

**VILLAGE OF SOUTH BLOOMING
GROVE
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY
JULY 25, 2022
8:00PM**

➤ **Call to order**

Mayor Kalaj called to order the Village Board Meeting at 8:02pm on July 25, 2022, via Zoom Webinar ID: 851 9649 5725 for the Village of South Blooming Grove located at 811 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
- Zalmon Rosner – Trustee
- Joel Stern – Confidential Assistant to the Mayor
- Isaac Ekstein- Legialative Aide to Mayor
- Scott Ugell Esq.- Village Attorney
- Kerry Dougherty – Village Clerk

➤ **Absent**

- Al Fusco, Village Engineer
- Asher Guttman- Trustee

➤ **Discussion**

The Mayor advised that water is an issue, the village is getting 6 trucks of water a week. We are working hard on obtaining more water and ask that the public help out.

➤ **Correspondence**

- Amended Application for 379 Lake Shore Drive – House of Worship amended from Large to Small.

➤ **Public Comment**

- **Sue Anne Vogelsberg** – The past couple of meetings there has been criticism about our volunteer firefighters and she is just wondering if the village board has met with the volunteer firefighters because she is thinking that communication with them would be paramount. It sounds like this village board wants to disband this fire company and if that is the case we haven't heard what the village board's end goal is. She is suggesting having a meeting with them and see how we can improve things in the village. At the planning board meeting the other night Isaac had mentioned about another supermarket and its going to go in at Stonegate Drive, that wasn't part of the plans when we saw it, it was just going to be retail space and decades ago a supermarket was proposed in that same area but it was, it had to be cancelled because there wasn't enough turn around room for

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the tractor trailers to make deliveries. She is wondering how now there is going to be room in that space because the site didn't change. Also there is that pipeline transfer station at the former driving range and she doesn't recall hearing that come up at a meeting or seeing any plans. What is going to be in those pipes? Is it going to be gas, chemical, water? She looked up the company and couldn't find any information. Another thing, we talk about speed, speeding in the village other traffic safety laws are in place. She was at the intersection of Duell and Route 208, she had a red light a woman was standing at the corner by the deli, she had the green light to walk across to go. The light changed and she had the green light to go and the that is when the woman stepped off the corner to go and walked in front of her. Maybe we could call DMV and have a community information meeting just so that everybody is aware of all the traffic laws for pedestrians so nobody gets hurt. She send in an incident report today regarding a tarp fence that collapsed over the weekend. She didn't know we had more employees to inspect and she is hoping no one got hurt in the collapse. When you put up the agenda, would you put up all documents in the same spot for the meeting. It makes her suspicious that you are trying to hide things. The resolution regarding Chapter 235, do you have a list of the changes and can you make available to the public.

- **Isaac Ekstein** regarding the firehouse, himself and Joel Stern tried to communicate with the fire department, many, many, many times, more than they should have and unfortunately our requests, negotiations, whatever you would like to call it fell on deaf years and unfortunately there is no one to talk to there and unfortunately it is a crisis. There was yesterday, last night a fatal fire again here in Mountain Lodge, not this fire department but Mountain Lodge but it is sad that these things keep happening. Myself and Joel Stern have tried to speak with the fire department many times, we have tried to get Orange County Management involved so they could go to a meeting and that meeting never happened. Orange County OEM reached out to them and us and we are still waiting. Unfortunately, there are people there that have a high from having a fire department and not having enough manpower to do what they are supposed to do. This is the situation, what we are going to do, what our mission is, what our goal is to ultimately re-district this so that this village should be fully protected in the event a fire happens. The Village of South Blooming Grove should have a fire department that actually reports to the Mayor, communicates and has the right manpower, equipment and whatnot to be able to combat whatever comes across them. In regard to the fence, Al Fusco has a few people working, Alexa as code enforcement, but then she has other licensed code enforcement officers that work through the week to inspect situations like that and he believes she sent someone out to inspect it and it will be taken care of. The supermarket by Stonegate, he does not how you define supermarket but he did say there would be a Kosher food grocery there, he doesn't think he said there will be a supermarket. There will be a Kosher food store on this side by Mangin Road and there will hopefully be a Kosher food store on the other side by Stonegate. That will eliminate people having to go across Route 208. As far as the class for the DMV, was this ever brought up in the past or is it that is just since there are people that triggers a DMV class. He has never heard of any municipality doing that. It is very interesting to get an idea like that, he has heard of classes for drivers but he never heard of DMV classes for pedestrians, if you have heard of anything like this in another municipality then we will look into that.

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- **Joel Stern** added, that regarding the golf course, there is no gas pipe installation there of anything of the sort. It is basically a firm called Transco, they are repairing and doing maintenance for the interstate power line that is running across South Blooming Grove and they just leased out the golf course to stage their trucks with the property sitting right underneath the power lines so they can have access/egress to come and go without creating any major issue for traffic from other areas. So there is no gas line installation or whatever. **Isaac Ekstein** advised that there is an application for that, they applied for a permit and there was nothing needed for planning on this, everything is being done the right way.
- **Isaac Ekstein** another thing about the fire department, they are not accepting applications, he does not know if that is from anyone or only from Hasidic guys. We had many people from the community that applied for the fire department to become a volunteer and they are just being ignored. We are talking about a fire department that whenever there is a call in the Village of South Blooming Grove, they are being re-sounded because they don't have manpower. If someone sends an application and their name sounds Hasidic, they don't even deserve a reply. **Mayor Kalaj** asked, didn't they have an Hasidic in the fire department working with them? **Isaac Ekstein** advised, no; they had one fire member, by the name of Brian, he remembers him, a very nice gentleman, and he actually converted to Judaism, guess what, when that happened, he is no longer welcome there. **Joel Stern** stated that they kicked him out of the department. **Isaac Ekstein** as we speak there is a MVA, motor vehicle accident at Route 208 and Mountain Road, they are trying to crew a truck. **Joel Stern** stated he wanted to correct Isaac for the record, you mentioned there was never any Hasidic applicant and that the applications are being ignored, which is true, they are actually applying for additional manpower and looking to get people on the roster from only outside of the Village of South Blooming Grove. We have information and I think we have a copy in our hands of a posting that recently went around trying to get people onboard that are not from the Hasidic Community. There are specific mailers going around to the section in the town where they made sure that it doesn't get to the hands of Hasidic people. So, if anybody has any questions of why the roster is shrinking I wanted to shed some light.
- **Dawn Salka** Trustees Rosner and Feldman keep popping in and out of the screen. You have 379 Lakeshore Drive as correspondence, why is it being brought up today when you had the public hearing last week at the planning board. **Trustee Feldman** advised that they did not have a public hearing on that, not by the Village Board. She is wondering why this correspondence got entered after the fact? **Isaac Ekstein** stated that the public hearing by the planning board is still open, they have an ongoing application. The initial application was a large house of worship and their engineer went over the numbers regarding the house of worship and how many participants they will have and it is a small house of worship.
- **Kristie Johnson** She made comments at the planning board public hearing regarding 379 being on a curve, she was worried about a car crash. Keep in mind the visibility on a curb and you have a structure too close to the road in the front, you lose that visibility and things get crazy when people are coming around a curb. We all know we like to try and stay on our side of the road but that doesn't really happen. With reference to the fire department and she sees this is very painful for you all and she would really like to see it resolved. She is wondering out of curiosity with the calls you

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are seeing a delay, how many of those calls are not going through 911? If she is not mistaken, she believes there are members of our community that have a separate number that they will call and she know that can cause a delay. It is her understating that the Village of South Blooming Grove Fire Department, you have to be certified for interior as well as exterior. She doesn't think anybody's application should be ignored, but having a beard is a problem because the respirator will not seal to your face, so she doesn't know how you guys are going to work that out but she would like to see it happen because this contention is terrible. We are one community and she is tire of seeing everybody trying to divide us between Hasid and non-Hasid. We are all human, when you strip us of our skin we look the same on the inside and God sees us all the same. She appreciates you guys and she doesn't want this to feel like an attack because we are all attaching each other way too much and she is kind of over it but Joel, you scolded a bunch of people at the last meeting she cant remember which because there are so many meetings, she feels like she lives with you guys but you scolded us for one comment, and you cannot say in the same sentence that you appreciate public comment and then chastise people for their public comment. She doesn't think it is wise and it is not going to help with unity, it is just going to cause more contention. There is one more thing she wants you to remember, there is an old saying that if you are a hammer everything looks like a nail. You've experienced a lot of hate, I want to say in your life and I understand that, but that doesn't mean that the whole world is that way, she certainly is not and when I make comments, it is not about pro Hasid or non Hasid, personally, she loves the culture, she loves all cultures and would like to see more sharing because she hasn't tasted y'all's food, nobody has invited me for dinner, you are all over there and nobody is sending an invite, you know who I am, you have my address. We can better and I want to see us do better and that also starts with the realization on your part that this is a lot of construction for a rural village, please understand that our quality of life has been affected, your needs are your needs, but your coming across as we don't matter and she doesn't want that and she doesn't think anybody wants that. She thinks that we can find middle ground if we try a little harder. She doesn't know what we need to do, invite me to pray with you, show her what the prayers are, whatever we got to do, we just, lets do better please.

- **Isaac Ekstein** you have to be careful what you wish for, it's not easy, it is a lot of responsibility there. Just about the fire department, I don't know if you are aware, there is a great village right next to us, its called Village of Kiryas Joel its in the Town of Palm, they have a fire department actually where 100 percent of their department have beards and it works for them pretty well. They actually had a fire this Saturday on a structure where they have approximately 10-15 units and it was a legit fire, it was a fire from a toilet fan and they saved the building. That night the entire building, all the residents were sleeping in that house and we are talking about single family houses that got destroyed. So about the beard, it is a legit concern, we didn't ask to become interior firefighters and if that is the policy of Blooming Grove Fire Department then they better change that policy because they are discriminating. If you are telling someone that they can't have a beard while you are in my fire department as an exterior fire fighter, as a fire police, as a traffic controller, as a truck driver, why can't I have a beard driving the truck, who cares. We all know what it was made for and the point that you made, that we all feel that we were all hated on in the past and that's why we think everybody hates us, we don't think, guess what, people hate us and a lot of these people that live in

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Blooming Grove, Town, Village and around hate us. That is what it is, there are a lot of good people, people like you, but there are a lot of people that hate us. For example, you mentioned the planning board, 577 Route 208 was approved a few years ago for four warehouses, four single separate structure warehouses, all of a sudden, a Hasidic Jew bought the property, and he is changing the plan to one warehouse, all of a sudden Route 208 is not made for warehouses. It was approved years ago without any problems, what changed now besides the owner, nothing. And there were people commenting at the planning board and the meeting tonight that were actually involved in a big project outside of this community and that's all okay, but when it comes to this community, it is not okay. There are so many things where yes, we are being targeted, we are doing things that any other community would allow. If you go around to any other municipality outside of Orange and Rockland communities are flourishing. They are building up beautiful shopping centers, they are building up huge developments. Go down to New Windsor, to Newburgh, to Middletown all those places are flourishing communities, state of the art development and everybody is okay with it. Do you know why, because they don't have this, they don't have the beard. We have our beard, we are Jewish, we are Hasidic and we are not going anywhere.

- **Mayor Kalaj** advised that he tired to work with and communicate with the fire department. We had a in person meeting and he was not happy with what the Fire Chief had to say to him. Instead of communicating with me and trying to work with us he (broken audio). **Isaac Ekstein** just realized that the independent fire company of Blooming Grove has one of their newest members a guy with a beard but he is not Jewish. So it has nothing to do with the beard. He works with the EMS, he works with us in KJ EMS, he is driving for us in the ambulance and he is an active member of the Blooming Grove Fire Department, he has a nice beard just like me and he isn't Jewish. So with all due respect to everybody in the fire department, commentators and all that it is BS and you know that. **Mayor Kalaj** stated that communication is the most important thing in our village, it doesn't mater what culture, religion, background, we should all communicate, we all live in the same village and work together. **Joel Stern** advised the Mayor that he said very well about the communication, he doesn't think that anybody from the fire department specifically the previous Chief every came in to apologize for the insults at an in person public meeting, he believes it has already been a year since that meeting, and he hasn't apologized so much for communication. To address what Ms. Johnson said, also very valid points and as Isaac said, it is not so easy and the calories are a lot but you mention about people being scolded by the planning board meeting, he is sorry if he came through as scolding but it was basically, simply hard cold reality check. It wasn't meant to scold anyone. When people are crying foul about the shack that had zero historic substance and because its supposed American History where they don't bother to really look at what is American History that that shack was supposed to represent, nothing. American History stands for freedom and liberty of speech and religion and when that cannot be and was not respected, why should an old building even if it did have any historic substance; fact of the matter is that these are just hypocrites and it pains them when they get a little doses of reality, so if it came across as scolding, it shouldn't be, its just a real harsh look in the mirror, that's it.

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- **Esther Blum** a few weeks ago the village mentioned that they would be creating a transportation board to evaluate transportation and traffic concerns within the village. She currently sees that the village really is working in that direction. She knows that you are working with the DOT, and trying to do something at Mountain Road, she also feels that all of the projects currently proposed within the Village of South Blooming are capable and willing to contribute their fair share to necessary improvements. What she would like is for this transportation board to look into in the future is traffic that is actually coming from outside the village. Route 208 is a corridor not just for the Village of South Blooming Grove, the traffic continues into Washingtonville, into the Town of Hamptonburgh, into the Town of Blooming Grove and all of those municipalities, they also have developments proposed. There is a huge quarry located on Clove Road right across from Woodard Road that has a lot of truck traffic and I really believe that it would be very beneficial for the village to reach out to those municipalities and see if they can potentially contribute a fair share to address this traffic onto Route 208 because their towns, their villages, their projects and their traffic that is destined for their municipality are actually going to benefit from whatever improvements the village makes on Route 208 and they are actually contributing a significant amount of traffic as well. She thinks it is important that they pay attention to that.

➤ **Business**

- **Resolution No. (100)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove setting a time and place for a Public Hearing regarding proposed Local Law of 2022 amending Chapter 235 and 110 (August 8, 2022 at 8:00 PM). Motion by Trustee Rosner, seconded by Mayor Kalaj. *4 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Rosner, and Trustee Feldman – 1 Absent – Trustee Guttman.*
- **Resolution No. (101)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove adopting proposed Local Law of 2022 amending Chapter 102 titled Property Maintenance of the Village Code. Motion by Mayor Kalaj, seconded by Trustee Rosner. *4 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Rosner, and Trustee Feldman – 1 Absent – Trustee Guttman*

➤ **Comments**

- **Isaac Ekstein** the property maintenance law that was previously discussed we need to make changes to that to reflect adding a calendar every.

➤ **Abstract**

- Motion to adopt the abstract by Mayor Kalaj, seconded by Trustee Rosner. *4 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Rosner and Trustee Feldman – 1 Absent - Trustee Guttman.*

➤ **Adjournment**

- Motion to close the meeting at 8:37pm. by Mayor Kalaj, seconded by Trustee Feldman. *4 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Rosner and Trustee Feldman – 1 Absent – Trustee Guttman*

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Kerry Dougherty, Village Clerk