

PUBLIC HEARING

WATER EDU ASSESSMENT

Town of Ulysses

October 23, 2018

Audio of the minutes are available on the website at ulysses.ny.us.

The meeting was held at the Ulysses Town Hall at 10 Elm Street, Trumansburg.

Notice of Town Board meetings are posted on the town's website and clerk's board.

ATTENDANCE:

TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Supervisor- Liz Thomas

Board members- Michael Boggs, John Hertzler, Rich Goldman, Nancy Zahler

Town Clerk- Carissa Parlato

Bookkeeper- Nina Thompson

Environmental Planner- John Zepko

OTHERS PRESENT:

Chaw Chang, Pete Angie, Michelle Couwenhoven, Roxanne Marino, Bob Thomas

OPENING THE HEARING:

Ms. Thomas made a motion to open the hearing at 7pm, seconded by Ms. Zahler and passed unanimously.

Ms. Thomas introduced the members of the Town Board as well as other staff in attendance and gave the subject of the hearing: a clarification in how water units are assessed for Water District 3. She noted that copies of the proposed equivalent dwelling unit (EDU) structure were available by the door, that the date of the hearing was set by resolution of the Town Board on October 9, 2018 and a notice of the hearing was published in the Ithaca Journal on October 11, 2018.

She continued, sharing the following:

- The WD3 units were set in 2001 using specific names e.g. Sleeping Bear Mattresses. This business was assessed 1 unit, but now is a school. ISA Farm 2 was assessed 10 units, but is no longer even in existence and is still being charged 10 units (nearly \$5000/year for no water used).
- This system has needed to be updated using a non-biased, data based approach.
- For residential units, there will be little or no change. But for properties coded by TC Assessment in the range of 400-1000, there may be changes
- 12 of the 20 commercial and community uses that were set in 2001 are no longer in existence or have changed
- New commercial properties have been added and the standards are unclear how these new connections should be charged.
- The Town Board, working with the Water District Administrator, Michael Boggs, the Town Attorney and Town Supervisor, created this method.
- Using the assessment code allows a non-biased way to determine what kind of use e.g. residential, apartment, commercial, community service,
- Residential = 1 unit as in the past

- Apartments/mobile homes, duplexes – all coded by assessment as types of residential between 0.8-1 unit per dwelling.
- Other uses (primarily businesses with assessment codes between 400-1000) – will go by actual water used
- Normal water unit for a residence = btw 24,000 and 40,000 – this is our base for one unit (eventually)
- To ease this change into effect and give people a chance to figure out ways to conserve water,
 - Year 1 (2019) – 1 EDU per 60,000 gallons of usage for 2018.
 - For 2020 = an average of use in 2018 and 2019 using 50,000 gallons of usage.
 - For 2021 – an average of 2018, 19, 20 and unit = 40,000 gallons of usage
- This must be decided before the town can pass the budget for 2019. The deadline is 11/13 meeting.

At this time, Ms. Thomas asked the board whether they would like to allow a 10 minute question and answer session (not part of the public record) with those in the audience. The board agreed.

Ms. Thomas then stated the following :

“The purpose of this public hearing is to afford the general public an opportunity to make statements and comments about the change to the EDUs in Water District 3. To allow for a smooth and fair process and to ensure everyone who wants to speak is heard, I ask that you raise your hand to speak. Each speaker has 3 minutes to comment and only one person may speak at a time. The Public Hearing part of this is not a question and answer session.

The hearing will remain open until all members of the public who are present have been given an opportunity to speak. Comments presented at this hearing will be taken into consideration by the town board when it considers action on this topic either tonight or at the next meeting on Tuesday November 13, 2018 here at the Town Hall of the Town of Ulysses.

I request that speakers sign in on the sheet by the door. Those wishing to speak may, but are not required to, state their name and addresses. Each speaker will have 3 minutes to comment. I will give a signal when one minute of time remains.

I would now invite speakers to raise their hand if they would like to make a statement. Please observe rules of common courtesy.”

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. Chang thanked the town for keeping him informed on this. He uses the most water in the district and this change will not make it cost-effective for his farm to continue to use municipal water. They are already making plans to get own water and to become a residential rather than a commercial user to help bring down the cost.

Ms. Marino inquired about whether the town can/wants to require that new residences hook up to municipal water to help share the district costs.

CLOSING THE HEARING:

Hearing no further comments, Mr. Goldman made a motion to close the hearing at 7:27pm, seconded by Mr. Boggs and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Carissa Parlato on 10/31/18.