

A Town Board meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Lewisboro, Westchester County, New York, was held on July 18, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. at the Town House, 11 Main Street, South Salem, New York.

PRESENT:

Supervisor	Tony Gonçalves				
Council Members	Andrea Rendo*,	Mary	Shah,	Richard	Sklar
Town Clerk	Janet L. Donohue				
Absent	Daniel Welsh				

*Attended remotely

Also attending was the Attorney for the Town Gregory Folchetti, Facilities Maintenance Director Joel Smith and Maintenance Assistant Shawn Johannessen.

Approximately 5 residents/observers attended the live meeting and approximately 9 participated via Zoom.

Supervisor Gonçalves called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

Supervisor Gonçalves noted the exits to be used in the event of an emergency.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Supervisor led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A total of two residents spoke during the public comment period and two emails were read into public comment period by the Board.

WOOD DEBRIS REMOVAL

A resident asked about what the next steps are for the timber pile/wood debris at the salt dome town property. During polling of the board, Supervisor Gonçalves stated that they are still working on the documents for the request for proposal (RFP).

OAKRIDGE WATER

A resident feels that an independent engineering study needs to be done at Oakridge to determine if the wells can support the amount of water needed for the water district. The wells test high for PFAS and TTHM which she feels suggests that the problem exists at the facility rather than further down the line. She will continue to fight for clean water for everyone in town. She also asked if the car wash was told to conserve water just as the homeowners were. During polling of the board, Supervisor Gonçalves stated that the high TTHM count was resolved some time ago.

PFAS is a known issue and there is a project that is being pursued to mitigate this and will be started next year. Supervisor Gonçalves also stated that there is a drought and the demand for water is greater. Some aquifers have been running dry in town. Oakridge has been using 24,000 gallons more per day than what is normally consumed. After he put out an email blast asking Oakridge to watch their consumption, water usage was reduced by 20,000 gallons per day. The car wash voluntarily closed down temporarily.

COLUMBUS DAY CELEBRATION

The Board read the following two emails:

Dear Lewisboro Town Board:

Unfortunately I am unable to attend the Town Board Meeting but I ask that you share my comments with the public:

My husband and I are both Italian and are both very proud of our Italian heritage and the contributions Italians have made to this country. However, even the briefest look into the real history of Christopher Columbus makes clear that, while there are many heroic and honorable Italian Americans, he ought not be celebrated. Opposition to one man and his brutal history is not opposition to Italian heritage. If there is an Italian Heritage celebration, it should not be related to Columbus. There are many other honorable Italian Americans to celebrate.

It is for these very reasons that states and towns are moving away from Columbus Day and toward Indigenous Peoples Day. It would be a shame for the Town to stick out as regressive amongst so much progress.

I also note that comparisons to LGBTQIA+ Pride and to Juneteenth are mere dog whistles. In fact, it is possible that this entire request is really a veiled opposition to Pride and Juneteenth.

I still have my U.S. Air Force discharge papers from the 2000s that state "reason for discharge: homosexual". I still worry about whether the Supreme Court will overturn protections for my marriage and even for my ability to adopt. I still have to look up local laws when I travel internationally to make sure that it is not illegal to be gay. It does not take much reading to see that LGBTQIA+ rights are under attack throughout the U.S. And I don't think I need to elaborate on the horrific treatment, both historically and presently, of BIPOC in the United States. Institutional racism continues to be a major integrated part of our criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, education, and political systems. The Town should support underrepresented groups who continue to be marginalized.

As an Italian gay man I have never, not once, experienced any fear because of my Italian identity. However, I have experienced significant fear, violence, and discrimination for being gay since the day I came out in the 90s. The discussion and analysis of a potential Italian Heritage Day should have nothing to do with LGBTQIA+ Pride nor Juneteenth.

This is not to say I oppose a day celebrating Italian heritage. I appreciate any effort to get residents together and to learn about and celebrate culture. However, I would be disappointed if the Town took the regressive step of holding an official Town event connected to Christopher Columbus.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully, Michel Pignatiello Pronouns: He/His Waccabuc

Members of the Town Board,

I'm not able to attend the meeting on Monday, but I wanted to take a few minutes to share my thoughts about the proposal for a celebration of Italian American Heritage that's on the agenda.

Please share these with those at the meeting.

As an organizer of the Pride celebration in Lewisboro for the past two years I'm happy to see others reach out to seek town support for additional community celebrations. I think that events that invite people to come together and build inclusive community are valuable and should be supported by the town.

However, I don't think an event associated with the legacy of Christopher Columbus qualifies as inclusive. I've added a few links at the end of this email that address the legacy of Columbus (the false one that I was taught in the TX public schools as a child, but has been rejected by NY state which now recognizes Indigenous Peoples Day as a holiday). I've attended many events in Lewisboro that celebrate the indigenous people of our area. From the land acknowledgement unveiling with the Lewisboro Land Trust, to the program with a Lanapi elder and historian at the Old Field Preserve in partnership with the town historian, I think our town is doing a good job of working towards more inclusive events. If this is an event proposed by the Garibaldi Society, would a celebration of Italian heritage be better placed around Giuseppe Maria Garibaldi's July 4th birthday? This would be a good way for the town to show respect for the indigenous people that were stewards of this town before our arrival.

I hope that the organizers and town can come together to plan a successful event to celebrate Italian heritage that isn't a Columbus Day celebration. I recognize that Italian immigrants and Italian Americans have contributed a great deal to this country, and also love any event that has chocolate Italian Ices!

thank you for your time, Rachel Simon, she/they, South Salem

<https://www.chieftain.com/story/opinion/editorials/2020/07/07/was-columbus-really-that-bad-no-he-was-worse/42256475/>

<https://secure.understandingprejudice.org/nativeiq/columbus.htm>

<https://secure.understandingprejudice.org/nativeiq/weather.htm>

COMMUNICATIONS

EAGLE SCOUT AWARD – Violet McCann

On motion by Supervisor Gonçalves, seconded by Councilman Sklarin, the Board voted as follows:

THE VOTE:	Yes	- Gonçalves, Rendo, Shah, Sklarin	(4)
	No	- None	(0)

Absent - Welsh

(1)

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, VIOLET MCCANN of Greenwich, Connecticut, is a member of BSA Troop 301 in Katonah-Lewisboro, NY, and

WHEREAS, VIOLET MCCANN by her conduct, responsibility, principles and achievements in following the trail of Scouting, has acquired the resourcefulness and leadership ability that will stand her in good stead in her future life, and

WHEREAS, VIOLET MCCANN by virtue of her Scouting experience and unselfish service to home and community has earned the highest honor of the Boy Scouts of America, the rank of Eagle Scout, and

WHEREAS, VIOLET MCCANN for her Eagle Scout project created a bird and butterfly garden in a local land trust property using native plants, and

WHEREAS, VIOLET MCCANN'S garden has brought about bird and butterfly viewing opportunities, helps enrich learning in the community and is an additional attraction to its location, and

WHEREAS, VIOLET MCCANN'S garden has inspired and motivated people to become more involved with biodiversity and conservation, leading to an increase of visits to the property and has raised awareness about habitat concerns while educating visitors on indigenous plants, and

WHEREAS, VIOLET MCCANN is the first female Eagle Scout in our community, and

WHEREAS, this honor is deserving of public notice, now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Lewisboro, in recognition of the worthy achievement, does hereby offer the congratulations of its populace to Eagle Scout VIOLET MCCANN, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be spread upon the minutes of this July 18, 2022, Town Board Meeting for future generations to see and that copies of this resolution be presented to Eagle Scout VIOLET MCCANN and her parents.

EAGLE SCOUT AWARD – Katherine Barbarakis

On motion by Supervisor Gonçalves, seconded by Councilwoman Shah, the Board voted as follows:

THE VOTE:	Yes	- Gonçalves, Rendo, Shah, Sklarin	(4)
	No	- None	(0)
	Absent	- Welsh	(1)

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, KATHERINE BARBARAKIS of Katonah, New York, is a member of BSA Troop 301 in Katonah-Lewisboro, NY, and

WHEREAS, KATHERINE BARBARAKIS by her conduct, responsibility, principles and achievements in following the trail of Scouting, has acquired the resourcefulness and leadership ability that will stand her in good stead in her future life, and

WHEREAS, KATHERINE BARBARAKIS by virtue of her Scouting experience and unselfish service to home and community has earned the highest honor of the Boy Scouts of America, the rank of Eagle Scout, and

WHEREAS, KATHERINE BARBARAKIS based her Eagle Scout project on enhancing the literacy program at a local childcare center that serves an economically-challenged and diverse community, and

WHEREAS, KATHERINE BARBARAKIS efforts led to the donation of over 1,000 new children's books, while she as well created a teacher reference resource area and organized a library of 4,000 books to allow easy access for the teachers at the center, and

WHEREAS, KATHERINE BARBARAKIS is the second female Eagle Scout in our community, and

WHEREAS, this honor is deserving of public notice, now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Lewisboro, in recognition of the worthy achievement, does hereby offer the congratulations of its populace to Eagle Scout KATHERINE BARBARAKIS, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be spread upon the minutes of this July 18, 2022, Town Board Meeting for future generations to see and that copies of this resolution be presented to Eagle Scout KATHERINE BARBARAKIS and her parents.

CONSENT AGENDA

MINUTES & REPORTS - Approved

On motion by Supervisor Gonçalves, seconded by Councilman Sklarin, the minutes of the June 27, 2022, Town Board meeting and the June Building & Police Reports were approved and filed.

THE VOTE:	Yes	- Gonçalves, Rendo, Shah, Sklarin	(4)
	No	- None	(0)
	Absent	- Welsh	(1)

LIBRARY FAIR TENT – Waive Permit Fee

On motion by Councilman Sklarin, seconded by Councilwoman Shah, the Board voted as follows:

THE VOTE:	Yes	- Gonçalves, Rendo, Shah, Sklarin	(4)
	No	- None	(0)
	Absent	- Welsh	(1)

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does authorize the Building Department to waive the permit fee for the large tent that will be installed at Onatru Farm for the Library Fair which will be held on September 17, 2022.

ITALIAN HERITAGE DAY/COLUMBUS DAY – Discussion (7:52 – 8:24 p.m.)

Town resident, Glenn DeFaber spoke as a member of the Garibaldi Society of Lewisboro. They would like to celebrate Italian Heritage Day and celebrate the Italians struggles and success. Mr. DeFaber thanked the organizers of the Juneteenth and Pride events for reminding the Garibaldi Society of the marginalization of Italian immigrants since they arrived in America. Mr. DeFaber stated that they are looking to have a celebration on Monday, October 10, 2022, at the Town Park with traditional Italian/American food and music. They are looking for the fees to be waived and funding from the town in the amount of \$1,000. They ask for equity regarding the town's help with the tax dollars. They invite all to attend.

Supervisor Gonçalves stated that the Garibaldi Society did submit an application to the Parks & Recreation Department, and he then asked the Board for their feedback.

Councilman Sklarin stated that his opinion has been consistent and that he is happy to waive the fees for the use of the park, but he is opposed to giving the group money from the town. He will attend the celebration and he will personally donate just like he did for the other celebrations.

Councilwoman Rendo stated that she agrees with Councilman Sklarin and does not feel that the town should fund independent events run by citizens regardless of the organization. She feels that this puts the town in a bad position of picking and choosing which events they feel deserve \$1,000. She feels that waiving fees and the possible contribution of the rental of tents sufficiently support these events. Councilwoman Rendo stated that appropriate criteria have not been solidified. She plans on attending the event.

Councilwoman Shah supports celebrating all cultures and she would be willing to help make the event happen and will donate personally. The Board has spoken about a policy that she has presented via email but nothing has been voted on yet.

Supervisor Gonçalves likes a heritage event and suggested a multi heritage event. Mr. DeFaber stated that the town of Harrison has one of these events. Supervisor Gonçalves stated that if this was a multi heritage event, he would be fine with putting \$1,000 towards the event, however, Mr. DeFaber stated that this year's celebration would be an Italian heritage celebration only and that if no money was being given by the town, then the Garibaldi Society would withdraw their application and have the event on private property.

On motion by Councilman Sklarin, seconded by Supervisor Gonçalves, the Board voted as follows:

THE VOTE:	Yes	- Gonçalves, Rendo, Shah, Sklarin	(4)
	No	- None	(0)
	Absent	- Welsh	(1)

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the Town Board does authorize the Italian Heritage Day/Columbus Day as a town sponsored event to be held at the Town Park and as such all fees will be waived however there will be no further funding from the town.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD II

A total of five residents spoke during the public comment period.

ITALIAN HERITAGE DAY/COLUMBUS DAY

Three residents stated that they were unhappy with the Boards decision not to fund the Italian Heritage/Columbus Day event. They stated that the Board is now picking and choosing what events are more important and who they are giving money to. They feel that the Board is setting a poor precedent and the Board is not on the same page.

A resident spoke out saying that he felt that the Pride in the Park event was extremely different from the event that was discussed this evening as the Pride event aimed to help saves lives and prevent suicides of the LGBTQ+ society.

Another resident stated that they were not trying to single anyone out with the Juneteenth event but rather they wanted to unite the community, not separate the community.

BUILDING INSPECTOR

A resident asked if a decision was made regarding a Building Inspector. During polling of the board, Supervisor Gonçalves stated that at an executive session meeting held on July 8, 2022, the Board appointed Jeffrey Farrell as the Building Inspector.

CLAIMS – Authorized for Payment

On motion by Councilman Sklarin, seconded by Councilwoman Shah, the Board voted 4-0 to authorize payment of the Town's bills in the amount of \$335,716.39.

POLLING OF BOARD AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIBRARY UPDATES

The Library Fair will take place at Onatru Farm on September 17, 2022. Donations can be dropped off at Onatru Farm on August 13, 20 & 27.

LATE NIGHT SWIM & FAMILY MOVIE

Since paperwork had not been submitted to the Board at the time of this meeting for a late-night swim and family movie night to be held at the Town Park, the Board will discuss this at the August 8, 2022, meeting.

COVID

There is a new variant of COVID, and it is very contagious. The Board urged all to be diligent.

FIREHOUSES

The three firehouses in town are all volunteer. Please consider volunteering your time or donating to the firehouses.

NY STATE GRANTS

Several NY State Grants have been finalized including the one for the hybrid police car, the ADA trail and playground at Town Park and the Lewisboro Baseball Association grant. Bricks can still be purchased as a fundraiser for the Town Park playground.

MEETINGS – Date Set

An upcoming meeting of the Town Board will include a meeting on Monday, August 8, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. at the Town House, 11 Main Street, South Salem, New York.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – To Discuss Real Estate

On motion by Supervisor Gonçalves, seconded by Councilman Sklarin, the Board voted 4-0 to go into executive session at 8:49 p.m. to discuss real estate.

On motion by Councilman Sklarin, seconded by Councilwoman Shah, the Board voted 5-0 to come out of executive session at 9:25 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Supervisor Gonçalves, seconded by Councilman Welsh, the Board voted 5-0 to adjourn at 9:26 p.m.

Janet L. Donohue
Town Clerk