

**TOWN BOARD MEETING  
April 24, 2024  
6:45 PM**

Supervisor Holdridge opened the meeting at 6:50pm.

**Attendance Rollcall:**

Supervisor Holdridge	Present <u>x</u> _____	Absent _____
Council Member Ardisana	Present <u>x</u> _____	Absent _____
Council Member Becker	Present <u>x</u> _____	Absent _____
Council Member Courtenay	Present <u>x</u> _____	Absent _____
Council Member Dysinger	Present <u>x</u> _____	Absent _____

**Determination of Quorum:** Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_

Also present: Elizabeth Cassidy, Esq.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**ON A MOTION OFFERED BY** Council Member Dysinger and second by Council Member Ardisana to enter into Executive Session at 6:54pm on the matter of litigation.

**VOTE AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger** **ADOPTED**

Supervisor Holdridge left the Executive Session at 7:05pm.

**ON A MOTION OFFERED BY** Council Member Courtenay and second by Council Member Dysinger to adjourn the Executive Session at 7:15pm.

**VOTE AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger** **ADOPTED**

**ACCEPTANCE OF MEETING MINUTES**

**ON A MOTION OFFERED BY** Council Member Courtenay and second by Council Member Ardisana to accept the Minutes of the Town Board Meeting of April 3, 2024 and April 10, 2024 as presented by Town Clerk Zappala.

**VOTE AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger** **ADOPTED**

**BUILDING MORATORIUM WAIVER REQUEST – 306 BLACK MEADOW ROAD**

**ON A MOTION OFFERED BY** Council Member Dysinger and second by Council Member Courtenay to move Agenda Item #13 to accommodate speaker.

**VOTE AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger** **ADOPTED**

Mr. Donato Socci addressed the Town Board concerning his property at 306 Black Meadow Road, Chester. He explained he had received a stop work on a project he needed 1,000 yards of fill to complete a concrete slab for permitted barn to be used as a residence. He claims this permit is 6 months overdue and that he has posted a highway bond. Attorney Cassidy suggested review by the Building Department of stop work order.

**BUILDING MORATORIUM WAIVER REQUEST – 1597 Route 17M**

**ON A MOTION OFFERED BY** Supervisor Holdridge and second by Council Member Courtenay to move Agenda Item #16 to accommodate speaker.

**VOTE AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger**

**ADOPTED**

Ms. M'Lanie Hunter addressed the Town Board concerning her property at 1597 Route 17M. She explained she has been in front of the Planning Board on this project that was referred to and denied by the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance on the use of a non-conforming barn for a temporary classroom. Due to health issues, she was delayed in returning to the Planning Board until after the moratorium was put in place. She claims to have \$10,000 placed as bonds and requests \$5,000 refund on barn she has now decided to keep. Ms. Hunter submitted project information to the Board for reference. Attorney Cassidy said the matter will be referred to the Planning Board attorney for project summary and a decision will be made by May 8, 2024 as to a moratorium waiver.

**CHESTER COMMONS AND CARPENTER PARK PAVILION RENTAL FEE WAIVER**

**ON A MOTION OFFERED BY** Council Member Becker and second by Council Member Ardisana to move Agenda Item #15 to accommodate requestor.

**VOTE AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger**

**ADOPTED**

**ON A MOTION OFFERED BY** Council Member Becker and second by Council Member Courtenay to waive the pavilion rental fees at the Chester Commons and Carpenter Park for the Chester Cub Scouts.

Discussion: Supervisor Holdridge said the Scouts will be meeting up to two times per month and will provide insurance for use.

**VOTE AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger**

**ADOPTED**

**RESOLUTION TO JOIN THE MONARCH CITY USA PROGRAM**

**ON A MOTION OFFERED BY** Council Member Becker and second by Council Member Courtenay to move Agenda Item #14 to accommodate speaker.

**VOTE AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger**

**ADOPTED**

Elizabeth Barrett-Zahn, CAC, addressed the Town Board on the plight of the monarch butterflies 80% diminishment in population. She said the Town will become the 2<sup>nd</sup> place municipality in the State by pledging to join the Monarch City USA program. Together with the Chester Elementary School, the CAC will provide education on healthy habitats through the \$50,000 grant funded construction of gardens and outdoor classroom. Ms. Zahn has offered to assist with the application process and procuring signage and future festival, and promote initiatives aimed at improving our local environment. She said this would not put restrictions on mowing but would be educating the public on ways to co-exist with our environment.

Following is the letter submitted by Ms. Barrett-Zahn:

Subject: Town Support Requested for Monarch City USA Recognition

Dear Supervisor Holdridge and Town Board Members,

I am writing to bring to your attention the immense benefits and opportunities that come with earning Monarch City USA recognition for our Town of Chester. By pledging to join the Monarch City USA program, Chester would join Warwick in expanding much-needed habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

As you know, monarch butterflies play a vital role in our ecosystem. Their presence not only enhances the beauty of our surroundings but also contributes to a more enjoyable, scenic, peaceful, and joyful living environment for all residents.

Moreover, being recognized as a Monarch City USA carries not just environmental benefits, but also significant economic advantages. Studies have shown that areas designated as monarch-friendly can experience an increase in property values, benefiting homeowners and the local economy alike. This recognition has the potential to attract visitors, boost tourism revenues, and foster community development.

By supporting the planting of milkweed and nectar plants within our city limits, we can create a welcoming habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators. Joining forces with other cities in the Monarch City USA program, such as Warwick, New York's first Monarch Recognized Village, will bolster our environmental efforts and strengthen our sense of community.

To support the Monarch Recognition, we will partner with Chester Elementary School during the 2024-2025 school year. They recently received a \$50,000 grant for the construction of raised bed gardens and an outdoor classroom, so the timing couldn't be better to anchor the students' learning on a real-world science issue of providing healthy habitats for Monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

Please consider our Town's application for Monarch City USA recognition as the second municipality in New York State to do so and to support initiatives aimed at improving our local environment. I am more than willing to assist with the application process and any related tasks, such as procuring signage, to ensure our success in this endeavor. I will also serve as the liaison with CES and work with educators to develop the learning goals for the projects, such as compassion, curiosity, collaboration, and communication skills.

When the time comes, I would like to propose hosting a Monarch City USA festival. Such an event would not only be a celebration of our environmental achievements but also an opportunity to engage our students, citizens, and the community at large.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I eagerly anticipate our Town's journey toward a better, more sustainable future with butterflies!

Best,  
Elizabeth Barrett-Zahn  
[ebzscience@gmail.com](mailto:ebzscience@gmail.com)  
121 Sugar Loaf Mountain Road  
Chester, NY 10918

**ON A MOTION OFFERED BY** Council Member Dysinger and second by Council Member Courtenay to authorize the Supervisor to sign the pledge to join the Monarch City USA program.

**VOTE AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger**

**ADOPTED**

## TOWN REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMENTS

Council member Dysinger said he is working on updates to noise amendment and filling of land law draft for additional comments from the Town Board, Planning Board, Engineer, Building Inspector and Planner. He is working on potential update to soil excavation and removal ordinance.

Council Member Becker provided his report:

On April, 16 Larry Dysinger and I attended a public hearing at the Town of Blooming Grove about the construction of Craigville Logistics Warehouse. Our concerns were the increase of traffic through the Town and Village from the project without the DOT future 86 improvements in place.

We are having an issue with the amount of contact time for the chlorination system for the Theater and I will reach out to the County for a corrective answer.

Larry helped me complete a flow test on Creamery Pond Rd for information needed by our Engineer for the future water line into the Theater. This is preliminary for the design of updating the hook-up to the existing fire system.

Council Member Courtenay attended the Police Department's award ceremony and commended the Chief and the men and women of the Chester Police Department for their extraordinary service to the Town. He applauded their sometimes unknown but lifesaving work. He attended the Soccer Club meeting which he said morphed into discussion on the speeding issue on Park Drive and a walk-through for a resolution to the issue. He reported the opening day for Chester Little League was well attended and he acknowledge the work of the Parks Department for the phenomenal job they did on the fields and the leaders of the league for their contributions. Council Member Courtenay attended the insurance meeting and will be setting up some appointments for the Advisory Committee for the SLPAC.

Council Member Ardisana announced the Sugar Loaf Spring Festival on May 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. He brought up the issue of speed through Sugar Loaf and the condition of the sidewalks that cause a hairy situation when walking.

Supervisor Holdridge announced the following events:

- Arbor Day ceremony and tree planting on April 25<sup>th</sup> at 2pm, Chester (Carpenter) Community Park in honor of Jack Deshler with a plaque being donated by the Deshler family and seedlings by O&R.
- Tire Collection – Highway Garage – May 6-17. Tires off rims, no truck tires accepted.
- OCDA Fish Derby 4/1-9/2/24. More information on chester-ny.gov
- Trout Brook Firehouse Wing Nite – June 8<sup>th</sup>, 5-10pm. \$25 all you can eat & drink. Children 10 and under \$10.

Supervisor Holdridge reported that he and Council Member Dysinger attended the Monroe/Woodbury Youth in Government class and was glad to get back to his Alma Mata after having been four times at Chester Academy. He intends to visit Warwick Valley Central in the upcoming future. Council Member Dysinger added he didn't know what to expect but enjoyed seeing the kids get something out of it and be able to convey a message of the importance of participation.

Supervisor Holdridge said the Coolest Recycling Event was a gigantic success and read the following report:

"In anticipation of Earth Day, the Chester Conservation Advisory Council, in partnership with Sustainable Warwick and the Town of Chester, collected 54 air conditioners, humidifiers, water coolers, and other items with refrigerants on Saturday, April 20, at Chester Town Hall.

According to the appliance labels, Chester's "Coolest Recycling Drive 2024" event will prevent the equivalent emissions of at least 150,000 pounds of CO2. This can be thought of as the emissions from burning almost 7,656 gallons of gasoline or landfilling nearly 3,000 trash bags.

This event saved Chester and other local residents nearly \$800 on recycling fees and made it easier for them to have their

appliances properly recycled. Our thanks to Michael Helme of Sustainable Warwick, Town of Chester Supervisor Brandon Holdridge, and to all our neighbors who brought their appliances.”

Supervisor Holdridge said our hearts go out to all those impacted by the fire at Whispering Hills and is in talks with the management to arrange a clothing drive to be held at the clubhouse with Senator Skoufis.

Supervisor Holdridge addressed the allegations that had to do with a cancellation and rescheduling of an event at the Chester Library, which was posted by the Director. He said the library operates fully independent of the Town and he has not been in touch with Ms. Jagos except to discuss the library trustee appointments. He suggested Mr. Westerfeld call Ms. Jagos.

Supervisor Holdridge reported his many meetings concerning grant opportunities and funding, Sugar Loaf walk-through with the President of the Community Foundation and the need for sidewalks. A plan is being drawn by the Town engineer to have painted sidewalks on either end from the firehouse to the church and SLPAC to Scott's Meadow to make a walkable path from the SLPAC to the hamlet and firehouse to the church with three raised crosswalks to promote traffic calming along with six others. He reported the Soccer Club was happy with the condition of the grounds and grooming will be kept up. He attended the Little League opening day, clothing drive, SL Community Foundation meeting, Surrey Meadows meeting on traffic calming, which will add speed bumps and 3-way stop signs. The Sugar Loaf Historical District application has been submitted and he thanked Neil Larson and Lydia Cuadros for their work. He said he is hopeful the federal aid for dial-a-bus will be passed. He thanked DGM for the help on the phone purchase plan for Town Hall and the other municipal buildings to cut down on costs.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Richard Logothetis, Sugar Loaf, reported the dog park vestibule remains unfinished and has turned into a mud pile. It needs to be dug in and pea gravel added. He said two trees have died and need to be replaced and watering continued. He said the Community Foundation is finishing the tree planting at the entrance of Sugar Loaf.

Lydia Cuadros, Creamery Pond Road, expressed concern about the water connection to the theater as the district has been under water restrictions and Tin Barn uses 1,000,000 gallons per year. She added there is one good well and a contaminated well and low pressure well. She asked the Board to work on infrastructure before adding more users. She said the district is over-extended and the residents are suffering. Council Member Becker replied that water restrictions are in place for conservation efforts throughout the State and the water operators regulate usage for future needs. He said the water needs for the district are sufficient by the well producing 100 gpm, for 144,000 gpd with 112-113,000 gpd at peak use. The second well be put in place, and the third well is pending work through procurement and DEC approval. He further explained that chlorine is added to this well and is used across the State and Country and is monitored and regulated by the Health Department. Supervisor Holdridge said we are well aware of the issues and want to provide for the SLPAC as well as the residents. He reiterated that the well is no longer contaminated and the Town is in talks with the engineer to do everything possible to do it right.

Stacy Padilla, via FB, was in support of the Conservation Advisory Council Monarch Butterfly program.

Cindy Smith, via FB, asked about the summer rec program, exercise park and senior trips. Michelle explained there has been extremely low registration after blasting social media and changing to indoor facility, and reduced fees to non-residents so far with 14 families. She has planned a December trip which she is putting on the finishing touches. Supervisor Holdridge added we are doing all we can and camp registration ends May 1<sup>st</sup>. He added the senior exercise park is almost near completion and should have opening date soon.

Ed Mullins, via FB, said speed bumps contribute to climate change with noise and rear-end collisions.

Jeff Zahn, Sugar Loaf, said there is a new President of the Chamber of Commerce. He asked if the Town Board approved the application for the Sugar Loaf Festival. He also asked about the insurance and parking. Supervisor Holdridge said this was to be on new business, but there are logistics to further work out and discuss with the Town Attorney. Attorney Cassidy said the biggest issue is the bounce house and is a very large insurance risk in liability and asked that be worked out.

**SUMMARY OF BILLS**

**ON A MOTION OFFERED BY** Council Member Becker and second by Council Member Dysinger to accept the Summary of bills in the amount of \$1,211,225.63 as submitted by the Comptroller.

**Vote Rollcall:**

Supervisor Holdridge	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Ardisana	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Becker	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Courtenay	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Dysinger	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___

**ADOPTED**

**RESOLUTION TO PROMOTE JOHN HAND TO BUILDING INSPECTOR III**

**ON A MOTION OFFERED BY** Supervisor Holdridge and second by Council Member Courtenay to promote John Hand to Building Inspector III, effective April 24, 2024.

**Vote Rollcall:**

Supervisor Holdridge	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Ardisana	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Becker	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Courtenay	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Dysinger	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___

**ADOPTED**

**CHESTER TV CHANNEL DISCUSSION**

**ON A MOTION OFFERED BY** Council Courtenay and second by Council Member Ardisana to table the matter.

**VOTE AYES(5):** Holdridge, Ardisana Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger

**ADOPTED**

**RESOLUTION TO INSTITUTE WARD SYSTEM MAP**

Supervisor Holdridge said after one referendum and six years after vote with 3,292 in favor and 1,200 opposing the ward system, the Town will now adopt the Ward System Map. It is the consensus that Option 1 be adopted.

Supervisor Holdridge asked if there were any public comments.

Robert Valentine, via FB, commented that option 1 splits the largest amount of republicans and groups the Village with Surrey Meadows which he said is gerrymandering. Supervisor Holdridge replied that there is no voter affiliation in this regard and that Mr. Valentine had agreed with keeping the water districts and Surrey Meadows development intact.

Ed Mullins asked if a shift in population after the census would impact the districts. Supervisor Holdridge explained that a 5% differential would cause the districts to realign until the 2030 census which would be adjusted automatically, not by the Town Board, in and around 2032.

Supervisor Holdridge said there will be a local law drawn for staggered four-year terms in continuity with permissive or mandatory referendum as required.

**TOWN OF CHESTER  
TOWN BOARD  
RESOLUTION TO ADOPT WARD MAPS**

**WHEREAS**, in 2018, the residents of the Town of Chester voted to implement a ward system; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town Board of the Town of Chester adopted Local Law 6 of 2018 (renumbered as Local Law 2 of 2024 for filing purposes) authorizing the Town Board to supersede New York State Town Law § 85, which local law, authorizes the Town Board, instead of the County Board of elections to establish and modify ward boundaries; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town Board of the Town of Chester, with the assistance of the Orange County Department of Planning has caused proposed ward maps to be prepared; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town Board held a public hearing on February 28, 2024 and March 13, 2024 for the purpose of soliciting comment on said proposed maps; and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that this action is a Type II action pursuant to the regulations of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation promulgated pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Town Board of the Town of Chester hereby does approve and establishes the boundaries for four (4) wards, as shown on the map annexed hereto and on file in the Town Clerk’s Office (also known as version 1).

**BE IT FURTHER REOLVED** that the map of the wards of the Town and which has been designated “The Official Ward Map of the Town of Chester,” as adopted by the Town Board shall be filed with and maintained by the Town Clerk as a public record, and a copy shall be filed with the Orange County Clerk and the Orange County Board of Elections; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that pursuant to Town Law § 85, the ward system established herein shall take effect at the next biennial election to be held in 2026 at which all four councilman seats will be up for election to two-year terms.

**ON A MOTION BY** Supervisor Holdridge and second by Council Member Courtenay

Councilman Ardisana	Aye
Councilman Becker	Abstain
Councilman Courtenay	Aye
Council Dysinger	Aye
Supervisor Holdridge	Aye

**ADOPTED**

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE STOP LITTERING BILLBOARD SIGN**

**ON A MOTION BY** Council Member Becker and second by Council Member Courtenay to approve the Stop Littering billboard sign.

**Vote Rollcall:**

Supervisor Holdridge	Yes <u>X</u>	No _____	Abstain _____	Absent _____
Council Member Ardisana	Yes <u>X</u>	No _____	Abstain _____	Absent _____
Council Member Becker	Yes <u>X</u>	No _____	Abstain _____	Absent _____
Council Member Courtenay	Yes <u>X</u>	No _____	Abstain _____	Absent _____
Council Member Dysinger	Yes <u>X</u>	No _____	Abstain _____	Absent _____

**ADOPTED**

**RESOLUTION TO CREATE A DONATION ACCOUNT FOR THE CHESTER CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**ON A MOTION BY** Supervisor Holdridge and second by Council Member Courtenay to establish a donation account in the name of the Chester Conservation Advisory Council.

Discussion: Supervisor Holdridge explained that unsolicited donations have already been made, so an account is a legal requirement.

**Vote Rollcall:**

Supervisor Holdridge	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Ardisana	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Becker	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Courtenay	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Dysinger	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___

**ADOPTED**

**EDUCATION REQUESTS**

There were no requests made to the Board.

New Business

**RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE ELIZABETH CASSIDY TO DEFEND TOWN OF CHESTER IN LAWSUIT AGAINST PAUL CANEVARI AND INDEMNIFY SUPERVISOR HOLDRIDGE AND BUILDING INSPECTOR JOHN HAND**

**ON A MOTION BY** Council Member Courtenay and second by Council Member Dysinger to authorize Elizabeth Cassidy, Esq. to defend the Town of Chester in the lawsuit against Paul Canevari and indemnify Supervisor Holdridge and Building Inspector John Hand.

**Vote Rollcall:**

Supervisor Holdridge	Yes ___	No ___	Abstain <u>X</u>	Absent ___
Council Member Ardisana	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Becker	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Courtenay	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Dysinger	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___

**ADOPTED**

**APPOINT FAIR HOUSING OFFICER**

**ON A MOTION BY** Council Member Dysinger and second by Council Member Courtenay to appoint Supervisor Holdridge as Fair Housing Officer for the Town of Chester.

**Vote Rollcall:**

Supervisor Holdridge	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Ardisana	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Becker	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Courtenay	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___
Council Member Dysinger	Yes <u>X</u>	No ___	Abstain ___	Absent ___

**ADOPTED**

**PERMA GRANT AUTHORIZATION**

**ON A MOTION BY** Council Member Becker and second by Council Member Dysinger to authorize Supervisor Holdridge to sign the PERMA grant for vests for the Police Department.

**Vote Rollcall:**

Supervisor Holdridge	Yes <u> X </u>	No <u>    </u>	Abstain <u>    </u>	Absent <u>    </u>
Council Member Ardisana	Yes <u> X </u>	No <u>    </u>	Abstain <u>    </u>	Absent <u>    </u>
Council Member Becker	Yes <u> X </u>	No <u>    </u>	Abstain <u>    </u>	Absent <u>    </u>
Council Member Courtenay	Yes <u> X </u>	No <u>    </u>	Abstain <u>    </u>	Absent <u>    </u>
Council Member Dysinger	Yes <u> X </u>	No <u>    </u>	Abstain <u>    </u>	Absent <u>    </u>

**ADOPTED**

A reporter asked from the audience about the Fair Housing Officer. Supervisor Holdridge directed him to the Town’s website where it is posted and read the language.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Robert Valentine, via FB, asked why the lawsuit was not submitted to the insurance company and what experience the Supervisor has to be the Fair Housing Officer. Supervisor Holdridge said there would be no discussion on the matter but thanked Mr. Valentine for his comments.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**ON A MOTION OFFERED BY** Council Member Dysinger and second by Council Member Ardisana to adjourn the meeting at 9:10pm, there being no further business brought before the Town Board.

**VOTE AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger**

**ADOPTED**

Respectfully submitted,

Linda A. Zappala  
Town Clerk  
2024-04-24