, socialization and overall care of the animals in the shelter.

While the Town has employed various tools, special spay and neuter days, employed behaviorists; our facility at Young's Avenue is inadequate, poorly located (next to grinding and compost yards) and without sufficient space to expand or even serve the public.

The Henry Pfeifer Center and the property provide an opportunity to put into use a town property which is underutilized and ripe for expansion. Last year, the North Fork Welfare Animal League contracted with the Town to take over our animal shelter and dog control services. North Fork has a wonderful reputation, hardworking staff, and frankly in a short time has improved services provided to town residents. This plan is to use an existing building and at no cost to the taxpayers, North Fork will build kennels and offices in a portion of the property. The Town is not surrendering ownership and control of our building, we are leasing the vacant portion of the property to improve and expand services. The present kennels are limited in number, small and we have no facilities for cats. This is an opportunity to provide quality care and services. North Fork would build kennels; much improved from those that exist today, spayed and neutered facilities and a facility to care for cats.

Years ago, and in many towns throughout this state, animal shelters were located on the outskirts of town or located next to less or undesirable uses, just like Youngs Avenue next to old landfill, yard waste facility and crown sanitation. It is time for this Town to relocate the animal shelter to a facility more conducive to visits from residents. The open space atmosphere, quiet and opportunity for expansion exist at this location.

This shelter should be a beacon of hope. The stress of being cooped up in a cage can be extremely debilitating. Our goal for the animals is to provide an environment that assists staff and provides tools to improve the dog behaviorally, emotionally and physically. Shelters aren't just for animals, they're for communities. It is this vision of firmly bringing these safe havens into the fold of the community that seems to be revolutionizing shelters the most profoundly. In the past shelters were seen as the repository of community's outcasts but today I hope that image is changing.

The relocation of the animal shelter to the Henry Pfeiffer goes hand in hand with urban renewal goals. First, utilize and improve existing buildings and sites that are not in use and provide improved services to town residents. Our goal are improved facilities, affordable spaying and neutering, vaccinations and micro chipping, to name but a few.

While I support the Town's recreation programs and frankly I think this entire Town Board has demonstrate its commitment to recreation, the move to the Henry Pfeiffer is not about recreation vs. animal shelter but instead the Town's commitment to the animal shelter and desire to make use of an existing underutilized building and transform a non-use to use providing valuable and long overdue community service.

I thank this Town Board for their support and embracing my vision to relocate the animal shelter and I vote yes."

Vote Continued: "Dunleavy."

Member Dunleavy: "That was a great speech. I have nothing prepared. I'm just an ordinary person, an ordinary guy. I vote the way my conscious and the way people describe. I don't know how to take care of animals, I'm not a professional I have to listen to the professional people and tell me how the animals should be taken care. North Fork Animal League is doing a wonderful job on Youngs Avenue and that is a building that's really falling down. So I mean they're doing a really great job up there. No one's complaining. We used to have people at every Town Board meeting complaining about how we treat our animals at the animal shelter. We don't have that anymore so using my common sense which I use all the time and say I want to thank the North Fork Animal League for the job that they do and I'm voting yes."

Vote Continued: “Walter.”

Chairman Walter: “For all the reasons eloquently stated by my distinguished colleagues to my right, I vote yes. I thank Denise Lucas because without Denise Lucas’s perseverance and putting this in my face and actually blocking me in the parking lot once and not letting me leave until she finished, I probably would not have been a champion for this as I am now so I thank Denise.”

Chris Kempner: “The Resolution is adopted and that completes the business of the CDA.”

Member Dunleavy: “I’d make a motion that we close the CDA meeting and reopen the Town Board meeting, so moved.”

Member Gabrielsen: “And seconded.”

Chairman Walter: “Moved and seconded. Vote please.”

The Vote: “Giglio, yes; Gabrielsen, yes; Wooten, yes; Dunleavy, yes; Walter, yes. The Town Board Meeting is now reopened.”

**Meeting Adjourned**