

**VILLAGE OF SOUTH BLOOMING
GROVE
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY
AUGUST 22, 2022
8:00PM**

➤ **Call to order**

Mayor Kalaj called to order the Village Board Meeting at 8:23pm on August 22, 2022, via Zoom Webinar ID: 81653699709 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
- Asher Guttman - Trustee
- Zalmon Rosner – Trustee
- Joel Stern – Confidential Assistant to the Mayor
- Isaac Ekstein- Legialative Aide to Mayor
- Al Fusco – Village Engineer
- Scott Ugell Esq.- Village Attorney
- Kerry Dougherty – Village Clerk

➤ **Correspondence**

- Zoning Board of Appeals – Intent to be lead agency for 2 Pecos Court. No objection or comment.
- **Joel Stern** advised that we received correspondence regarding a Restore NY Grant to rehab and restore and build up new buildings in the place of existing infrastructure, so knowing that this village is growing, it is ever expanding and with the amount of housing we will be getting in here and businesses, commercial, retail and whatnot considering that the village right now operates out of village hall which is just a cluster of modular trailers and some cluster of garages that just built up some patch work over the past fifteen years and we are growing out of there pretty soon and with that being said, Mr. Fusco your authority applied to NYS Restore Grant with will hopefully provide us with the funds to demolish all of these small buildings and build up a beautiful building which will house village hall and all of its ancillary services and departments, it will have a social services department and we will operate a full fledge village whether there is a DPW/ Highway Department. Just tonight we had meetings about DOT, Parks Commissions and the sky is the limit for this great village for the future years to come. He want to make everybody aware the trustees were all informed privately and the Mayor was informed and the conversations with the two property owners, the Monroe strip and C & G Deli about to acquire that property as well as the property that the urgent care is, to ultimately acquire these two properties and ultimately to be able to demolish and build up a beautiful village mall or plaza which will house all of the services of the village. Mr.

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Fusco is supposed to get back to the grants department with some details before October 9 and he is working on that and as soon as there will be any future updates we will keep everybody posted.

➤ **Public Comment**

- **Sue Anne Vogelsberg** – In early July she mentioned about 216 Prospect, they have a two-story tarp that is around their inground pool that is there. There were strong winds in early July, it came down, the tarp and wood and it also took down the chain link fence that's around the pool. Alexa had gotten back to me and said she was going to send someone over. Well, they reconstructed the same thing and we are coming into potentially hurricane season with a lot of wind and rain and this thing is going to come down again, so it really needs to be looked at, she will submit another incident report with that as well. In prior meetings we have talked about garbage and she believes that on Tuesday and Wednesdays she drive around the village, she doesn't think she comes on prospect and peddler because people, this past week they put the stuff out on Friday, the garbage cans are overflowing so the lid isn't shut and they stick all the big bags next to it and she doesn't know who gets into it, varmints, she is assuming, so there is garbage all over the place, and nobody is cleaning it up. Please address this. Back in June we would always have community day but it was postponed so she is wondering if we are going to be rescheduling it, last year we talked about doing it in the fall and being that all the restrictions have loosened up we call talk about doing it. It would be nice to have that back again, it is something we have done over the years and when are we going to start the meetings for planning for next years budget. The website is sorely lacking, information is missing and it is hard to negotiate. If we are going to get a nice new village hall and everything else, then the website should go with it. While we are talking about village hall, that can be in modulars if its good enough for the kids to be going to school in modulars at 58 Fort Worth then she certainly thinks that village hall can remain in a modular where it is. Thank you.
- **Joel Stern** replied that regarding the code enforcement officer which we recently brought on board another code enforcement officer, Mr. Fusco can relate to that and we will definitely look into that and if the person with the fence, if you are having issues please submit another incident report. Regarding community day, we are having as you mentioned budget and we would really not like to raise the tax this year and we will definitely try to do it once again. It is unbelievable what we were able to accomplish last year not having to raise any taxes and with the inflation and everything else going on out there and the lack of sponsors I think the community day is not on the top of our priority right now. Regarding the website, yes, that is in the works for a few months already, we are putting the finishing touches on it and hopefully soon it will be announced and everybody is going to be able to go on it and have access to maximum amount of information as possible. Regarding the budgeting, with the resignation of the village treasurer we on boarded state of the art municipal accounting firm, Bonadio Consulting, they do municipal financial consulting, they are doing a tremendous job and they save us a lot of money in terms of head count, payroll and whatnot, they will be managing the budget and everything else and for the month and ½ that they are on board, we are so happy. He is sure that everything will be published and public for the community and everybody will be able to take part in those meetings which should be announced soon.

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- **Bonnie Rum** – she wasn't going to say a lot tonight, but you brought up a lot of things. One of which by the way Mr. Mayor, Isaac did state at the planning board meeting that 58 Fort Worth Place was vacant totally and then when Sue Anne said I thought our Mayor lived there, he changed his tune, so I don't know which way it goes, one of your neighbors said they never see you, so I don't know. You like to joke but not on my three minutes. You mentioned that you do not have to raise your taxes which is great, nobody likes to pay more in taxes, of course you are using your reserve fund to cover the difference, but you did put out something about not wanting to wait for the \$500,000 for lighting and to take out that bond would raise people's taxes, but that kind of went under the rug there, that was something that you published. With all of this expansion in the village that you are talking about and you need a DOT and all of that stuff, your building up the village, unfortunately, for the people who wanted to come and not have a KJ experience, you are building it up very much to look like what they have, it seems to her, she hopes not, but she wants to tell you about a group of she calls them BallaBusses, very smart, very powerful women in New York and they went against a developer in their neighborhood and went to court several times. The developer ended up having to unbuild or de-construct things that were not correct, he ended up, she thinks, going broke and that is because they choose to live in a particular neighborhood that had a certain feel to it and this developer was changing that dramatically. **Trustee Feldman** where was this? **Bonnie Rum** responded, Rockland. That happened in court, they went to court a few times. The thing is when you joke about people making money by selling their homes and making a lot of money and it's a joke and you call the Mayor "you look like a million dollars Mayor" there is a problem with that, everybody knows what he sold his property for, which was far and above what it should have gone and the last thing, Isaac and Joel, you guys actually, she believes, are the Mayors but not in name. **Isaac Ekstein** interjected there is only one Mayor, **Bonnie Rum** officially yes, but you guys are at every meeting, you know a lot and the Mayor is always deferring to you because you have the answers. **Isaac Ekstein** the Mayor has a good team. He asked Ms. Rum if she has ever been to Kiryas Joel? Ms. Rum replied yes, Does Blooming Grove look like Kiryas Joel? Ms. Rum replied no. Mr. Ekstein asked what was her comment earlier? **Ms. Rum** replied the way you are building it up. Mr. Ekstein asked which way. Ms. Rum replied, you are building high density housing, Mr. Ekstein asked where, Ms. Rum replied when you put that many people in a very small area. **Mr. Ekstein** stated that the only comparison between the Village of South Blooming Grove and the Village of Kiryas Joel is that most of the boards are Jewish, besides that there is zero comparison. By the way Bonnie, did your taxes go up last year, mine didn't, I don't know what the Village did for that but my taxes didn't go up and I feel your pain, I understand but guess what, the village is going to do anything and everything, even though you don't agree to that, to make sure that the village taxes are not being raised crazy like any other municipality and if you don't like that, that is okay. **Ms. Rum** she thinks that's great and she wishes you a lot of luck with that. **Joel Stern** there is an old saying don't be right, be smart, it is a matter about being smart and being creative and that is what the Mayor and the Board of Trustees, Judge Ugell and Engineer Fusco that is what we are doing all day, every day and Ms. Rum mentioned about the pricing about the houses, he actually feels sorry for her, she would have wished that her house was in the boundaries of the Village of South Blooming Grove but unfortunately it isn't, he feels for her. **Attorney Ugell** whatever property

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was sold, was sold for fair market value and for anyone to insinuate that anything was sold by any other measure is a lot of baloney and it is very, very offensive. It really irks him that someone would say that and she doesn't know what she is talking about. **Joel Stern** added that she doesn't realize that these sales actually bring up the mortgage tax and whatnot, this enables us not to raise taxes, but again it is not one plus one, its agendas. **Mayor Kalaj** stated that he has a great team, a great staff and he is proud of them, they are a bunch of smart people and God Bless them. He is glad they are under his wing. The are a bunch of great, smart, knowledgeable people. At every meeting you are answering, saving the Mayor a lot of headaches by answering the questions and thank you and thank you again.

➤ **Business**

- **Resolution No. (107)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove appointing Joel Stern and Isaac Ekstein as additional MS4 Stormwater Officers. Motion by Trustee Rosner, seconded by Deputy Mayor Weiss. *5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Rosner, Trustee Guttman and Trustee Feldman.*
- **Resolution No. (108)** – Resolution of the Mayor of the Village of South Blooming Grove appointing Joel Stern as a Member of the Community Design Review Committee (CDRC).
- **Resolution No. (109)** – Resolution of the Mayor of the Village of South Blooming Grove appointing Isaac Ekstein as a Member of the Community Design Review Committee (CDRC).
- **Isaac Ekstein** provided background, that himself and Joel have been in contact with the owners of the hotel and the people that proposed the wedding banquet and the 20,000 square feet structure, so basically they have a few wells on their property and want to try to get all of their wells into the village boundaries but for now we are starting with one. He believes the well is currently producing approximately 50 gallons of water per minute which is a big add on to our current water district. They will also donate 30 feet to potentially expand Route 208, they will donate the well to the village and that is basically the agreement, they will also contribute to the traffic signal by Route 208 and Mountain Road. They only need the current usage for the hotel.
- **Resolution No. (110)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove authorizing the Mayor to enter into a Developer's Agreement with Blooming Grove Hotel LLC, AKA Bailie Lane Estates LLC. Motion by Trustee Feldman, seconded by Trustee Guttman. *5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Rosner, Trustee Guttman and Trustee Feldman.*
- **Isaac Ekstein** South Grove is a property on Route 208, right next to Shannon Lane, they recently got additional approval from planning board to construct 24 units, they are located in the RC1 zoning so technically they could have done a lot more on that property based on the RC1 zoning but they are only doing 24 units and 1 wellness center. They have petitioned to the board to come into the sewer district and potentially whenever we have enough water to come into the water district as well. They are also looking into potentially digging a well there and if they find a wealthy well, to potentially give it over to the village, so they are asking to come into the sewer district and whenever we have enough water, to come into the water district. They will also give 30 feet for the potential expansion of Route 208.
- **Resolution No. (111)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove authorizing the Mayor to enter into a Developer's Agreement with South Grove. Motion by Trustee

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Rosner, seconded by Trustee Guttman. *5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Rosner, Trustee Guttman and Trustee Feldman.*

- **Isaac Ekstein** at a previous meeting we had a public hearing on the local law text amendments, Chapter 235 and Chapter 110. We were waiting for the county comments, and Mr. Fusco has prepared responses to the county and if the board wishes, they can potentially pass a resolution to adopt that local law.
- **Resolution No. (112)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove adopting Local Law 4 of 2022 amending Chapter 235 – Zoning and Chapter 110 – Streets and Sidewalks. Motion by Trustee Feldman, seconded by Trustee Guttman. *4 Ayes, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Rosner, Trustee Guttman and Trustee Feldman, 1 Abstain, Mayor Kalaj.*
- **Resolution No. (113)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove adopting Local Law 6 of 2022 creating a Department of Transportation. Motion by Trustee Feldman, seconded by Trustee Guttman. *5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Rosner, Trustee Guttman and Trustee Feldman.*
- **Resolution No. (114)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove adopting Local Law 5 of 2022 creating a Parks Commission. Motion by Trustee Feldman, seconded by Trustee Rosner. *5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Rosner, Trustee Guttman and Trustee Feldman.*
- **Scott Ugell** prepared a resolution distributed to the board this afternoon, to continue the process by which the village had initially declared the property on Virginia to be surplus, and then we worked on what amount of that property that was there would eventually be potentially sold to the Congregation that is next door. The resolutions talks about the village having declared the property surplus, the village having the authority under village law to do so, they have crated a restriction on the deed so if the property was to be sold to the congregation couldn't be used for housing or development or anything like that, it would be used solely for charitable purposes for the benefit of expanding some of the programs and opportunities for members of the community and we completed the resolution, we have a contract that we are happy with, where it is only going to be 3 of the 8 acres that are there with deed restrictions as mentioned, we would go to contract, the buyers would have approximately 90 days from the execution of the agreement to do their due diligence with whatever concerns they have, water, sewer and then eventually it will be sold based upon an appraisal that is required, we have that and it is the fair market value based upon our appraisal of the property. After the time is up in the agreement the buyer doesn't have to wait 90 days, they can choose to accelerate the closing once tile is ordered, the agreement has title to be ordered forthwith after the agreement is signed and he thinks it would be a positive thing for the village to both expand some of the programs we have amongst members of our religious community and also bring the village some added value, that property is sold at fair market value, so it is significant in the range of high 700,000 range, the money could be used for great purposes to help expand and improve the village's infrastructure and finally as required by law the process is subject to permissive referendum.
- **Resolution No. (115)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove authorizing the sale of three (3) acres surplus property. Motion by Trustee Guttman, seconded by

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Trustee Feldman. *5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Rosner, Trustee Guttman and Trustee Feldman.*

- **Isaac Ekstein** we discussed in the past meeting about having someone as a village planner dedicated to that purpose only. Mr. Fusco has been doing that and has been doing an amazing job but the amount of projects that are in front of the planning board and village board needs full attention and someone dedicated to that, so you have been notified and we have found Shepstone Management Company, Thomas J. Shepstone, he has tremendous amount of experience with planning, running planning boards, ZBA boards, all those things and it will not cost anything to the village, it will be billed to the applicants whenever they have an application from the village, so if you wish you can have a resolution to retain as well. **Attorney Ugell** advised that he has worked with him in the past and he is very knowledgeable.
- **Resolution No. (116)** – Resolution of the Village Board of the Village of South Blooming Grove appointing Shepstone Management Company as Planner for the Village, ZBA and Planning Boards. Motion by Trustee Feldman, seconded by Trustee Rosner. *5 Ayes, Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Rosner, Trustee Guttman and Trustee Feldman.*

➤ **Comments**

- **Trustee Feldman** asked the status of the street lights. **Joel Stern** advised that they are finalizing right now with DASNY as this is a grant, everything needs to be submitted back to DASNY and they need to approve it and there is a packet that must be submitted. Tim Doyle has submitted already all of the documentation, we had quotes for installation, shipping and everything else we are just waiting for DASNY right now, but hopefully in the next couple of weeks there will be news on that.
- **Isaac Ekstein** updated the mayor, they had a meeting today with Orange County Sewer District #1 with Moodna, Al Fusco was there, myself and Joel to go over the PILOT study project and we had a very good outcome of it, we had some difficulties with the PILOT because it wasn't set up the proper way but the final product has very good potential and could save us a lot of money. We are awaiting for them to provide pricing, financing or possibly renting it. There are a few options of how we can go about it, but Orange County Government was very impressed with how we run our sewer department, all our testing and reporting, we received a good few compliments there. **Al Fusco** explained that this is a system that uses ozone instead of chlorine, right now we are putting chlorine into the system to keep the odors down and this uses ozone which it generates itself and it may be the same price or cheaper and more effective, so we are continuing to review it and we are going to look at the financing and also look at possible procurement.
- **Trustee Guttman** behind every successful Mayor there is a beautiful successful team.

➤ **Abstract**

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

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➤ **Adjournment**

- Motion to close the meeting at 8:58 pm. by Mayor Kalaj, seconded by Trustee Rosner. 5 Ayes, *Mayor Kalaj, Deputy Mayor Weiss, Trustee Rosner, Trustee Guttman and Trustee Feldman.*

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Kerry Dougherty, Village Clerk