

Town of St. Armand
Special Board Meeting
Tuesday, January 16, 2025
6:30 p.m.

A Special Board Meeting of the Town of St. Armand was held on the above date and time at the St. Armand Town Hall, 1702 NYS Route 3, Bloomingdale, NY, in person only. The topics of the Special Board Meeting was to establish a Neighborhood Watch Committee.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Town Supervisor Davina Thurston, Deputy Supervisor Karl Law, Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer, Councilperson Donna Whitelaw and Councilperson JP O'Neil in person.

TOWN EMPLOYEES PRESENT: Water and Sewer Clerk Barb Darrah, Hon Francis Whitelaw, and Town Clerk Raine DeLancett.

SPECIAL GUESTS: Saranac Lake Police - Chief Perotti, Essex County Sheriff's Office – Sergeant Forbes, and New York State Police- Officer Simons

GUESTS: Warren McCarthy, Joe Fisher, Dale Gonyea, Casey Field, Scott Gibson, Kara Matthews, Shawn Snyder, Roxie McCarty, Bruce Irvine and Erik White attended all in person.

Public Notice was published in the Adirondack Daily Enterprise regarding the date and time of this meeting, and posted on the Town of St. Armand's website and Facebook page.

Supervisor Thurston called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm, and asked everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Supervisor Thurston started off the meeting by introducing local law enforcement. Saranac Lake Police - Chief Perotti, Essex County Sheriff's Office - Sergeant Forbes, and New York State Police – Officer Simons.

Supervisor Thurston asked law enforcement in attendance what can we do as a community to help law enforcement with suspicious activity? Sergeant Forbes replied that the whole community needs to come together to be vigilant, communicate with other members in the community and report suspicious activity to law enforcement. Chief Perotti agreed with Forbes's statement adding everyone plays a part in public safety. The community being the eyes and ears, reporting things that seem suspicious or submitting a tip.

Supervisor Thurston asked should there be a text group with all neighborhood watch members, where all information is shared between the group, and then a single member shares this information with law enforcement? Chief Perotti replied whether it's a text group or a Facebook group to share information among each other you should be selective with the members you allow into the group. So the people that are doing the suspicious activity don't know what's going on within this group. Then a spokesperson can come to law enforcement with the shared information.

A guest in the audience asked is there something that can be done as to enforcing violations on people living in abandoned dwellings. Supervisor Thurston replied that the Town Board updated the water and sewer rules and regulations, stating that it is illegal for someone to live long term in a camper that doesn't have access to water and sewer. Chief Perotti added that information about properties is very intertwined, code enforcement is dealing with a list of issues all at the same time police are dealing with a list of criminal issues. It's all about sharing information and communicating with each other to keep everyone in the loop of what is going on at a certain property.

Supervisor Thurston asked if State Police Officer Simons had anything to add. Trooper Simons replied that the community should protect personal property. Cameras are super helpful in any investigation.

* Sergeant Forbes handed out a sheet on basic observation techniques. -*discussion ensued

Supervisor Thurston asked if it would be helpful to share the access of people's cameras with law enforcement. Sergeant Forbes replied saying that only if something were to happen and someone's camera had gotten footage of an incident. Chief Perotti added on the Saranac Lake crime watch website, there is a camera registry where you can register that you have a camera on your property. It is very helpful to have this information on hand when an incident happens.

Supervisor Thurston asked does it make sense to have one person in the Neighborhood Watch that everyone sends the information to and the one person gives it to law enforcement. Trooper Simons replied saying depending on how many meetings the Neighborhood Watch has. To come together and decipher the information that the group as a whole collected and if the information is worth giving to law enforcement.

Chief Perotti asked Supervisor Thurston if the Town of St. Armand had any Local Laws like a curfew. Supervisor Thurston replied yes there is a curfew, the town has never enforced it but, for anyone under the age of 17 is supposed to be home by 10 pm. Chief Perotti added that law enforcement can't necessarily enforce Local Law.

Supervisor Thurston asked is it legal to have posted signs that state "Park Closed Dusk to Dawn" at the park and will someone be arrested for violating these signs. Sergeant Forbes replied saying that if the signs were posted by the Town and

they were being violated that he would enforce. Chief Perotti added saying it would be a valid penal law arrest for trespassing.

Deputy Supervisor Karl Law asked law enforcement are there any recommendations as far as a selection process for the Neighborhood Watch, how do you suggest we navigate through that? Chief Perotti replied that I don’t think it would hurt to have some sort of vetting process, people that are organized and structured that can, bring good valuable ideas to the table. You could also do a backroad check on people that want to join the group.

*Supervisor Thurston excused law enforcement

*Supervisor Thurston suggested that the Neighborhood Watch meetings are no longer Town Board meetings.

*Councilperson JP O’Neil Suggested that towns people should be running the Neighborhood Watch not the Town Board

* Group agrees that Deputy Supervisor Karl Law should be a liaison to the Neighborhood Watch group so that the Town still knows what is happing in the group without being involved.

* Supervisor Thurston suggest that the Town Hall can be a meeting place and the group will get a key to the Town Hall.

Supervisor Thurston asked if the group wanted to set a date for a private meeting at the Town Hall, January 29, 2025 at 6:30 pm.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

Supervisor Thurston asked if there were any more questions, comments or concerns from anyone?
There were none.

MOTION TO ADJOURN SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

Supervisor Thurston asked for a Motion to adjourn the Special Board Meeting. Deputy Supervisor Karl Law made the Motion to adjourn the Special Board Meeting. The Motion was seconded by Councilperson Sheridan Swinyer. The Special Board Meeting adjourned at 7:52 pm.

I, Raine DeLancett, Town Clerk for the Town of St. Armand, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct transcript of the Special Board Meeting minutes held on the above-referenced date.

Raine DeLancett
St. Armand Town Clerk

Dated: January 16, 2025