

Ray Lentz meeting 3/12/2018 5:30 PM
Caledonia Village Hall
5043 Chester Lane, Racine, Wisconsin

Trustee Prott called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Attendance: Trustee Prott, Trustee Wanggaard, Trustee Trentadue, Trustee Benkowski (arrived 5:34) Village Administrator Tom Christensen, Ray Lentz, and Dale Stillman.

1. Issues brought forward during Public Comment session of Village Board meetings by Caledonia resident Ray Lentz

Trustee Prott stated there have been issues brought to the attention of the Board by Mr. Lentz. Mr. Lentz said he has addressed issues during Public Comment at over 40 Village Board meetings. Trustee Prott wanted to give Mr. Lentz the opportunity to discuss these grievances he has and what he's seeking from the Board to resolve them. Trustee Prott explained that this was an open meeting, but wanted Mr. Lentz to be comfortable to speak freely in an effort to come to terms in what the Board could do.

Mr. Lentz requested everyone in attendance sign a waiver. He stated that with the modern day lawsuits (sic) he wanted to protect himself without any counsel present. His waiver requested:

"I hereby agree to receive information from Ray Lentz in hopes of improving my capacity as a Caledonia leader. I promise that none of the shared information will be used in a harmful manner."

Christensen thought the waiver was unnecessary and that those in attendance were there in good faith to address Mr. Lentz's concerns and that no one was there to be retaliatory. Mr. Lentz said it was because he had a lack of trust for the Board and felt he had good reason.

Trustee Wanggaard brought up an impromptu meeting he had with Mr. Lentz and Trustee Wishau following a Board meeting in October of 2016. They initially met with Mr. Lentz because he stated he (Lentz) was always the last to leave the meeting in hopes that a Board member would stay after and discuss some of the issues he's brought up. Trustee Wanggaard said that at the time Mr. Lentz was seeking guidance and felt that the advice given was not taken. Both parties want answers in order to move forward and this meeting is an opportunity to give Mr. Lentz the forum he desired. Although the meeting is bigger than expected it meets the requests Mr. Lentz put forth in regards to further discussion with the Board outside of the allotted two minutes during Public Comments.

Mr. Lentz felt that Trustee Prott was one of the best representatives on our Board, and that he was the most conscientious. He read history of interactions from his personal notebook with Trustee Prott:

- May 24, 2015 – Mr. Lentz left a message expressing his concern about things happening in Caledonia. Mrs. Prott said Trustee Prott would return his call on Monday (25th).
- May 26, 2015 – Trustee Prott returned Mr. Lentz's phone call. Trustee Prott at the time was on the Board for 3 years and said he wasn't receiving any of Mr. Lentz letters.
- June 9, 2015 – Mr. Lentz left a message with Mrs. Prott, who said Trustee Prott would return his call by Wednesday. By the 14th (Sunday) the call still hadn't been returned.
- August 16, 2015 – still no returned call (presumably from the June 9th call).
- February 15, 2016 – Trustee Prott offered to meet with Mr. Lentz after a Board meeting. Mr. Lentz stated that since the Board unanimously said they wouldn't meet with him, he wasn't interested in meeting with one person.
- February 16, 2016 – Trustee Prott offered again to meet with Mr. Lentz and again Mr. Lentz answer remained at no because he was only interested in meeting with the entire Board.

Christensen stopped Mr. Lentz because he felt this wasn't a productive conversation. Christensen wanted specific complaints that the Board can address to make things right for Mr. Lentz. Mr. Lentz brought up personal issues he had with Christensen and his role as Administrator. He specifically mentioned an instance where his neighbor had multiple violations, and Christensen reported back that he was over there and no violations were found. Mr. Lentz felt this was untrue, and that at any moment they could find many violations. Christensen recalled this instance and stated Mr. Lentz specifically complained about a "white pile of material" which turned out to be Gypsum (a material that is used as a fertilizer and as the main constituent in many forms of plaster, blackboard chalk and wallboard). Christensen contacted Beneficial Recycling which dealt with this type of material, they advised it was not considered hazardous; the pile was dealt with in a reasonable amount of time and has since been removed. Mr. Lentz felt that the pile shouldn't have been there in the first place.

Mr. Lentz stated the neighboring property has a zoned B3 operation; he questioned if anyone knew what that meant. Christensen stated that the business predates the zoning code, and is grandfathered. Mr. Lentz doesn't think that portion was grandfathered, and it was never grandfathered beyond B3, if its classification had been changed, he would've been notified (everyone within 300 feet would have been notified). Christensen stated there wouldn't have

been a reclassification, because it predates the zoning code. Christensen thought that part of the issue was acceptance, Mr. Lentz didn't agree with the answer, and so he wouldn't accept it. Mr. Lentz stated he isn't accepting it because he doesn't think it's true.

Trustee Benkowski stated that Mr. Lentz has issues with his neighbor to the south, and Mr. Lentz agreed and added that the neighbor does not have issue with him. Trustee Benkowski wanted him to state the current issues (as of today) that are infringing on Mr. Lentz's sense of wellbeing and enjoyment at his residence, as a result.. He reassured Mr. Lentz that no one would hold him to these stated issues and wanted information that would create a constructive dialogue. Mr. Lentz felt he was knocked down already when he was told the neighboring property was properly zoned, and he believed it was not.

Trustee Wanggaard thought they had given Mr. Lentz the forum he asked for and in order to move forward, the Board needed something recent they could address. Mr. Lentz said he was not prepared for this, and had come to meet with Trustee Prott only. He stated he had a stack of information at home that the Board refused to hear about. Mr. Lentz has been in business in Caledonia for over 57 years, has lived here for over 70 years and has witnessed a lot in the Village. He felt that no one present understood the Village in the same vein he did, and no one cared to listen to him. He felt disrespected that he is only given 2 minutes of speaking time during Public Comment at the Board meetings.

Trustee Benkowski brought up an instance where he spoke with Mr. Lentz and concern was brought up surrounding Hintz garbage trucks and a semi-trailer being too close to his residential lot line. Lentz said this is an ongoing issue and Mr. Hintz is throwing tires and junk/scrap pile along the property line as well. There was also a complaint of dumping oil right next to Mr. Lentz's ditch; the oil is being used for weed control, but when it rains the oil runs into Mr. Lentz's ditch, and he felt this wasn't legal.

Mr. Lentz further complained that he believed RHI Trucking Company is operating an illegal trucking operation in a B3 Zoning. 25 Years ago, he was told it was illegal by the Zoning Administrative Assistant of Racine County Julie Anderson, under the head of Arnold Clement. He also brought up issue with the legality of the topsoil pulverizing operation next door and that shouldn't be permitted either per his interaction with Anderson. He complained about the dust issue the topsoil operation caused, and that a water truck was brought in but never used to control the problem. He also complained about an asphalt pile; there was tons of ground up asphalt trucked in that is now sitting in a pile, which he thought was hazardous to the environment, and again didn't think it belonged in B3. There was also concern about an equipment salvage yard (old dump trucks and construction equipment) being kept in the back of the property and that the junk yard/storage yard is not considered B3 either.

Mr. Lentz wanted to state that he was caught off guard and didn't feel he was in the best of health. Trustee Prutt said he did initially asked to meet one on one, but it had to be an open meeting (because of open meeting requirements) when other Board members wanted to attend, which is something Mr. Lentz repeatedly requested. Trustee Prutt asked with all the different complaints discussed, what did he want to see as a result? Mr. Lentz wanted to talk about harassment he received in the past, but the Trustees wanted to only talk about recent issues that they could resolve now. The Trustees have no control over what happened 30 years ago. Mr. Lentz believed this to be the issue, and that initially the Board unanimously told him they weren't interested in speaking to him. Trustee Trentadue thought this was untrue and said she personally spoke with Mr. Lentz for an hour and a half. Mr. Lentz didn't recall this interaction and had to review his notes on Trustee Trentadue.

Trustee Benkowski wanted to know how they could fix this and what it would take for Mr. Lentz to feel the matter is resolved. Mr. Lentz spoke of the harassment is family received and his son's future career being ruined as a result. He wants his neighbor to feel the same level of harassment he received and felt that they should be "pinned against the wall" in the same way. Mr. Lentz received violations notices on the neighbor's behalf because of certain strings he believed were pulled. Mr. Lentz had to buy sign permits for every sign on his property (flagstone, parking) and as a result felt personally attacked and victimized. The only way he would feel okay is if his neighbor would have to get rid of the asphalt pile in ten days, and have the top soil, recycling, storage, and get down to what B3 encompasses.

Christensen stated that Mr. Hintz business predates zoning, and when Mr. Lentz business was started he was held to a conditional use which is a different standard to what Mr. Hintz would be held to. Mr. Lentz wanted more detail; he only understood that the property needed to be zoned properly. If the zoning was updated than he is unaware and should've been notified. It comes down to conditional use, because Mr. Hintz is allowed to operate his business as it was operated before conditional use provisions were put in place. Mr. Lentz felt there was no reason the 19 acres should be operating B3. Christensen stated he has checked with the Zoning Administrator in the past, and confirmed that Mr. Hintz is in compliance, but would be happy to check again. Trustee Benkowski thought it would be good to check on specific complaints of location, such as side-yard setbacks in regards to equipment and salvage in proximity to a residential line. RHI Trucking will also be checked to see if they're in compliance or not.

Mr. Lentz also brought up an issue of there being a huge pile of tires, and thought that shouldn't be in B3 either. Mr. Lentz stated there have been over 1,200 fires, and that his wife has been sent to the hospital twice as a result of the burning.

Trustee Prott thought it would be best to have the Zoning Administrator Jarmen Czuta, draft a letter addressing these concerns, so that Mr. Lentz may receive a zoning letter of compliance that would clarify what the property is zoned and if any violations are found. Mr. Lentz felt he already knew the outcome, but was interested in seeing the letter and would accept anything involving moving forward.

Trustee Wanggaard wanted to address the issue of the 2 minute speaking time, and told Mr. Lentz that Public Comment is meant to be a statement from a citizen and not a back and forth discussion. Trustee Wanggaard felt that this meeting was exactly what Mr. Lentz had requested. Furthermore, he brought up the discussion between himself, Mr. Lentz, and Trustee Wishau, at which he requested Mr. Lentz give him specific dates that the Police and Fire were out to that property, and hasn't received that to date. Mr. Lentz stated that we say we want to hear from him, but won't listen to his grievance regarding the millions of dollars in favors and thousands of violations that haven't been addressed. He brought up President Bradley's farewell meeting in which he said "No offense Ray, but I don't believe a word you say". Trustee Wanggaard said that President Bradley spoke for himself, and his interaction with Mr. Lentz was his own words, and no one else's. Trustee Wanggaard felt the same principle applied to those who sat on the Town Board 30 years ago when Mr. Lentz's issues began. He reiterated that they want current issues (2016 and beyond) and specific examples so that they can address them and move forward.

Mr. Lentz stated that if we shut down what he considered illegal in the B3 and give him ten days to fix petty violations, he'd be happy. Mr. Lentz believed there to be total disregard for him and his wife's health in regards to all the fires. He stated that the fires were all illegal because Commercial isn't permitted to burn and that the Fire Department has been out there countless times. Trustee Benkowski spoke with Chief Roeder who said they were there once for a control burn for experience training. Christensen stated that Mr. Hintz was found in violation and received a citation. Mr. Lentz felt there were more fires, and could attest to those dates. Trustee Wanggaard requested those response dates from Mr. Lentz, and Mr. Lentz has not written them down. Trustee Benkowski thought we could call the Fire Department for those dates, Mr. Lentz questioned the integrity of Chief Roeder who has been in the Fire Department for 30 years and Chief for 7 years. Mr. Lentz requested a lie detector test.

Trustee Benkowski asked if Mr. Lentz wanted additional time to prepare for a meeting. Mr. Lentz did not want another meeting if he couldn't show the history of what transpired and what he thought needed to be changed. Trustee Benkowski suggested contacting Zoning Administrator Czuta to personally talk to Mr. Lentz and walk with him on the property to discuss possible violations. Trustee Benkowski confirmed with Mr. Lentz that he received citations for signage, flagstones and parking, and if that had come from Racine County. Mr.

Lentz stated he received 14 different violations and none of them were forgiven. Brian Jensen was the individual who he was dealing with in regards to those violations.

Mr. Lentz acknowledged that Mr. Hintz is no longer burning after the citation, after countless violations and only stopped because of his diligence. Although the problem has stopped, he felt that it could start back up anytime. Mr. Lentz had no further comments.

Trustee Prott said that we were going to be in contact with the Zoning Administrator, plan a site visit and draft a zoning letter of compliance. Trustee Benkowski thought it would be good to check into the complaints that Mr. Lentz mentioned in regards to Julie Anderson, Arnold Clement and Brian Jensen and address the history Mr. Lentz refers to.

2. Adjournment

There being no further business, Trustee Prott moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:18 p.m. Trustee Wanggaard seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Joslyn Hoeffert
Deputy Village Clerk