



Town of Franklin

May 2002 Newsletter

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May 2002

Town of Franklin

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TOWN OFFICIALS

Town Supervisor

Mary Ellen Keith

Deputy Supervisor

Gene Goff

Town Councilmen

Janet Goff

Timothy Goff

Walter Kretser

Town Justice

Roger Symonds

Highway Superintendent

Donald Vorrath

Deputy Highway Supt.

Michael Canty

Town Clerk/Tax Collector

Lauren LeFebvre

Attorney for the Town

Edward Murphy

Assessor

Douglas Tichenor

483-0188

Code Enforcement Officer

Edward Lagree

891-5976

TOWN BOARD MEETINGS

Regular town board meetings are held the second Monday of each month. The meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. and are open to the public. The next regular meeting will be held Monday, June 10, 2002.

Check the town Web site for up-to-date information on upcoming town events and meetings, minutes of past meetings and agendas for upcoming meetings.

If you would like to be on a mailing list for the newsletter, contact the town clerk. ❖

Loon Lakers ask Town for Ban on PWCs

Members of the Loon Lake Homeowner's Association are hoping to be able to ban jet skis on Loon Lake. Nathan Moser, president of the LLHA, brought the issue to the Town of Franklin Town Board with a request for their help to help keep personal watercraft (PWCs) off that lake.

The LLHA is made up of approximately 70 home and camp owners on Loon Lake. According to Moser, the association has overwhelmingly approved LLHA board's desire to take steps to prohibit PWCs on Loon Lake at their 2000 annual meeting.

LLHA Requests Local Law

On their behalf, Moser proposed that the Town of Franklin pass a local law to declare

Loon Lake a "Personal Watercraft and Specialty Prop-Craft Regulation Zone" which will outlaw the use of jet skis.

The LLHA was formed by property owners to preserve and protect the lake and the surrounding area. They encourage safety by enforcing New York State boating guidelines and by setting boating speed limits. Members of the LLHA are concerned with the quality of the water and have required septic monitoring and regular water quality testing.

According to Moser, in a letter to Town Supervisor Mary Ellen Keith, "Simply put, a ban will protect the character of the Loon Lake community. Beauty and tran-

quility, peace and quiet, these are the attributes that the businesses here sell and market, that visitors to the area desire and expect, that residents and property owners cherish."

At the May 13 board meeting, Moser brought the LLHA argument in favor of the ban, stating that by passing the law, the Town of Franklin will be joining the towns of Johnsbury, Chester, Brighton, Duane and Webb in banning PWCs. He presented to the board letters and e-mails from over 45 homeowners and two business owners in Loon Lake who support of the law.

PWC Supporters Speak, Too

While the LLHA represents many of the landowners in

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E911 and Address Changes in the Future for Town of Franklin Residents

With the passing of a resolution by the town board, work will soon begin on initiating the 911 emergency call system in the Town of Franklin.

According to Rick Brown and Don Work, who have been hired Franklin County to connect towns to a Verizon 911 dispatcher by January 2003, Franklin is one of only seven New York State counties that does not yet have E911.

The number 911 is universally recognized as the number to call in an emergency. Once Town of Franklin is "locked"

in to the system, a call to 911 will reach a Verizon dispatcher who will expedite a response depending on the nature of the call.

As the call is received, the dispatcher will automatically see on a screen the homeowner's name, address and phone number from where the call was generated, and information about which local emergency response services should be called for that particular site. The Town of Franklin will continue to be served by Saranac Lake Fire

and Rescue Departments, the Bloomingdale Fire Department, and the Ray Brook State Police.

"Even if the emergency is such that you make the call and then have to drop the phone and leave, the dispatcher will have enough information for a response," Work said. On a hang-up, the dispatcher will call back to check the number. If there is no answer, the dispatcher will send out a response.

For the system to work at all

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Committee and Community Notes

RECREATION COMMITTEE by Derek Doty and Janet Goff

We have a design for a new scoreboard. The scoreboard is made out of metal and is four feet by ten feet. The top of the sign will say "Curtis Tyler Memorial Scoreboard". There is room for four sponsors at the bottom. We have one sponsor spot left to fill. The cost is \$75.00. If you are interested please contact Janet Goff or Tim Goff. The committee would like to thank the local business-person (who wishes to remain anonymous at this time) for his help with this project.

The estimate for the fencing that will go around the basketball court is \$6,400. This price includes all labor and material needed to put up the fence. We have about half of the funds needed. We will be looking into some grants, doing fund raisers and a bottle drive to come up with the rest of the funds. We hope to have the fence up by fall.

Maureen Parker has donated wood chips for the walking trail. Mary Ellen Keith will let us use her backhoe to load the chips. No date has been set yet to move the wood chips. Volunteers will be needed, so keep checking back for a day and time!

We have had a request from Adam Reynolds, Travis Rabideau and Zack Savarie, representatives of some of Curtis Tyler's former baseball players and friends, that they would like to dedicate the large baseball field in Curtis K. Tyler's name. They would like to place a remembrance plaque and rock at the field. All of the necessary funds for this project would be raised by them.

Thanks to the people who have contacted us with their questions and ideas. Keep them coming!

Thought for the month from Andy Rooney: "No matter how serious life requires you to be, everyone needs a friend to act goofy with!" ❖

CELEBRATION COMMITTEE by Lauren LeFebvre

If a party was held at Kate Mountain Park and no one came, would anyone hear it?

The Town of Franklin Celebration Committee held a meeting Tuesday, May 7, at 7:00 p.m. at the Franklin Town Hall to plan a fabulous July Fourth celebration and no one showed up. I really thought my article in last month's newsletter was better than that!

I know that with the weather we've been having lately it's hard to think about summer. I have every reason to believe the Fourth of July will happen. I'm willing to bet it will happen right after the third of July. Given that information, the planning for a Fourth of July celebration has to start soon.

The committee still has the same theme in mind, an old-fashioned celebration with potato sack and three-legged races, a pie-eating contest, a cream pie throwing booth, a Potluck dinner, and a band formed by resident musicians.

I know I'm really failing in the humor department with this article, folks, but it's hard for me to stay enthusiastic when there's no feedback from you.

The Celebration Committee will meet again in late May or early June. There will be a meeting announcement posted on the town hall sign, at Gene's Grocery, and in the Adirondack Daily Enterprise. If you are interested but can't make the meeting, give me a call.

I have to apologize for this dull, dry article. If you really want to get back at me sign up to throw a cream pie in my face on July Fourth! That will teach me. ❖

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECTS

Two scouts are working on their Eagle Scout projects to the benefit of the Town of Franklin. Clayton Smalley's sign project is well underway. After a survey throughout the town, Smalley had directional and recreational destination signs made for town intersections. Smalley's project required his researching the design and production of the signs. They should be ready to be installed soon.

Bryon Tuthill's proposed Eagle Scout project is to make improvements at the Union Cemetery on Route 3 in Vermontville. He is planning a stone base for a sign identifying the cemetery. The preliminary design includes a flower garden and benches.

The boys are responsible for all of the planning and coordinating of materials and workers to carry out their projects, including the funding. We're proud of the work they've done and are doing, and are honored that they chose to do their projects to benefit our

Town of Franklin Grievance Date June 5, 2002

On May 1, Doug Tichenor, Assessor for the Town of Franklin, filed the tentative assessment roll with the town clerk.

If you choose to grieve your assessment, Town of Franklin Board of Assessment Review will hold hearings in the Franklin Town Hall on June 5, 2002, from 5:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. Remember that it is your responsibility to provide the back-up information for your claim.

You do not have to be present at the Grievance Day hearing. However, your complaint must be received by the time the

board meets. Late complaints will not be considered. You will be notified by mail of the board's decision within 21 days after Grievance Day. If you do not agree with the BAR's decision, you can appeal your assessment through Small Claims Assessment Review. You can contact the assessor or the town clerk for information on small claims.

After July 1, you might as well start thinking about your argument for next year. Your assessment for this fall's tax bill will be final. ❖

Three Town Students Awarded Scholarships

by Shir Filler

Stephen Gothard, Kelley Moore, and Reiko Rexilius-Tuthill were the big winners of this year's Town of Franklin Scholarship Fund awards. All three attended the Town Board meeting on Monday evening, May 13, where they were presented with certificates and checks for \$250 each by acting Scholarship Committee Chair Shir Filler.

All three recipients are students at North Country Community College. Gothard is finishing up his associate's degree in liberal arts and science and hopes to transfer to a school in New York City (possibly New York University) to study interior architectural design and photography. Moore is finishing her first year in the wilderness recreation leadership program and looks forward to a career in the

outdoors when she is done. Rexilius-Tuthill will be graduating as a registered nurse on May 18. She plans to continue on at Plattsburgh State University for a bachelor's degree in nursing so she can teach in the future.

The Town of Franklin Scholarship Fund would like to help other local students pursue their educational goals. The fund gives out several \$250 scholarships each year to residents of the Town of Franklin who have completed at least one semester of post-high school education with a B average or better. All local students, young and old, are encouraged to apply.

2003 Application Deadline

The deadline for applications for 2002-2003 will be April 1, 2003. Contact Shir

Filler at 891-6755 or e-mail shir@northnet.org. By regular mail the address is HCR 1, Box 18A, Bloomingdale, NY 12913.

The Town of Franklin Scholarship Fund is administered by a group of town resident volunteers and is funded entirely by voluntary donations from businesses and individuals for the sole purpose of helping local residents pursue postsecondary education in the form of college or vocational school.

Current members of the Scholarship Committee include Fran Oliver, Lorraine Rumble, Al Berg, Reid Fitzsimons, Shir Filler, and new member Walt Kretser.

If anyone is interested in joining the committee, please contact Shir Filler as above. All are welcome. ❖

911 Coming to Town

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requires that all residences and buildings in the town be identified and that the information goes into a database. Residents in the town will be receiving a questionnaire asking for the information Brown and Work need to identify each piece of property. "We're not nosy. And none of this information will be sold," Brown promises. However, in order for the system to work, it's important that they have accurate information.

"You may be tempted to just toss the questionnaire into the can. But please, please take a minute. That's all it takes," Brown said. The questionnaire will come with a stamped return envelope. "It won't cost you anything."

Meanwhile, Brown and Work will be busy mapping out each road in the town into a grid that will identify every 50-foot section of property along the roads with a number. They will run from south to north, and from west to east. Numbers on some roads, Route 3 and State Route 30 in particular, will continue from numbers assigned from 911 work already done in Hamilton and Clinton Counties.

With the questionnaires in hand and county tax maps to help identify each

piece of property, Brown and Work will assign the appropriate number along the road to match every building with electricity and phone service on every piece of property.

New Addresses to be Assigned

At this point, we get new addresses consisting of the 911 ID number and the road name. Lists matching current addresses from the questionnaires with the newly assigned identifying number will be sent to local post offices for editing. Eventually, an edited and double-checked list will be sent to the Central Post Office in Albany.

From there, everyone will be mailed a notice verifying the new address and when the new address should begin to be used. It will be up to each individual post office customer to notify everyone they

get mail from of the new address.

"Notifying the people who send you your bills doesn't have to be done overnight," Brown reassures. "The post office will continue mail deliveries to the old addresses for twelve months."

Brown and Work estimate that the work in the Town of Franklin will be completed by October of this year. The cost for the service is the 35-cent-a-month charge on Verizon's bills. The charge pays for the dispatcher and Verizon's equipment, and for the salaries of crews who do the set-up work.

"How well the system works depends on accurate information. We need your cooperation. Please, return your questionnaire," Brown asks.

"And encourage your neighbors to do so, too," Work adds. ❖

Informational Meeting on Onchiota Camp Set for May 21

The Aspen Education Group, who will be operating a camp on Roakdale Road in Onchiota beginning in June, will hold an informational meeting at the Franklin Town Hall on Tuesday, May 21, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

The camp will be operated from property Aspen is leasing from Paul Smith's College. Future plans for the site include building six to eight lodges. The program, which will run year-round, will serve approximately 200 kids a year. The Aspen Group anticipates hiring up to 60 staff to run the camp.

The meeting will be run by Jim Glaeser, Leah VanDekieft, and Hansel Halverson, of Aspen Education Group, and Cindy Garso, of NorthWoods Engineering in Saranac Lake, who is working with the group on development of the site. ❖

Town OKs Goldsmith Land Purchase Negotiations

An 86-acre piece of private property in the Town of Franklin has been offered for sale to New York State. According to state law, the state cannot pursue the purchase without permission from the town that taxes the property. At the May 13, 2002, board meeting, the board voted to allow the state to do so.

The property is located on Goldsmith Road. In researching the decision, the board met at the property with Les Eggleton from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Roland LaPier, a year-round Goldsmith Road resident, met the group at the property.

Eggleton led the group down an old road through a wet, swampy area back to what was an old gravel pit. "Because this road is pre-existing, we would be able to upgrade it and then clear out this open area for parking," Eggleton told the board.

Public Access

While the 86 acres themselves are of no particular interest to the state, the road and parking area would lead to trails that would provide public access to state land

that abuts the property. "This purchase would open that 1,200 acres to hunters, hikers, campers, and cross country skiers," Eggleton said.

Councilman Walter Kretzer, who is familiar with the property, added, "I believe there's some good fishing back in there, too."

Councilwoman Janet Goff suggested horse trails. "I don't see why the trails couldn't be used that way," Eggleton said.

LaPier is one of over thirty property owners farther down the road who have no electricity. Property under town roads is owned by the Town of Franklin. As a private road, the Goldsmith Road is owned by the landowners right up to the middle of the road. There are two sections of Goldsmith Road where the State of New York owns both sides, and it is illegal to run electric lines through state land.

A check of maps brought by LaPier showed that since the land on the other side of the road from the 86-acre parcel is privately owned, it would not add to the problem.

Tax Base Issue

Another concern is the loss of tax revenue to the town. According to Eggleton, the town would lose the potential of the property being developed in the future. However, the state is required to make payments to towns on state lands roughly equal to, sometimes even higher, than the surrounding privately owned vacant land.

"Then there also is the issue that by opening up 1,200 acres of state land to the public, more visitors will come to the town, which can be financially good for the town."

The board's approval does not mean that the purchase will take place, only that the state will look into negotiations with the landowner. The purchase also is dependent on the availability of money to the DEC from the state legislature for that purpose. "It could be several years before the purchase is made, if it is made," Eggleton said.

With the consent, the board included a requirement that the state must provide the road improvement and parking area on the property if the sale is made. ❖

HIGHWAY REPORT

Highway Superintendent Donald Vorrath's report to the town board was a list of post-winter repair and clean-up and a run-down of plans for summer road work.

In addition to cleaning up the winter's worth of sand build-up on the roads, and chipping downed trees, the highway crew is doing repair and maintenance work on the plow trucks. "A winter like this one is hard on the plows," Vorrath said. "They take more of a beating when we're sanding over icy roads instead of over snow-packed roads."

Work recently done at the garage by the crew included upgrading the electrical service in the kitchen and building storage decks. Meanwhile, estimates still are coming in on upgrading the garage doors and floor, and from Niagara Mohawk about replacing lights back by the salt shed.

In order to monitor expenditures, Councilmen Gene Goff and Walt Kretzer have asked Vorrath to continue keeping the board up to date on highway scheduling and planning. "That I can do," Vorrath told them. "But keep in mind there just are some things that have to be done."

The board was put on notice that a grader will need to be rented for at least a month this summer to take care of the dirt roads and to help with the paving. At a cost of approximately \$8,000 a month, renting is expensive.

Vorrath was asked why a grader needs to be rented. "Our grader isn't safe to drive. I won't have our guys out in it," he said. He is looking into the cost of repairs, but suggested that the board consider the possibility of buying one in the next year or so. Even with the expensive repairs, the grader is old and the town's

needs have outgrown it's capabilities.

At the suggestion that a grader might be borrowed from another town, Vorrath replied that the other towns usually are using their graders at the times the Town of Franklin needs one – to deal with heavy snows and ice in the winter and for grading dirt roads and paving in the summer.

"It would have been handy for cutting back the sand banks this spring, too."

Plank Road Set for Paving

This summer the two-and-a-half miles on the Plank Road in Forestdale between Rosamund Lane and the county intersection are scheduled for paving.

Vorrath and deputy highway Superintendent Michael Canty also are still looking into a grant to widen intersections at the Keith Road and Cold Brook Road intersection and the Franklin Falls Road

Rules of Order Keep Meetings Productive

Most of us don't have the time to go to town board meetings. However, there may be a time that you have a particular problem or opinion you want to bring to the attention of the town board. How do you go about it?

At the first meeting each year, the Town of Franklin Town Board holds an organizational meeting at which, among other things, such as swearing in newly elected or reelected board members and town officials, they adopt Rules of Procedure for holding board meetings. These rules cover the various types of meetings, and include Rules of Conduct for both the town board and the public.

Most town meetings are open to the public, and are set up to allow the public a role to play in the board's decision-making. People often don't realize that while they do have a right to be heard, there are rules that they are required to follow.

The usual business of the town is held at Regular Town Board Meetings that are held second Monday of each month, beginning at 6:30 p.m., at the Franklin Town Hall in Vermontville. Special Meetings are held when there is a matter of urgency or a need of lengthy consideration of issues. The supervisor may also hold a Special Meeting any time the board feels it is necessary. The Rules of Conduct for are the same for Regular Meetings and Special Meetings.

Before a meeting, the town supervisor prepares an agenda. If you plan to speak to the board on an item that may not already on the agenda, you need to give a written request to the supervisor five days before the meeting.

During the meeting, you are allowed to speak on the agenda item the board is addressing at the moment. Before addressing the board, you must be recognized by the chairperson. You begin by clearly stating your full name and address and then stating the nature of your business regarding the agenda item. Although it often takes people by surprise, the chairperson does have the right to limit the time given to each speaker.

Comments are to be directed to the town board and not to other members of the audience. Your questions should be

directed to the chairperson. Often, people leave a meeting dissatisfied because they did not feel their issue had been addressed. However, according to the Rules of Conduct, you do not have the right to demand a decision or an answer to a specific question from a member of the board. If the board feels further consideration and review is necessary, the answer may be deferred to a later date.

An agenda item at the end of each meeting is "Questions and Comments", during which items not on the agenda can be brought up by board members and members of the audience. As with an agenda item, you must be recognized by the chairperson, and you begin by identifying yourself.

The chairperson may limit each speaker to three minutes. If you feel it is necessary, you do have the right to request to have your issue addressed at a Special Meeting at a later date or at a future Regular Board Meeting. If the board agrees, a date and time will be set.

The board holds Public Hearings, Work Sessions, and Executive Sessions. Public Hearings are held for issues that may have significant economic, environmental, or other serious impact on the town and its residents. At a Public Hear-

ing, you are invited to and encouraged to express your views, and you have the right to "hear and examine witnesses regarding the issue at hand". All of the Rules of Conduct again apply with one additional rule: No person may speak a second time until everyone who wants to speak has spoken.

At a Work Session, the public may not participate or ask questions. The board use these hearing only to discuss and deliberate matters that are coming up on the agenda at the next Regular Board Meeting. The town budgets are usually worked out at Work Sessions.

The public is not invited to take part in town board Executive Sessions. If a decision is made in Executive Session, the board is required only to provide the public with summary minutes within one week from the date of the session. No minutes are taken if no formal action is taken during the session.

While the board members are open to the views of the public, they are not required to respond to unreasonable requests or to have the business of the town disrupted. And anyway, when it comes to local government, it helps to remember your old childhood lesson about vinegar and honey. ❖

PWC BAN STIRS CONTROVERSY

(Continued from page 1)

Loon Lake, they do not represent all of them. Speaking on behalf of Loon Lake landowners who do not support the ban, Evan Meyers said that a ban would be unwarranted. "It's not like there's ever really been any trouble over the jet skis," he said. "There's no history of the law and PWC's on Loon Lake prior to this to justify the ban."

Meyers said that he has been coming to Loon Lake all his life, as have his parents, and his grandparents. "We've been enjoying this area for a lot more years than most of these association homeowners," he said, "and being able to use the lake with our jet skis is part of what we like to do."

After the presentations, the board decided that at this time it would be pre-

mature to make a commitment either way. "It will be more appropriate for this to be taken up at a future public hearing at which both sides can present their cases," Town Supervisor Mary Ellen Keith said, adding, "There are many, many issues that we have got to address before we can decide on this."

Keith was referring to questions brought up by this issue about private/public ownership of Loon Lake, including the question of public access to the lake allegedly being blocked by LLHA members.

Both sides had to be content that the only promise from the board was that they will begin to address the request by the LLHA soon, but that a decision would not be made until the board has thoroughly studied all the issues involved. ❖

Town of Franklin Cemetery Committee

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Three cemeteries, Union Cemetery in Vermontville, Merrillsville Cemetery in Merrillsville, and Franklin Falls Cemetery in Franklin Falls, are under the ownership of the Town of Franklin. Money is included in the annual budget to maintain these three cemeteries as to mowing of grass and upkeep of grounds. These “places of rest” are and will continue to be, a place of solace and respect to those who have made our town the place to rest in peace.

Because the upkeep of our cemeteries requires more than just the basic care, we, as the Town of Franklin Cemetery Committee, will endeavor to enhance the grounds. We hope to plant shrubs (under supervision), improve roadways, and repair old tombstones. In addition, Bryon Tuthill, of Vermontville, has proposed to the town an Eagle Scout project to build a stone garden for flowers with a “Union Cemetery” sign. These plans also include a granite bench for those who wish to visit the cemetery.

Resting in peace and quiet are our families and friends. History that has contributed to the beginning and growth of our town are personally contained in these graves in our cemetery. What a tribute to our loved ones to have each of us write a brief history, a story, some comments, etc., to be combined in a book of memories! We need your help! Please return our “comment and input” sheet to us – we need your thoughts.

How do we plan to fulfill our dreams? We have on hand some money donated and some from fundraisers. We’ll address this issue as our plans unfold.

We want to hear from you, Our cemeteries are special to us, the Cemetery Committee.

Sincerely,
Mary Ellen Keith, Town Supervisor
Timothy Goff, Town Councilman
Vivian Manny, Cemetery Custodian



Town of Franklin Cemetery Comments and Input

1. Name of cemetery:

2. Names of family members, friends, names of “history” or neighbors, etc.

3. Brief (or not so brief) story and/or facts about persons, dates, etc., you would like to share:

4. Would you like to talk to someone and have them write your story?

We need to “capture” our history today. Please be a part of our plan by submitting your input, suggestions, and comments to:

Town of Franklin Cemetery Committee
P.O. Box 209
Vermontville, New York 12989

Thanks!