

February 15, 2024

Schultzville, NY

A public hearing on proposed local law No. x of 2024 was held on this day in the Town Hall. Present were Supervisor Whitton, Councilmen Charlie Dykas, Eliot Werner, Katherine Mustello and Marion Auspitz, as well as Town Clerk Carol-Jean Mackin. There were 15 people in the audience.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

At 6:15 PM, Supervisor Whitton called the public hearing to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

LEGAL NOTICE

The Town Clerk read aloud the Public Hearing Notice.

PUBLIC HEARING

MM Supervisor Whitton, 2nd Councilwoman Mustello to open the floor to public comments. All aye. Motion carried.

Russell Moss, General Manager Milea Winery – discussed statistics of the average age of farmers, 3 -1 are elderly farmers. Committed to revitalizing the heritage of agricultural farming; the profit margins are razor thin. Discussed vineyard economics which have a 5-10 percent profit margin. Adding a tasting room adds to the margins, this law offers a lifeline to the agritourism market as it bolsters farm revenues of up to 30 percent. Law safeguards small family farms. Urges support.

Stacy Higgins – Has been in business for 6 years, still trying to legalize the business. Discussed her process to do so. She has no communication with the town and she is unclear which law to follow to legalize her business: the ag events law or this farm law. Says there are only 15 businesses in town that will apply to this law. Feels disrespected by town officials who she says do not reply to her requests and concerns. Councilwoman Mustello asked her to define her concern with the new law; said the ag events law is in effect and this one is a proposal. Councilwoman Mustello asked her for her comments on this new law. Stacey replied: Why not update the old law with an amendment for a restaurant?

Jeff Newman – MCEI, this is a standalone law. The old law Stacey is referring to is a separate standalone law regulating a separate use. He explained everything comes back to use when applying a law. NYS Ag and Markets protects a farm to sell their own products. If a farm needs an additional revenue stream, they can have agricultural event venues or if they want to have a tasting room or a

restaurant, they would apply under this new law. A farm can have more than one special use permit.

Councilman Charlie Dykas - how do we solve Stacey's problem? MCEI Newman explained the process one would follow. It's a very friendly law towards farmers.

At 6:33 PM, MM Supervisor Whitton, 2nd Councilman Werner to approve to keep open the public hearing until March 12, 2024 at 6:15 PM for further comments. All aye. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:33 PM, MM Supervisor Whitton, 2nd Councilwoman Mustello to adjourn the meeting. All aye. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carol-Jean Mackin".

Carol-Jean Mackin,
Town Clerk