

Workshop of the Town of Mexico
Held January 25, 2021
Via Zoom commencing at 7:00 P.M.

Present:

Nancy Weber, Planning Board Chairman
Ned Waterbury, ZBA Chairman
Steve Salatti, Planning Board Member
Matt Mason, Planning Board Member
Gary Toth, Planning Board Member
Bonnie Loforte, Planning Board Member
Ron Marsden, CEO
Eric Behling, Town Board
Marty Trey, ZBA
Liz Dishaw, Town Clerk

Weber opened the meeting at 7:02. Weber said there were a few topics she would like to discuss. The first was multi-homes. Marsden said that duplexes are allowed. You can have two homes but they need to be connected. Weber asked home Marsden knew that someone was building illegally. Marsden said he rides the roads.

Salatti said there was an article about Amish. They use religion as a reason to not conform to our laws. The state does nothing when someone gets killed not even to put tape on the buggies. Weber said Illinois wants to add a \$50 tax due to the damage done by buggies to the roads. Loforte said she attended a seminar about Amish. If they choose to live with us they should obey our laws. Weber said she is happy that they are improving property. Waterbury said Amish decided to come north because of the land value. This sect has the most growth than other sects. He believes they are from the Swartzentruber sect. Waterbury asked if they had smoke detectors. Marsden said they put them in until the final inspection then take them out.

Weber said the next topic is outhouses. Weber said Oswego County Health Department has no guidelines about outhouses. Marsden said NY Building Codes states that you don't need running water. Outhouses need to be 50 feet houses and waterways. Weber asked if there was anything about moving them. Waterbury said when the ground won't accommodate any more they are moved. Weber said some you can't see because they are attached to the houses. Marsden said they usually put where they can't be seen. Weber said Zook has an employee so he is required to have an outhouse, how does Marsden know. Marsden said he knows by what is said in the resolution. Weber said she is concerned about the creek. Can the board request that they stay so far away from the creek. Marsden said yes. Weber said the board has never address outhouses. Waterbury asked Marsden if the Amish are accommodating when he interacts with them. Marsden said they are. The only one he has had problems with is Miller. They usually don't like controversy.

Waterbury asked how many Amish families are in Mexico. Marsden said about 12. Waterbury said Amish have a different mindset. Weber said the order doesn't compromise. Rules are rules. Waterbury asked why they resist the orange triangle. Marsden said he didn't know. Weber said there are complaints about the children driving buggies. She said she spoke to Moses Zook about a meeting but nothing took place.

Weber said she thinks that the Amish on La Casse have a saw mill. Marsden said if they sell things then they need a permit. A sawmill is allowed as a personal use but if it is commercial then a special permit is needed. Weber asked if the board could request a building around the saw. Marsden said there is nothing in the law.

Trey entered at 6:57.

Toth said if laws are in place it would make Marsden's job easier to enforce. Trey said he just joined the meeting and asked if he could get an update on the conversations. He was updated. Dishaw said that we have to treat all of our residents the same regardless of their religious beliefs. If not then we are discriminating against them.

Waterbury said the Amish community is growing in Mexico. The boards are trying to see what the issues are so they can interact in a positive way. Toth said the orange triangles are legislative issues for the sheriffs to enforce. The Town Board, Town Clerk, Zoning and Planning Boards are the face of the town and who people call with questions. Behling said they are important to the community as is everyone else. Trey said the roads are out of our jurisdiction. We don't want to create laws that are against the 1st amendment. If there is a problem then how's it fixed and if there are none then let's get ahead of them. The town roads will be degraded because of the steel wheels and the horse shoes. People in the area are concerned about the outhouses, It is a wonderful thing to have the Amish but there is a newness about their way of life that people don't understand. Toth said some laws don't have to be rewritten but some do need to be addressed. We need to be consistent with everyone and treat the Amish like we do with all residents. Toth said need to think of buggies as safety issues not as religious issues. Trey said he doesn't disagree, anything can be abused. We must tread carefully. Loforte said other communities have communication with Amish. This a community that is established and they have joined. Three or four years ago there were no Amish now there are 12 families. In a few years there could be 30 to 40 families.

Weber said working on the Comprehensive Plan is forcing us to look forward. We want to draw people to our community. Loforte said they can't use the religious card for everything.

Waterbury asked if there are any other items. Loforte said Palermo has a law that all homes must have a septic tank. There is a misconception that all zoning laws are the same for all towns.

Toth said the discussion was good. The meeting was closed.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Dishaw
Town Clerk