

Draft

**SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING
FEBRUARY 16, 2023
7:00 PM**

Supervisor Valentine opened the meeting at 7:00pm followed by a salute to the flag. Members present: Supervisor Valentine, Councilman Ardisana, Councilman Courtenay, Councilman Holdridge, Councilwoman Smith

The meeting took place at the Chester Senior Center as the Town Hall had a previously scheduled meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals. The following is the Press Release announcing the meeting and as posted on the Town's website.

PRESS RELEASE

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TOWN OF CHESTER
1786 KINGS HIGHWAY
CHESTER, NY 10918

The Town of Chester Supervisor has called for a Special Meeting on Thursday, February 16, 2023, at 7:00pm on matters of the Ward System. Said meeting to take place in the Chester Senior Center, 81 Laroe Road, Chester, NY.

The Town Board will also conduct any other business brought before the Board.

BY ORDER OF THE TOWN SUPERVISOR
TOWN OF CHESTER

LINDA A. ZAPPALA
TOWN CLERK
February 16, 2023

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were none.

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING PERFORMANCE BOND – W. MEADOW WAY

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Councilwoman Smith and second by Councilman Courtenay to accept as Performance Bond (LOC #437) in the amount of \$70,000.00 for the timely completion and appropriate use of W. Meadow Way to access parcels to build residential homes to the property identified on the Tax Maps of the Town of Chester as parcel 17-3-16.

VOTE: AYES(5) Valentine, Ardisana, Courtenay, Holdridge, Smith

ADOPTED

WARD DISTRICT DISCUSSION

Persons in attendance were provided copies of the redrawn election district and ward district map. The Town Board allowed for public comments and questions as the discussion ensued.

Supervisor Valentine explained that ward boundaries were written up by County Planning and reviewed by the Board of Elections. A draft version was provided to the Town on February 14th and confirmed on February 15, 2023 as a final version. The map depicts 8 new election districts with two to each ward. The Supervisor defined the wards as depicted on the map.

The Town Board discussed their concerns with the map.

Councilwoman Smith said she didn't understand district 3-1. She said it goes way out from Sugar Loaf, Surrey Meadows, including water and sewer districts. She said it was way out of line.

Supervisor Valentine said he took issue with how the wards were divided between sewer and water districts. He said there would be conflicts with members representing different district across ward boundaries.

Steven Diffley asked what it would matter if two members represented two sewer and water districts and could not complaints or requests go through the Supervisor.

Tom Becker said he thought dividing water and sewer districts shouldn't matter, as the Town Board would not deny the districts what they need. Supervisor Valentine said it affects taxes and the tax cap. Town Clerk Zappala said it affects special district taxation.

Edie Johnson said in Blooming Grove each board member acts a liaison and gives a report.

Town Clerk Zappala asked if the portion of Surrey Meadows situated in Ward 3 could be included within Ward 1 with the rest of the Surrey Meadows development.

Councilwoman Smith said we should keep Surrey Meadows as one with Village portion.

Councilman Holdridge noted that the district kept the Village in tact but Whispering Hills is in the Village but not in Ward 1.

Councilman Courtenay took issue with the statement made in December by County Planning that a Public Hearing would have to held.

Supervisor Valentine said he wants to get it done but can't be wrong. He suggested combing Lake Hill Farms and Walton Lake Estates into one ward. Town Clerk Zappala pointed out the disproportionate number in population with such a change. The Supervisor suggested that other sections of the ward could be carved out to balance the numbers.

Supervisor Valentine said the County redistricted based on population within 10% but did not ask for any input.

Councilman Holdridge said Meghan Tennemann discussed with the Board keeping election districts within a 10% population differential.

Noel Spencer said why wasn't the map divided with political demographics, as he said was done in 2004 when District 10 sent Chester to Tuxedo. Councilman Holdridge explained that was not possible and could not be taken into consideration.

Mr. Diffley said gerrymandering shouldn't be taken into account.

Supervisor Valentine said it cannot be done by voters, only population but we should use consultants and divide by the side of Town and have the engineer review.

Councilman Holdridge said that the Town Board has until February 21st to accept this map and if not, we would need a special election. Town Clerk Zappala said she was told it would go to the next biennial election if not adopted at this time.

Supervisor Valentine said the Town Board was told the process would take six months and was not asked for any input from County Planning.

Councilwoman Smith said she thought the County was slacking off.

Councilman Holdridge said he thought a commission should be created with Board members and the public.

Councilman Courtenay said the Town Board should considering holding meetings both during the day and night to accommodate all residents.

Marcy said she was concerned with the timing of the process. She said we shouldn't waste any more time and we should use electronic communications going forward.

Town Clerk Zappala was asked to create a link on the town's website for the wards. Edie Johnson said she would add information to the Courier Journal.

Councilman Holdridge added he would have voted for the map to see the wards go forward as it is a shame to wait any longer, but we are between a rock and a hard place.

Councilman Holdridge said after receiving information from Town Departments and consultants there should be a public hearing to go over any additional changes to the ward map for submission back to the County Planner.

SET PUBLIC HEARING

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Councilman Holdridge and second by Councilman Courtenay to set a public hearing on the matter of the wards on March 22, 2023 and direct Town Clerk Zappala to cause to publish same.

VOTE: AYES(5) Valentine, Ardisana, Courtenay, Holdridge, Smith

ADOPTED

DOG PARK DISCUSSION

Councilman Holdridge asked if Engineer Fusco was to take into consideration trees for shading.

Councilwoman Smith said it was not on the plan, but Richard Logothetis would put in plants. There would also be a division with two gates to be installed.

ADJOURNMENT

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Councilwoman Smith and second by Councilman Ardisana to adjourn the meeting at 8:05pm, there being no further business brought before the Board. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda A. Zappala
Town Clerk
2023-2-16