

**VILLAGE OF SOUTH BLOOMING
GROVE
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY
FEBRUARY 28, 2022
8:00PM**

Call to order

Mayor Kalaj called to order the Village Board Meeting at 8:13pm on February 28, 2022, via Zoom Webinar ID: 853 3558 2169 for the Village of South Blooming Grove located at 819 State Route 208, within the Village of South Blooming Grove, and having a mailing address of Monroe, New York.

➤ **Roll call**

The following persons were present:

- Mayor's George Kalaj – Mayor
- Abraham Weiss – Deputy Mayor
- Yitzchok Feldman– Trustee
- Asher Guttman- Trustee
- Zalmon Rosner – Trustee
- Al Fusco – Village Engineer
- Isaac Ekstein – Legislative Aide to Mayor
- Scott Ugell Esq.- Village Attorney

➤ **Comments**

- Please do not flush any rags into the sewer, it is destroying our sewer system, it is clogging it and doing a lot of damage. If we can improve 15-20 percent it would make a big difference for everybody.
- A new property maintenance law has been passed, please take care of your property.

➤ **Correspondence**

- February 18,2022, proposal from Sensus FlexNet for water meters.
- The Mayor asked Isaac Ekstein to discuss the correspondence further. **Issac Ekstein** said that the correspondence is about Sensus FlexNet and it is a long time coming. We are dealing with this company with the meters we have right now. They have approached the Village to potentially upgrade the system to have a smart meter software installed. They would hire an installation company and go out to each individual house and install this new meter together with a radio communication device that would communicate to village hall and give live meter readings for usage and that would potentially increase the revenue to the village, lost meter. Right now we have no control to know how much water people are using and we rely on the actually physical inspection. They go to the house and take a meter reading which is not always accurate, and a lot of time people disconnect meters and we don't know. With this new system we will get alerts if the meter is disconnected, if there is a leak even if it is small and unnoticeable in the house. Then we can inspect and save money. They are the only ones in the United States who are licensed to sell this software and we are already dealing with them. We are waiting for them to give us final pricing including installation and also finance options, how we can do it and where the money

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would come from, etc. As soon as we have more pricing information it will be presented to the board.

➤ **Public Comments**

- **Scott Morrice** at the last meeting it was asked what the numbers are on the fence 1 through 10. The question was emailed and still haven't gotten a response and would still like to know that. **Mayor Kalaj** asked the board if they know what those numbers are? Nobody could answer and asked if it was on private property. **Mr. Morrice** stated so you hired three people for the zoning board and he never got a phone call for an interview. He said he wanted to be on the zoning board or either one of the boards and never got a call, never got an interview, nothing and you have already passed the resolution. He thinks that is a problem and maybe you should ask all the people that are interested first before you just hire people, because you don't know what I know. At some point maybe you will hear from a lawyer, he is not sure yet, but we will see. It seems like it is a very racist thing that is going on now. So far it is all Hasidic that have been hired. **Mr. Ekstein** stated that you have a valid point and as you know on top of what I help out with the Mayor and the Village and everything, he is the Chairman of the United Jewish Community of Blooming Grove and he has got a lot of complaints from people that they have applied to become fire members in the fire department of blooming grove and they are denied because of their religion. **Mr. Morrice** they are not denied because of their religion they are denied...**Mr. Ekstein** they are actually being denied because of that, you and me know that. **Mr. Morrice** there is no reason for them to be denied, come down and become a fireman. **Mr. Ekstein** I, myself have applied to become a fireman, why can't he be a fireman. **Mr. Morrice** you say you can't, I didn't say you can't. **Mr. Ekstein** why has no Hasidic person been accepted in the fire department and the only fire member that you have that on your force that actually converted to Judaism got fired from your fire department. **Mr. Morrice** advised he did not get fired **Mr. Ekstein** advised he did "you know the facts". **Mr. Morrice** he moved away. **Mr. Ekstein** don't come here talking about racism while you practice and preach it all day long.
- **Sue Anne Vogelsberg** at the February 17, 2022 Planning Board meeting attorney Ron Kossar for Route 208 Holdings LLC said they have the legal right to use their property as a business park and he also said that if the Orange County Planning doesn't approve it, it won't go forward but the Orange County Planning Board only makes recommendations, they don't give approvals, what she is concerned about is, the village seems to be focusing on businesses than what is good for residents and she is concerned about that because the current infrastructure can't support all of this development. Mr. Mayor you have been talking about the sewer issues, we have been talking about water for decades and yet we keep forcing more and more development when we can't take care of what we have and that doesn't seem responsible. She is going to echo that all of our boards are filled with white men and in this day and age, it would be nice to see a woman. We did have woman before on the planning board, zoning boards and village boards and we don't have that now. Does that open the village up to lawsuits if somebody decided to sue because of the lack of diversity on our

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boards. She was checking the three gentlemen that were appointed, Mr. Sptizer I don't see a village address for him when she was searching, she sees an address in Brooklyn and another one in another part of Monroe, the other two gentlemen do seem to have a South Blooming Grove address, but Mr. Lieberman was first on 25 Pine Hill and now it says he is down on 85 Spillman Street in Brooklyn, she thinks you gotta be a village resident to be on our boards and lastly, a positive thing, Anne Gaylor does Blooming Grove Clean and we will be doing it in person this year in April so she asked me to work with the Village. As soon as she gets more details, its in April but when it come the village will be a part of that as well. It is a long standing tradition. **Mr. Ekstein** the approvals from the planning board are up to the planning board. The village board does not have any word on that, it is the planning board decision to make. The appointments the Mayor made tonight, you can rest assured that they all live here in Blooming Grove and they all have addresses in Blooming Grove and if you want you could FOIL their addresses.

- **Kristie Johnson** she believes at the last meeting when the question was brought up about the numbers along the fence, she knows you are tired of hearing about it, but again this is another miscommunication. Hopefully she can clarify, is there not a village code regarding signage? She owns a piece of property but she cannot put a 20 x 20 neon sign on it just because she owns it. You have to follow village code because the village has to look a certain way so that we can all live together peacefully as a community and happily. If this is a code violation and this board has been asked several times, why don't we have an answer. Why are you telling us to look up who the property owner is, you want property owners getting into disputes in the street or do you want to handle this as a professional village board? It needs to be addressed, its ugly and if it doesn't have a purpose, then it should be taken down. She thinks that we can all agree on that. Let's never, ever again talk about racism as a defense, for the lack of diversity on the board. She doesn't appreciate the comments or talking about firefighter or this that and a third. We all know that certain fire departments have to wear gilbert both internal and external and in order to work internal you have to have a clean shaven face and that is a personal choice, not a religious one and we are going to leave that at that and should never be brought up again, it has no place at this meeting. The next thing she wanted to talk about was they you guys are working on more wells, she brought this up at the planning board meeting, more wells is putting more straws in the same glass of water. She lives in the Town and her water is soon to be affected by all this drilling and excess water usage and all this commercial property approvals and all this stuff going on. She wants you to look it up its called an aquifer, she wants you to research it for this area before you keep moving forward with depleting an aquifer that probably can no longer recharge itself.
- **Patty Morrice** the minutes for the meeting were not on the sight the last minutes for the meeting were September 2001, the last minutes for planning board was November 18, 2001 and the last minutes for the zoning board was March 12, 2020. She has a questions since the mandate has been lifted with the masks in the schools, will we have meetings in person? The Mayor mentioned about the village looking nice an clean for everybody, the buses parked on

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208 by Sunoco, if they could put a fence around that, all other villages have fences around the bus garages, to keep the buses safe also and it also cleans up the village.

- **Dawn Salka** village engineer Al Fusco is appointed building inspector, code enforcement replacing the previous BI. Since he works for seven (7) municipalities, he was a little busy and realized he couldn't fulfill his duties, he brought on Alexa Burchianti someone from his own firm. Please explain how she can respond to complaints by physically going to the sites, oversee permits, make inspections, write reports and everything else required of a building inspector and work as a full-time building inspector in Chester where Al Fusco is also the planning board engineer. When she has made a complaint or had a question in the past the previous BI would immediately go out and take corrective action, now she is told -we don't have anyone in the area, I'll email them – so what are her house, when is she actually in the village, how is she doing her job, when she has a full-time job in another municipality? This next section was asked at the planning board meeting and was told to ask at this board meeting regarding the EMS building. The application states project description – 2 Bay Ambulance, Merriewold Lane South, Ambulance Bay was approved for 1 story, no water, sewer or habitable space. Permit for vehicle parking only. How is it that is now two stores with many people in the building. The application also states I am aware of the required inspections and that I am responsible to schedule them. There is no signature at the bottom of the application or even a name by the person who filled out the application. With a FOIL, the only inspection was done in August, the footings and nothing after that. It just goes to show you that this has not been inspected by any of the part time absentee building inspectors because if they did they would have seen that the building is not what they were approved for. We need a full time, present in the village building inspector.
- **Bonnie Rum** that is exactly right about that emergency ambulance and the interesting thing is that Isaac Ekstein is actually the leader of the organization that has that second floor. She wants to know, that's a huge conflict of interest, and to be working so strongly with the board to get something built without any kind of a permit or approval or anything, because FOILs were made for this particular location and what Ms. Salka just said is the only thing that is reflected in the records, so if there are no records, there is a group in Rockland County of Hasidic Woman who got the developer, who had approval of certain plans, they took him to court so often, he ended up going broke and he was forced to deconstruct the building that he made which not according to the plans that were approved. That could actually come down again if it was done before, it can be done again and those Hasidic woman by the way, they drive, its amazing. Ms. Johnson was absolutely right, when you are a firefighter and you have to go inside a building, for safety, you have to wear a mask and if you have a beard that impedes your safety and you should know that.
- **Simon Gelb** to get facts straight, people are talking about, complaining about putting in a lot of straws in the same cup of water. All of those kinds of talks are not reality because if you really do a study, which I was involved with a study for almost 10 years for here in the area and specifically in the Village of South Blooming Grove area, the watershed for the Village of South Blooming Grove is a total of 7,030 acres. Based on the studies and reports, there is

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available water in the water shed about 22 times as much of the water that is needed for the village. The question is not, or the problem is not putting in a lot of straws in the same cup of water. That is not the issue, how we can resolve the issue of water is by finding different lanes and different water sources which is available in this water shed. Of course sometime there is a problem with interference, but the amount of water that is available in the watershed, since it is about 22 times the demand that the village needs, just trying to explore more options within the village properties or in the village area and trying to help out so that village can have more water.

➤ **Business**

- **Resolution No. (010)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove referring 55 Mangin Road to the Village of South Blooming Grove Planning Board. Motion to accept by Mayor Kalaj, seconded by Deputy Mayor Weiss. *5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Feldman, Trustee Guttman and Trustee Rosner.*
- **Resolution No. (011)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove authorizing bids for the CDRC Grant- Prospect Road Drainage Project. Motion to accept by Trustee Rosner, seconded by Deputy Mayor Weiss. *5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Feldman, Trustee Guttman and Trustee Rosner.*
- **Resolution No. (012)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove authorizing bids for the CDRC Grant- Merriewold Drainage Project. Motion to accept by Trustee Feldman, seconded by Mayor Kalaj. *5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Feldman, Trustee Guttman and Trustee Rosner.*
- **Resolution No. (013)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove appointing Shmaya Spitzer as member of the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- **Resolution No. (014)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove appointing Sholem Lieberman as member of the Zoning Board of Appeals
- **Resolution No. (015)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove appointing Dov Frankel as member of the Planning Board.
- **Resolution No. (016) - Scott Ugell, Esq.** advised that the village has been working very hard on obtaining potable water up at the Clovewood property, he would like to ask the board for a Resolution to authorize a draft license agreement that would allow the village to access some of that water and proceed in that direction. This is to authorize the Mayor to sign a draft license agreement. Trustee Feldman made a motion to authorize and Trustee Rosner seconded. *5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Feldman, Trustee Guttman and Trustee Rosner.*
- **Resolution No. (017)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove granting Conditional Approval for House of Worship – Large, to Congregation Arye Shaug for 55 Mangin Road, designated on the tax map as 217-1-2 by Trustee Feldman, seconded by Trustee Rosner. *5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Feldman, Trustee Guttman and Trustee Rosner.*

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➤ **Abstract**

- Motion to adopt the abstract by Mayor Kalaj, seconded by Trustee Guttman. *5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Feldman, Trustee Guttman and Trustee Rosner.*

➤ **Adjournment**

- Motion to close the meeting at 8:47pm. by Mayor Kalaj, seconded by Trustee Rosner. *5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Feldman, Trustee Guttman and Trustee Rosner.*

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Kerry Dougherty, Village Clerk