

The minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Village of Haverstraw Board of Trustees on Monday, February 1st, 2016, beginning at 7:00 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL	Trustee Batista	- Present
	Trustee Bueno	- Present
	Trustee Watson	- Present
	Trustee Dominguez	- Present
	Mayor Kohut	- Present

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor opened the meeting with the first Public Participation inviting the public to ask questions or make comments.

Stuart Suchotliff, 1413 Round Point Drive: Mr. Suchotliff mentioned that Harbors has a private snow plowing contract for public streets and inquired whether or not they need a permit from the Village for snow removal and what the liability would be if something happens during or after the contractor has completed the plowing.

Jay Hood, Jr., Esq., Village Attorney: Counselor Hood responded that there is no permit required for snow plowing in the Village. As far as the liability is concerned he is in the process of preparing an agreement for the Village whereas the Village must be added to every contractor's insurance policy as additional insured whether it is a landscaper, snow removal company, etc. Larry Schwartz, attorney for the HOA is working on the Agreement and should have it back to him this week for signing.

Barry Berman, 21 Broadway: Mr. Berman mentioned that several years ago the Mayor's position at the Village was changed from full time to part time. He feels this should be a full time position, especially with everything that will be happening in the Village in the near future including the streetscape and he requested the Board reinstate the Mayor's position to full time. He then requested the Board to have a part time person available at the Village Hall on Saturday mornings from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM for those people that work during the week and cannot get to Village Hall during regular business hours.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor agreed with Mr. Berman that Saturday mornings is a great idea, but explained that for safety reasons there has to be 2 people in the office at all times.

Barry Berman: Mr. Berman felt that 2 people would be even better and suggested rotating the staff or something of that sort to make this happen so there is someone available on Saturday's to assist the public. He then recommended that since this has been a mild winter that any money left over from the snow removal budget be utilized for Saturday hours. He would like the Board to consider both of these proposals and vote on them as soon as possible.

Elsa Konigsburg, New City: Ms. Konigsburg, a retired teacher, spoke about security and safety concerns at the Haverstraw Middle School requesting the Board to consider the following:

- 1) Men loitering during school hours in the area of Lincoln Street and Broadway, which parents have also brought to the schools attention. At times some of these men have approached the playground trying to get the girls to come within reach of them.
- 2) A "No Parking" zone be established along Lincoln Street from the school to the end of the playground.

- 3) A flashing school zone light installed or create speed zones with 15 MPH signage, which have already been implemented at the other North Rockland schools.
- 4) Due to the ongoing speeding conditions on Lincoln Street & Maple Avenue Town Police Chief Miller recommended that the Village install speed bumps in these areas.
- 5) Changing traffic patterns on Lincoln Street & Maple Avenue perhaps making them one way streets because they are very narrow and cause problems during fire drills, etc.
- 6) Block off Partition Street at the end in order to better protect the school from any dangerous incidents.

Ms. Konigsburg requested the Board give these issues serious consideration.

Joel Walitzer, 22 Bontecue Road, Stony Point: Mr. Walitzer's son is a 4th grader at Haverstraw Elementary School, who also spoke about the safety situations on Lincoln Street & Maple Avenue, especially when the children are arriving and leaving school. He would like the Board to consider rezoning Lincoln Street & Maple Avenue to make them one way streets with a restricted speed limit and installation of speed bumps, flashing lights, and whatever else is needed to make this a safe school zone.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor responded to the above issues presented by both Ms. Konigsburg and Mr. Walitzer by first explaining that the school was built in the middle of the Village at a time when the Village was still growing and was completely different then today. At this point in time, however, he stated that the streets involved will remain 2 way streets to accommodate everyone in the Village, not just the school district. He then pointed out that when the school complained to the Board about the speeding vehicles and the parking situation on Lincoln Street the Village accommodated the school by placing a crossing guard in that area, at the Village's expense. He feels that the school itself has a responsibility in these matters and the safety issues of the school should not fall on the Village or its budget to resolve issues at the school. He then remarked, if the school district would like to provide the Village with signage, the Village would install the signs and that the Village has done whatever it can to keep the streets safe. In addition he believes a speed bump or a speed hump is scheduled to be installed on Lincoln Street later this year. He feels most of the issues brought to the Board's attention are due to the fact that this school is located in an urban setting, unlike the other schools in the district that are located in rural areas. Additionally, he stated part of the problem is that there are also teachers parking on those streets because there is not enough teacher parking elsewhere at the school itself.

Francisco Batista: Trustee Batista agreed that the area is congested and that the trucks are a problem, however, he is there during school hours and has talked to the teachers and he feels there has been some improvement, especially since the Village placed a Crossing Guard in that area. Trustee Batista inquired of Ms. Konigsburg if the Board of Education is aware of all the issues that she presented and that the BOE should be presenting any issues in writing.

Elsa Konigsburg: Ms. Konigsburg responded that they are only aware of the 1st issue because the rest are village issues for the Board to resolve.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor thought it was peculiar that the Principal or Vice Principal, both of whom he knows well, did not come before the Board to express concerns about any of the issues mentioned, especially since they have approached the Board about other matters.

Emily Dominguez: Trustee Dominguez suggested that Ms. Konigsburg and Mr. Walitzer attend the School Board meetings and address their concerns there, informing them that there was a School Board meeting scheduled for the following night.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor put a hold on the Public Participation portion of the meeting to open the 1st scheduled Public Hearing for that night.

Mayor Kohut entertained a motion to open the Public Hearing with regard to Open Arms, Inc. to house 8 of their residents in a family and group care facility located at 28-A Clinton Street in the Village. He invited Betsy Rauschard to come forward for her presentation.

RESOLUTION #18-2016

Motion by: Emily Dominguez
Seconded by: Rafael Bueno
Motion Carries: All

Betsy Rauschard, Open Arms Representative, Main Office at 57 Sharp Street: Ms. Rauschard advised the public that Open Arms is requesting approval to occupy the house at 28-A Clinton Street as a part of their "Supportive Living Program", which will house up to 8 male residents and then slowly transition to female residents. She explained that the program is designed for people who have gone through an Open Arms Community Residence Program, which is a structured program that is manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Supportive Living Program is for people who have graduated from the community residence, have at least 6 months of sobriety and are currently either in the process of gaining employment or are involved in education. She stated that all of their residents are active in the community, with many of them volunteering at the Haverstraw Center, and some of whom helped build the playground at the Center.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor received letters from Tor View Village Apartments, Hellman Management and David Fineman/Best Home Value owner of the Clinton Street property, advising the Board of the good relationships that were formed and maintained by the residents while at their previous locations. All the letters showed support for Open Arms, and their residents, whom they stated were always good neighbors who were respectful of their apartments and surrounding areas keeping them neat and clean. In his letter, Mr. Fineman pointed out that his company had the house on Clinton Street demolished down to the studs and then completely rebuilt it bringing the house in complete compliance with the Building Department regulations and meeting all specifications for Open Arms occupancy. He informed the Board it is a 4 bedroom, 2 bathroom house completely furnished and decorated and Open Arms has assured Mr. Fineman that their staff will make weekly home visits to strictly monitor the residents, adding that anyone not adhering to the rules and regulations is expelled from the program.

Betsy Rauschard: Ms. Rauschard mentioned that she had brought pamphlets to hand out if anyone was interested in further information about the program.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor opened the floor to the public for questions and comments.

Mel Post, 1422 Round Pointe Drive: Mr. Post inquired about transitioning the home to female residents and if they would be joining the male residents.

Betsy Rauschard: Ms. Rauschard responded that the government regulates the OASAS program, which in turn regulates and oversees the Open Arms Program,

therefore, the home would be either all male or all female and at no time would there be a mix of residents.

Linda Epps, 39 Clinton Street: Ms. Epps was there representing the Clinton Street Neighborhood Watch. She submitted several signed petitions to the Board from the neighborhood residents and the congregation of the Clinton Baptist Church opposing the rental of this house to Open Arms. She mentioned that there are already 2 homes in the community housing Open Arms residents, which are within 1 mile of each other, making this a 3rd residence, which is a real concern for the neighborhood. Along with that fact, there is limited parking on Clinton Street and there is no room for any more cars to squeeze into an already crowded area. Ms. Epps then inquired if the residents would be monitored 24-7.

Betsy Rauschard: Ms. Rauschard stated that there would be no house van and that the majority of the residents do not have a vehicle and use public transportation to get around so there should be no concern over additional parking. She then informed Ms. Epps that even though there will not be an on-site monitor 24-7, that the Open Arms staff itself is available to the residents of the home and to the community 24-7.

Linda Epps: Ms. Epps reiterated that this is a big concern for the community, with the location being so close to a park where women bring their children every day. Ms. Epps mentioned that she is a Social Worker and believes in the recovery process but she also understands that things can go astray, especially without 24 hour supervision within the residence, which presents a huge problem for the people in the neighborhood. Ms. Epps then brought up the smoking issue, if the residents are not allowed to smoke inside the house; she wanted to know if provisions were being made for a place where the residents can smoke. Ms. Epps wants the Board to know that the Clinton Street neighborhood is opposed to an Open Arms house in their area.

Betsy Rauschard: Ms. Rauschard responded that according to the OASAS regulations, the residents are not supposed to be smoking at all, inside or outside. She also mentioned that Open Arms does background checks on all the people they put in these homes, therefore, there should be no concern about violent people, felons or sexual offenders being housed in Open Arms homes. She again stated that the Open Arms staff members, as well as the Case Managers, are available 24-7 so if there is ever an issue or a problem it will be acted upon immediately.

Emily Dominguez: Trustee Dominguez thought that there was a monitor 24-7 in the house on Hudson Avenue.

Betsy Rauschard: Ms. Rauschard responded that the house on Hudson Avenue does have monitors 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, as does the house on Sharp Street.

Kristin ?, 2 Lauren Street, Nyack, NY: Ms. Rudy was an Open Arms resident at both the Hudson Avenue and Tor View address. She completed both programs; also mentioning that staff was available to her 24-7. The staff also dropped in and monitored the residents on a consistent basis. As a resident, she also met with her Case Worker on a weekly basis to discuss any ongoing issues and the residents were tested for drugs regularly. From what she has seen there have always been good relationships formed with the neighbors. For her it was a growing process that completely helped her to better her life, being 1 year sober because of the time she spent with Open Arms, which she considers to be an outstanding program for people like herself.

Barry Berman: Mr. Berman believes that the Village Law specifies a limit to how many group homes are allowed to exist in the Village, which he believes is a maximum of 8.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor agreed with Mr. Berman that there are many rehabilitation/supportive living group homes throughout the Village, however, Case Law states that a municipality cannot limit or prohibit the number of these homes on that basis. He responded that oversaturation of these types of homes is a valid point, however, there are no number limits in the Village Code and the Village, by law, cannot put a number on how many of these homes can exist in a municipality.

Barry Berman: Mr. Berman then brought up the smoking issue since the residents are not allowed to smoke inside any of these homes. He has seen the clients from the Hudson Avenue home smoking in the downtown area and according to Ms. Rauschard, the clients are not supposed to be smoking at all. He then mentioned that the clients from the Open Arms on Sharp Street gather at St. Mary's Church, which he believes is not a good situation for the wellbeing of any children in the area. He understands that these are not bad people and that they are trying to rebuild their lives, however, all the people at the meeting opposing this home on Clinton Street would not be at the meeting unless they were fearful that something could happen, especially in the area of the park. He then inquired why all the applications for Tor View are now being denied.

Betsy Rauschard: Ms. Rauschard informed Mr. Berman that Tor View is in the process of renovating all of its apartments and turning them into condominiums.

Barry Berman: Mr. Berman responded that he is a landlord with many rental units and that is one of the excuses a landlord uses to get people out. He feels they could be moved to other apartments in the Tor View complex, but for some reason Tor View does not want to renew the contracts.

Emily Dominguez: Trustee Dominguez asked Ms. Rauschard about the units at 4 Broadway.

Betsy Rauschard: Ms. Rauschard responded that unlike 4 Broadway, the Clinton Street residence is an individual house requiring different permits.

Anthony Farsetta, 33 Sunrise Drive, Stony Point, NY: Mr. Farsetta is an Open Arms graduate, who was a resident in 2002. He believes that the time he spent in this program is what gave him the opportunity to recover and become a productive member of society. During his time with the program he has never heard of any complaints from landlords or neighbors and he feels there are a lot of people who are trying to recover from some sort of addiction and should be given that chance. He can understand the feelings of the Clinton Street neighborhood, but he feels you cannot deny anyone the chance to move forward with their lives advising everyone that he now has a family of his own that might not have happened without this program.

Emily Dominguez: Trustee Dominguez congratulated Mr. Farsetta for going through the program and building a life for himself, but as a resident of the Village, she feels that Haverstraw has become the dumping ground for all these homes. She then mentioned that she has a family member who suffers with an addiction, but she still feels that the Village as a whole cannot move forward either because it has become the place where every agency decides it wants to put their homes.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor responded to Mr. Farsetta that Open Arms is a great program, with the Village having had residents here for almost 40 years and now having 3 facilities here. The question in most people's minds is "when is enough, enough" for the Village of Haverstraw to provide services to people coming from

Westchester County and elsewhere when there are 4 other towns and 18 other villages in Rockland County alone that could be housing these residents. He believes that the Village residents are not feeling that they don't want the program to exist, but at this point, it is a matter of too much saturation in too small an area. He also congratulated Mr. Farsetta for the achievements he has made in his life, allowing him to become an asset to society.

Anthony Farsetta: Mr. Farsetta referred back to the reference letters the Mayor read, stating that Open Arms just wants the opportunity to continue to evolve and help people become respectful members of a community.

Betsy Rauschard: Ms. Rauschard also mentioned that one of the objectives of having another home in the Village is because their central office is located at 57 Sharp Street and Open Arms tries to keep all their locations in close proximity to each other, giving them easy access to the central office.

Julius Gerome, 57 Sharp Street: Mr. Gerome is a Counselor and Coordinator of Open Arms. He pointed out that the Village of Haverstraw has so much to be proud of with the restoration taking place. He then mentioned that the Village has supported Open Arms for all these years and the fact that it is happening here instead of other areas of the County should make the Village proud that it is representing this accomplished agenda. He pointed out that these residents are rebuilding their lives through this program - attending RCC, Mercy College, and BOCES or have jobs and, therefore, are not loitering, drinking or using drugs. He believes the population going into this house is transparent so everyone knows what they are getting, sober people who are improving their lives. These people will soon be going back on the tax rolls to become productive members of the community like everyone else. He wanted to make it clear that it is a completely different program than the "halfway houses". The success rate of Open Arms is very high. Mr. Gerome then mentioned that people from Open Arms helped to build that park by Clinton Street, with no monetary reward. As for the concern about the children, they help tutor the children and assist them with many of the programs at the Center, also for free. He mentioned that they attend churches in the community because they have spirituality now and they deserve the chance to become part of the community. He feels to oppose this program the residents are taking away the chance for someone to become a productive member of the community, again explaining that the people in the Open Arms homes are clean, sober people working to better themselves stating that it takes cognitive ability for them to go to BOCES for training or to attend college or go out to work every day and the one thing they do not need is rejection, something that everyone knows about. He also mentioned that there are several people from Haverstraw currently in the program, because the problems exist here as well as in every other community. Mr. Gerome appealed to the people to back this supportive living program.

Thomas Mathis, 8 Hallowbrook Road, Peekskill, NY: Mr. Mathis is also a graduate of Open Arms who has started his own company and has become a productive member of his community. He explained that these are ordinary people who may have become addicted because a doctor kept prescribing medication for an illness or injury that persisted to the point becoming addicted to the meds and ending up with a problem he cannot deal with by himself. He remarked that this Open Arms program changed and truly saved his life and now he is helping other people do the same thing. He then mentioned that when he lived in an Open Arms facility that everyone in the house helped the neighbors cleaning sidewalks, clearing snow, keeping their own house and yard clean and wherever they could help out they did. This is not a bad thing; it is a good thing that should make everyone in the community feel good. He ended by saying that someone in your family or Village might need Open Arms one day and it will be here for them.

Jacyln Foy, no address given: Ms. Foy is not concerned about whether or not Open Arms is a good program because from what she has seen and heard she knows it is good. What concerns her is whether or not it is good for Clinton Street, where she was raised and is still involved with everything that goes on there. She is worried about the additional traffic in the area and if the house is big enough for 8 men that are not related to each other.

Betsy Rauschard: Ms. Rauschard informed Ms. Foy that the house meets all the State requirements for an Open Arms Supportive Living home.

Jacyln Foy: Ms. Foy mentioned that Clinton Street is already a congested area so her question continues to be "is this a good fit for Clinton Street?".

Jean Allen, 36 Robbins Court: Ms. Allen has 2 homes on Clinton Street, one being right next to the house being considered. Her concern is for her tenants, one of whom is a single mom who has been robbed a few times and is afraid. Ms. Allen does not believe this Open Arms home is conducive to the Clinton Street area which is 90% African-American. She then spoke about the men from Green Hill on Route 9W who are always wandering the streets of Haverstraw, some of whom wander into her church for the Outreach dinner they provide once a month. She just does not feel it should be on Clinton Street.

Betsy Rauschard: Ms. Rauschard wanted to clarify that Supportive Living residents are nothing like the people from Green Hills, mentioning that they are not even at the house all day long. They are either going to school or to work, trying hard to become productive members of society.

Jean Allen: Ms. Allen is also afraid that if she decides to sell her home she will not be able to do so with this house right next door. For the record, she opposes this home on Clinton Street because the area has always been for black residents and should be kept that way.

Susan Filgueras, Tomkins Cove, NY: Ms Filgueras is involved with Habitat for Humanity and read about this hearing taking place. She has listened to every member here that has been helped by Open Arms and she applauded them for their achievements. She wanted to know about the Zoning Code requirements for 8 unrelated gentlemen living in a single family house with only 4 bedrooms, if this will affect the way the block is zoned in the future and if it will have any bearings on someone else wanting to construct a 2 or 3 family house in that area. She again applauded Open Arms for their program and achievements, mentioning that a family member went through the program with great results. However, by allowing Open Arms there at this point, will it redefine the area and force the Village to redesign the Building Code for a single family area. While she supports Open Arms to the fullest, she questions having that house in a single family home area, which could push the Zoning changes into other uses.

William Fagan, 70 Front Street, Nyack, NY: Mr. Fagan raised his family in Haverstraw. He has been with AA for 29 years and now sponsors many of the people who come out of Open Arms. He feels that Haverstraw is a kind, giving and spiritual neighborhood, but, unfortunately when he comes to these meetings he does not hear any of the good things, reiterating a quote from Mother Theresa "that we can't all do great things, but we can all do small things with great love", which is what Open Arms is asking everyone in the Village to do. He feels we are here to love our neighbors and give what we can where we can, which is what he hopes the Village can do as a community.

Barry Berman: Mr. Berman inquired about how many Open Arms homes are located in Clarkstown, Stony Point, Orangetown and Ramapo.

Betsy Rauschard: Ms. Rauschard responded to Mr. Berman that the only Open Arms Supportive Living facilities in Rockland County are located in Garnerville and Haverstraw.

Barry Berman: Mr. Berman inquired why there are none of these homes in the other areas of the County.

Betsy Rauschard: Ms. Rauschard responded that Open Arms central office is located in Haverstraw, which is in a close proximity to Garnerville, and they like to keep their housing locations close by to be more accessible to the residents.

Barry Berman: Mr. Berman asked if they have ever considered another area of the County besides Haverstraw in their 35 years and they would ever consider a townhouse in Harbors for a group home.

Betsy Rauschard: Ms. Rauschard responded, "absolutely" if it met the requirements.

Dorothy Williams, 74 Hudson Avenue: Ms. Williams works with the women at the Open Arms facility on Hudson Avenue. She reiterated what had previously been said, that these are people that are striving to better their lives; they are not the loiterers, the drinkers, etc., they are not "those" people. She informed everyone that the residents are provided with food, clothing, etc. and everything they could possibly need they have in their homes. She reiterated that these are good, honest people that just want a chance to rebuild their lives. If not for Open Arms, there would be no place for the woman to go and they need this chance for a better life just like any member of any family. She mentioned that there are currently 5 women at Open Arms going to college who are now succeeding with what they want out of life and she is proud of these woman and the men on what they have achieved so far because of Open Arms.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor informed the public that 5 years prior, the current sitting Board members stood up for these woman and allowed the Hudson Avenue facility to be built and used by Open Arms.

Emily Dominguez: Trustee Dominguez remarked that the Board gives the men and woman of Open Arms credit for everything they have gone through and everything they have accomplished. She did say, however, that the Board represents the residents of the Village and therefore have to be open-minded and listen to what everyone says.

Lee Allen, 36 Robbins Court: Mr. Allen is not in favor of an Open Arms residence on Clinton Street and just feels that they should look for another location in another area because everything is coming to Haverstraw and Haverstraw residents cannot continue to carry the burden for everyone.

Betsy Rauschard: Ms. Rauschard stated again that their central office is located in Haverstraw and is in close proximity to Garnerville, allowing them to keep their housing locations close by to be more accessible to the residents. She then mentioned that the staff is also available to the community so if any neighbor has an issue they can call and have that issue taken care of promptly, adding that neighbors have also been invited to and attended their social functions.

Gail Pendelton, 23 Gladys Drive, Spring Valley, NY: Ms. Pendelton was born and raised in Haverstraw and was informed that this meeting was for a residence that would house alcoholics and substance abusers. She is a Social Worker and an Alcohol/Substance Abuse Councilor who has a very close relationship with Open Arms and has seen many people go through the Open Arms program to recovery and building a good life for themselves. She will continue to support Open Arms

and anyone struggling to make a better life for themselves and feels that people opposed to Open Arms do not understand what the program is all about. Listening to the opinions voiced at this meeting, she also feels that everyone has to understand where the residents of the Village and Clinton Street are coming from. She feels Ms. Filgueras made the most important point of the night referring to the zoning issues involved for this area to accommodate the Open Arms facility. She remarked that this is not about the Village residents not having feelings for the people in the program, but about what the zoning change will do to the future of the Village, allowing multiple family dwellings to pop up anywhere in the Village. Ms. Pendelton is in support of the Open Arms Program but believes that there are other places they can look into for this facility to be established. She has been in, and worked with the staff of all the Open Arms facilities in the Village, but she does feel that the Board has to take into consideration what the Village residents are feeling about this additional facility in Haverstraw.

Lottie Hurdle, 44 Picariello Drive: Ms. Hurdle understands and appreciates the help that Open Arms gives to people, however, if 28 Clinton Street had not gone into foreclosure where else would Open Arms have looked for a house qualified to accommodate these men. She is also concerned about the many seniors living in this area, some of whom live alone.

Betsy Rauschard: Ms. Rauschard responded that it could be at another location on Clinton Street or it could be anywhere. She then mentioned that there is an elderly person that resides next door to the facility on Hudson Avenue and she appreciates that the residents look out for their elderly neighbors, shoveling snow, etc.

Lottie Hurdle: Ms. Hurdle then inquired where the residents are coming from that will be placed in this house, mentioning that she has a son who went through the Open Arms program and is well aware that a lot of the residents are not from Rockland County. She is also aware that the central office is available 24-7, but by the time someone gets to the facility a criminal act could already have taken place.

Betsy Rauschard: Ms. Rauschard responded that a lot of them are coming from Rockland, some from Orange County and other locations.

Charlene McCallum, 102 Maple Avenue: Ms. McCallum feels they need to find a different location outside the Village. One of her biggest concerns is the zoning issue. Being a Christian woman, she believes that opening ones arms is the right thing to do, however, she feels that the landlord has some other motive in mind. She feels it all goes back to the motive of the landlord. She also wanted to know what kind of weight the Village residents have in the decision the Board will make.

Jay Hood, Jr., Esq., Village Attorney: Counselor Hood advised the public that this is not a zoning issue. He noted that it is a Special Permit application that is looked into on a case by case basis, explaining that just because one facility is opened in one area does not mean that another facility can be opened next door. He also mentioned that, by law, a municipality cannot pass any zoning that excludes this type of home in their community.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor then informed the public that there are 5 members on the Board that will make the final determination. He also stated that the Board listens to the public and will take everything into consideration when making a decision.

James Robinson, New Windsor, NY: Mr. Robinson, who grew up in Haverstraw and was even on the high school football team, went through the Open Arms program, graduating 20 years ago and proud to still be sober today. He is hearing

over and over again that everyone wants to help somebody, but just not in “my” neighborhood or backyard. He then pointed out that Open Arms chose this house because it was available, not because they specifically wanted a house on Clinton Street. He then stated that Open Arms cannot have a house in every area of Rockland County because then the staff at the central office would have to travel a distance to get to that location and having the office and facilities located in one area enables the staff to get where they need to be in a minimum amount of time.

Dave Samuels, 7 Park Avenue: Mr. Samuels is also a staff member of Open Arms and after listening to the people at that meeting he felt they were not living up to their values, knowing that every individual has his/her own set of values that they live by, especially here in America, a nation divided by gender, creed, color, financial status, etc. He mentioned driving past Clinton Street and seeing that building in total disarray and thought how ironic it is that this building has been given a new life and could now be the place that gives these residents the opportunity for a new life. He questioned the values of the people attending the 2 churches in the area of Clinton Street, stating that when people come here wanting that chance for a good life, the values of the people of the Village start dipping downward. He then remarked that if Open Arms was not in Haverstraw the residents from the Village who might need Open Arms would not have easy access to family, which is an important part of a person’s recovery. He feels Haverstraw is a great place to live and for people to make a fresh start.

Emily Dominguez: Trustee Dominguez inquired how many men are in the Sharp Street house where Mr. Samuels works.

Dave Samuels: Mr. Samuels responded 17.

Emily Dominguez: Trustee Dominguez then inquired how many of the 17 are from Haverstraw.

Dave Samuels: Mr. Samuels responded 6 residents were from Haverstraw.

Julius Gerome: Mr. Gerome reported he owns an Open Arms house on Broadway and has never had emergency services or have police have to come to that house in the 1½ years they have been there. He feels they are good neighbors, always cleaning up around the house and sweeping the streets when other people just drop their trash on the ground instead of using the garbage can. The staff is instilling these values into their residents.

Jean Allen: Ms. Allen feels that Clinton Street is an historic street, mentioning that there are second and third generation black people living there. She remembers a time when black people could only live on Clinton Street or the “Mudhole”, where the Harbors is now located. She reiterated that Clinton Street is an historic area that is 90% black and should be left that way.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor stated that everything she fought for all her life was just lost in those words. He then stated that after hearing everyone’s comments, the Board would not be making a decision that night, but would have to give this topic its utmost consideration.

Mayor Kohut entertained a motion to close the Public Hearing:

RESOLUTION #19-2016

Motion by: Emily Dominguez
Seconded by: Rafael Bueno
Motion Carries: All

At this point in time, the Mayor called a 5 minute recess.

Continuing with that night's agenda, Mayor Kohut requested Counselor Hood to explain the changes to the Village Noise Ordinance.

Jay Hood, Jr., Esq.: Counselor Hood reported that the amendment to Section 157-11, "Penalties for the Noise Ordinance", would raise the minimum penalty per violation from the current \$250.00 to \$500.00 to \$2,500.00, imprisonment for not more than 15 days, or both a fine and imprisonment, which will be up to the discretion of the Judge to decide the final verdict.

Mayor Kohut entertained a motion to open the Public Hearing.

RESOLUTION #20-2016

Motion by: Emily Dominguez
Seconded by: Terence Watson, Jr.
Motion Carries: All

At this time the Mayor invited the public to ask questions or make comments.

Sherry Copeland, 68 New Main Street: Ms. Copeland requested Counselor Hood to verify the process for convicting and fining someone when the person receives a violation.

Jay Hood, Jr., Esq.: Counselor Hood informed Ms. Copeland that if the person pleads guilty or is found guilty then the Judge alone determines the fine and/or jail time to be served.

Sherry Copeland: Ms. Copeland asked for verification if someone appearing before the Judge for a first offense the Judge can fine them \$500.00 and if they receive a second violation the Judge can then raise the fine.

Emily Dominguez: Trustee Dominguez explained that all the fines are at the discretion of the Judge who can fine the person anywhere from \$500.00 to \$2,500.00 depending on the number of violations and the extent of the violation, which could then require jail time as well; all at the discretion of the Judge.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor reiterated that the proposal is changing the minimum fine to \$500.00, up to a maximum fine of \$2,500.00, for each violation and anything in between is at the discretion of the Judge.

Sherry Copeland: Ms. Copeland was happy to hear the Village is changing the Ordinance because the noise in her area has been a real issue for her for a long time. She feels, however, that the minimum should stay at \$250.00 because a first offense should hurt the offender's pockets, with them being told that the second fine would cost them \$500.00 at which point they will think twice about the noise coming from their establishments. She also requested that the Board have a follow-up meeting to determine whether or not the change is working.

Mel Post, 1422 Round Pointe Drive: Mr. Post felt this was an extremely valid ruling and that the community will be very happy with what the Board is doing, including the option given to the Judge ability to extend the fine he feels fits the violation and also that jail time be a part of his determination. He feels the stronger the penalty, the more fearful people will be about incurring violations.

Mayor Kohut entertained a motion to close the Public Hearing regarding the Village Noise Ordinance.

RESOLUTION #21-2016

Motion by: Emily Dominguez

Seconded by: Francisco Batista
Motion Carries: All

Mayor Kohut entertained a motion to approve the amendments to the Noise Ordinance Section 157-11 as stated above.

RESOLUTION #22-2016

Motion by: Emily Dominguez
Seconded by: Francisco Batista
Motion Carries: All

At this point, the Mayor continued with the first Public Participation.

Larry Levine, 1414 Round Point Drive: Mr. Levine is disturbed by the fact that the Village of Haverstraw is rarely, if ever, mentioned in the Rockland Review with activities or happenings for people to attend. He feels all the other municipalities are always mentioned and wanted to know what the Board has to do to get the paper to promote the Village.

Emily Dominguez: Trustee Dominguez stated that when the Village has an event planned a release is sent to the Rockland Review, The Rockland County Times and the Journal News.

Larry Levine: Mr. Levine then suggested that the Board advise the different organizations in the Village to inform the Board in order for the Village to promote all the activities that take place throughout the Village more prominently, even to the point of letting people throughout the County know about the Streetscape Project that is moving forward in the Village and inviting people to visit and see the changes taking place.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor agreed with Mr. Levine and will see what can be done to let other organizations know to inform the Village of their happenings so the Village can forward those activities to the media in the hopes of attracting more outsiders to the Village.

Mel Post, 1422 Round Pointe Drive: Mr. Post mentioned that he does not know the history of the Village like some of the other people at the meeting that night, but he does take offense to Mr. Berman's remarks about the Harbors whenever he feels there is something bad or detrimental happening in the Village. He asked that the Board stop him when he starts talking that way and let him know what Harbors does for the community, which Mr. Post feels is a lot. With regard to Mr. Berman's request to have the Mayor's position put back to full-time, Mr. Post reminded the Mayor that he has spoken to him regarding that matter, which he feels should remain a part-time position. He was always of the opinion, per-say, that the Village needed a Mayor and a half to aggressively handle everything going on and he believes Mayor Kohut could definitely do the job and make this into a phenomenal village, however, if the Village can have a full-time Mayor for a part-time salary, he is all for it.

Emily Dominguez: Trustee Dominguez pointed out that when Mayor Kohut decided several years back to make the position part-time, he still gave his all to the Village 24-7, as he still does today. She then advised the public that if the Mayor is not here that any one of the Trustees or the Village Clerk would be available to the public for whatever reason. The Village Board, she feels, works as a team and is available to the residents whenever needed.

Judith Curcio, Village Clerk/Treasurer: Ms. Curcio does not believe there was ever a resolution passed making the Mayor's position part-time, stating that the Mayor is basically receiving a part-time salary for a full-time job, which was what

he requested. There was, however, a resolution to lower the salary, but not change the hours of the position.

Francisco Batista: Trustee Batista pointed out that the Mayor went to a part-time salary on his own. The Trustees did not want him to become a part-time Mayor, but they respected his wishes.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor requested this topic be put aside for the time being and referred to Mr. Berman's condescending comments towards the Harbors.

Mel Post: Mr. Post also felt that the disrespectful way that Mr. Berman interrogated Ms. Rauschard during her presentation was uncalled for.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor believes that one of the points Mr. Berman was trying to make in saying what he did about Harbors was a socioeconomic point.

Mel Post: Mr. Post remarked that he has heard Mr. Berman make references about the Harbors many times before and he feels it is uncalled for.

Rafael Bueno: Trustee Bueno wanted to verify that he has personally seen the effort that the Mayor puts forth for this Village, always working, always here for everything and anything and he has told the Mayor that he should be receiving the wages of a full-time Mayor.

Francisco Batista: Trustee Batista feels this is something that the Board can and will discuss, but not at this time.

With no further input from the public, the Mayor moved on with that night's agenda.

Mayor Kohut:

REPORTS OF VILLAGE OFFICIALS

VILLAGE ATTORNEY, Jay Hood, Jr.: Counselor Hood requested the Board to hold an Executive Session to discuss the potential litigation matter with Ginsburg/GDC and a personnel issue.

Counselor Hood had nothing further to report.

VILLAGE TREASURER, Judith Curcio: Ms. Curcio had nothing to report.

MAYOR'S REPORT, Mayor Kohut: The Mayor reported that the start date for the Village Summer Camp will be July 6th, which is 3 days earlier than previous starts and, in addition, there will be an increase in the fee involved, which will be discussed at another meeting.

Mayor Kohut entertained a motion to start the Village Summer Camp on July 6th, as stated above.

RESOLUTION #23-2016

Motion by: Emily Dominguez

Seconded by: Rafael Bueno

Motion Carries: All

The Mayor received an Education Funding Resolution, which he explained is being circulated in all communities in New York State, to request a reform to the

NYS Public Education Fund. He then read the following resolution for approval by the Board:

WHEREAS, New York State is one of only twelve states that continue to fund public schools through property taxes; and

WHEREAS, the greatest financial hurdle faced by homeowners in the State is the onerous burden of school taxes; and

WHEREAS, that burden has forced innumerable New Yorkers, including many of those transitioning to retirement on a fixed income, to sell their properties and move from the State; and

WHEREAS, most states fund public schools through sales taxes and state income taxes (both corporate and personal) and other possible avenues of funding include mortgage taxes and excess profits taxes, all of which should be considered as more equitable and less burdensome alternatives to the school property tax method in New York; and

WHEREAS, even the City of New York no longer funds its public schools through property taxes and, recognizing this as a matter of equity as well as hardship, and in order to avoid a "subsidy" by the residents of one region of another, the residents of the City of New York should either be afforded a credit or excluded from any funding alternative so that fair legislation can be enacted without opposition on that score; and

WHEREAS, responsibility for the education of our youth should be more fairly and equitably distributed and not placed on the backs of our property owners; and

WHEREAS, the two percent tax cap law enacted by New York State is proof that the Governor, Senate and Assembly are aware of this crisis, but it is only a band aid approach to a worsening problem; and

WHEREAS, a more permanent solution must be found for the sake of the survival of our State.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Village Board of the Village of Haverstraw in its capacity as the governing body of the Village hereby requests that Governor Andrew Cuomo, members of the New York State Senate and members of the New York State Assembly urgently address this crisis and enact reforms to school district funding in New York State that implement an equitable alternative funding system to the property tax; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we respectfully request that our New York State representatives, the Hon. William Larkin, Senator for the 39th Senate District and the Hon. Kenneth Zebrowski, Assemblyman for the 96th Assembly District, advocate for the reforms hereby put forth and we thank them for their diligence in this matter; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Village Board hereby authorizes the Village Supervisor to execute a letter substantially in the form annexed hereto on behalf of the Village Board addressed to the Hon. Andrew Cuomo, Governor requesting said reforms and to deliver such letter and certified copies of this Resolution to the Governor, Senator Larkin and Assemblyman Zebrowski; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the foregoing resolutions shall take effect immediately.

Mayor Kohut entertained a motion to approve the Education Funding Resolution as stated above.

RESOLUTION #24-2016

Motion by: Emily Dominguez

Seconded by: Rafael Bueno

Motion Carries: All

The question of the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly put to a roll call vote with results as follows:

ROLL CALL VOTE

Trustee Franciso Batista -	YES
Trustee Rafael Bueno	- YES
Trustee Emily Dominguez	- YES
Trustee Thomas Watson Jr.	- YES
Mayor Michael Kohut	- YES

Motion Passed by all. The resolution was thereupon declared duly adopted.

The Mayor then informed the public that the next regular meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday, February 16th at 7:00 PM due to the President’s Day holiday on that Monday. He also indicated that this is the annual meeting where the Board hears assessment grievances from the public which will take place during the hours of 4:00 PM and 8:00 PM.

The Mayor informed the public that the Town of Haverstraw will be planning for its 400th Anniversary celebration starting on Monday, February 22nd, 8:00 PM at the Town Hall.

The Mayor then presented the following budget adjustments submitted by the Village Accountant Joseph Modafferi for approval by the Board:

<u>ACCT. #</u>	<u>ACCT. NAME</u>	<u>INCREASE</u>	<u>DECREASE</u>	<u>INCREASE</u>
		APPROPRIATIONS	APPROPRIATIONS	REVENUE
A1325.0420	Payroll Processing	\$ 3,700.00		
A1990.0400	Contingent		\$ 3,700.00	
A1620.0420	Building Dept. Repair	8,075.00		
A3089.0000	State Grant			\$ 8,075.00
	Generator – Fire House			
A1440.0410	Engineering Ferry	1,025.00		
A1990.0400	Contingent		1,025.00	
A1950.0400	Sewer Tax	1,500.00		
A1990.0400	Contingent		1,500.00	
	To correct account number 10/2015 Budget Adjustment			

RESOLUTION #25-2016

Motion by: Emily Dominguez
 Seconded by: Francisco Batista
 Motion Carries: All

The Mayor had nothing further to report.

Mayor Kohut:

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

FIRE & ORDINANCES – Trustee Rafael Bueno: Trustee Bueno read the following report of fire activity for the month of January, 2016, submitted by Fire Chief Robert Drexler, Jr.:

Total Alarms	-	23
General Alarms	-	20
Special Calls	-	0
Mutual Aid Calls	-	3
Structure Fires	-	1
Cooking Fires	-	3
Electrical Fires	-	1
Gas Leaks	-	1
Good Intent/Misc.	-	8

Snowstorm Standby	-	1
False Alarms	-	5

Total Manpower Responding - 483 members

Trustee Bueno had nothing further to report.

PUBLIC WORKS, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS – Trustee Terence Watson:

Trustee Watson read the following report submitted by Robert Drexler, Maintenance Supervisor, Public Works, as of February 1st, 2016:

- 1) Patched potholes throughout the Village.
- 2) Received new 2016 plow truck with sander.
- 3) Snowstorm removal on all village streets, churches and sidewalks.
- 4) Repaired the game room at the Community Center.
- 5) Started work on the parking lot behind the Village Hall to provide more parking for staff.

Trustee Watson had nothing further to report.

Mayor Kohut: The Mayor mentioned that the DPW again did an awesome job taking care of the Village roadways during the last snowstorm, working approximately 30 hours straight, with just a 4 hour break for some sleep to keep them alert to their surroundings. He thanked the DPW for a job well done.

YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES - Trustee Francisco Batista:

Trustee Batista read the following report of activities at the Community Center for the period of January 19th thru January 29th, 2016:

- 1) Monthly Youth Celebration was held on January 27th in conjunction with Caught Being good. The focus of this month's celebration was the introduction of February's Black History Month, therefore, during every Friday during the month of February the Haverstraw Center will be showcasing movies highlighting the African American History in the Village of Haverstraw.
- 2) Friday, January 29th, Haverstraw Center staff member Frank Vazquez chaperoning 10 youth participants attended the North Rockland vs. Albertus Magnus basketball game.
- 3) The Haverstraw Collaborative is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, February 3rd from 12:00 to 2:00 PM.
- 4) Spanish Speaking Parents Group is scheduled to meet on February 3rd at 6:00 PM.
- 5) The Haverstraw Center building is being utilized by Rockland Community College who is offering a free ICD-10 Medical Billing and Coding Class for residents of the County who meet their criteria. The 420 hour program provides free training for qualified candidates who are currently unemployed or displaced. All costs of the program are covered by a grant.

Trustee Batista had nothing further to report.

BUILDINGS & CODE ENFORCEMENT - Trustee Emily Dominguez:

Trustee Dominguez read the following report submitted by the Building Inspector, Ruben Berrios, for the period of January 18th thru January 29th, 2016:

Miscellaneous inspections	-	75
Searches	-	2

Complaints	-	3
Construction inspections	-	8
Building Permits & C.O.'s	-	4
Violations	-	7

Trustee Dominguez had nothing further to report.

Mayor Kohut:
OLD BUSINESS
 None.

Mayor Kohut:
NEW BUSINESS
 None.

Mayor Kohut:
2nd PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mel Post: Mr. Post spoke with regard to the Executive Session and in particular the Ginsburg/GDC matter. He is aware that the Mayor cannot give the public any of the details, however, he wanted to know if there was an offer on the table.

Jay Hood, Jr., Esq.: Counselor Hood informed Mr. Post that there has not been much movement to date; just a couple of letters have been exchanged.

Mayor Kohut: With no further business to be conducted by the Board, the Mayor entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting and move to Executive Session.

RESOLUTION #26-2016

Motion by: Emily Dominguez
 Seconded by: Francisco Batista
 Motion Carries: All

Respectfully submitted by,

Beverly A. Swift, Senior Steno Clerk