

TOWN BOARD

COUNTY OF ALBANY

TOWN OF COLONIE

PUBLIC COMMENT

THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above entitled matter by NANCY L. STRANG, a Shorthand Reporter, on May 9, 2019 9:05 p.m. at Memorial Town Hall 534 Loudon Road, Newtonville, New York 12128

BOARD MEMBERS:

- PAULA A. MAHAN, SUPERVISOR
- LINDA MURPHY, DEPUTY SUPERVISOR
- PAUL ROSANO
- DAVID GREEN
- CHRISTOPHER CAREY
- MELISSA JEFFERS-VONDOLLEN
- JENNIFER WHALEN

ALSO PRESENT:

- Michael C. Magguilli, Esq. Town Attorney
- Julie Gansle, Town Clerk
- Michele A. Turcotte, Deputy Town Clerk
- John Monette
- Rob Donnelly

1 SUPERVISOR MAHAN: Does anybody have any regular
2 public comment? Do I dare ask?

3 MR. MONETTE: My name is John Monette and I live
4 on Homestead Drive which is a short drive right up
5 Route 9 across from the CVS and Newton Plaza.

6 It has been an ongoing problem for probably the
7 last six years. I have lived there for 15 years. With
8 all the new development, my street has become a major
9 cut through. We've tried through the proper channels and
10 got the Colonie Police involved. They come over and they
11 patrol and they enforce, but it's just too much.

12 MR. MAGGILLI: What is the problem?

13 MR. MONETTE: Traffic. There is way way too much
14 traffic.

15 MS. WHALEN: It has to do - - I think people cut
16 through because they can't turn onto Route 9, or it's
17 difficult or there are pedestrian walks.

18 MR. MONETTE: I think it's 155 and Route 9,
19 mainly.

20 Just to give you a quick idea of what makes up my
21 street. We have two commercial properties; a bank and a
22 doctor's office that is on Homestead. They have
23 entrances. The population of the culture of my street -
24 we have a child at the end of the street and we have
25 signs up. The child can't hear. We have another child

1 who is in a wheelchair. My next-door neighbor is a
2 quadriplegic. These people can't even walk on the street
3 or move in their wheelchair without the continuous
4 threat of being run over. It is out of control. Come
5 over any morning between 7:00 and 8:00 and during the
6 evening from 4:30 and 6:00.

7 MS. WHALEN: Where are they coming from?

8 MR. MONETTE: They come off Fiddlers and they come
9 in or off 9 down to Fiddlers. I know this sounds crazy,
10 but you can go on my street and ask anybody or come
11 walk with me one night. It is so bad - probably the
12 last five years my vehicle has gotten hit while parked
13 in the driveway. My mailbox has gotten taken out. Just
14 recently my children were hopping on the bus - someone
15 went around the buss and almost hit them. Something has
16 to be done. I can't have a cop there 24/7/365. They do
17 come. They do citations and I'm very thankful for that.
18 It is an ongoing problem.

19 MS. WHALEN: Do you have any signs that say your
20 speed is this?

21 MR. MONETTE: Yes, we tried the sign and they
22 bring it over but like I said, to some people that's
23 like, let me see how fast I can get on the sign. I'm
24 really asking you guys if we can think of some solution
25 to help us out. It's just getting out of control.

1 Before someone gets hit, killed - - if you go back and
2 look at the number of accidents on the corner of
3 Homestead and Fiddlers in the last few years, those
4 have been on the rise. On the corner of 9 and
5 Homestead, they are on the rise. I'm just one person
6 and that happened at my house into my driveway. I can't
7 even let my kids go play in the driveway on the fear of
8 once again, my vehicle has gotten struck. My mailbox
9 has gotten taken out just getting on the school bus and
10 going around the bus. I just need some help.

11 MR. MAGGUILLI: As town Attorney, I am considered
12 the Chief Vehicle and Traffic Prosecutor. The only
13 instruction I give my assistants a lot of leeway except
14 for one thing and that's school buses. They are all
15 instructed that we do not plea-bargain school bus
16 violations. If anybody in the Town of Colonie passes a
17 stopped school bus, it's either plea to the charge and
18 look at the highest possible penalty or you can go to
19 trial and get the highest possible penalty. That's one
20 thing that we won't budge on.

21 Paula and the Town Board supports us all the way on
22 that.

23 If you see somebody doing that, get me a license
24 plate number and I will do something about it.

25 MS. WHALEN: What about a no thoroughfare sign?

1 MR. MONETTE: Can we dead-end it at one end? We
2 have two commercial properties coming onto a side
3 street. We have the bank and we have the doctor's
4 office. Can we did and it just past there so those
5 businesses can still use that end of the street to have
6 their patrons come?

7 MR. MAGGUILLI: This happens in the early morning
8 when the school bus is there?

9 MR. MONETTE: Yes.

10 MS. WHALEN: Dead-end it where?

11 MR. MONETTE: Iif you came out on Homestead,
12 probably 150 feet down there is a side entrance to the
13 bank and there is an entry to the doctor's office. If
14 you dead-ended it there, it would still serve those
15 businesses and at the same time it prevents all the
16 extra volume of cars coming down the street. It is out
17 of control during rush hour.

18 MS. WHALEN: What are the rules on dead-ending
19 streets like that?

20 SUPERVISOR MAHAN: Rob, would you like to comment
21 on this?

22 MR. DONNOLLY: Hi, my name is Rob Donnelly and I'm
23 the Lieutenant for the Traffic Safety Division for the
24 Police Department. The Chief asked me to come tonight
25 because he is ill.

1 Some of what you already addressed were some of the
2 things that I was going to say. We have had enforcement
3 up there. I will say that the tickets that we have
4 written for the most part have been for other things
5 like stop signs. We haven't had a lot of luck in terms
6 of actually issuing citations for speeding. I don't
7 know.

8 Are you from number 14?

9 MR. MONETTE: Yes.

10 MR. DONNELLY: I spoke to your wife, I believe. I
11 personally went out and sat. I have an unmarked car and
12 my Sergeant has an unmarked car. We have better luck
13 with the unmarked cars. People don't pick it up as
14 quickly.

15 I have asked people to do speed surveys when they
16 go up there. Typically the Sergeant or I won't do that,
17 but we some patrolmen who do. They do speed surveys and
18 all that is - they write the speed down and the have
19 radar and whatever the top speed each car has. What we
20 have found is typically the speeds are close to or a
21 little over 30 miles an hour. I'm not saying that
22 there's not people speeding. That's different. The
23 median speed is not very high.

24 What I will absolutely agree with you is that the
25 volume has gone way up. What typically we see is when

1 the volume goes way up, the constant flow of traffic
2 actually slows cars down a little bit. It seems like the
3 problem is because the Shaker High School corridor and
4 the problems getting in there on 155 - people are
5 seeking alternative routes. In the morning it seems like
6 most of the traffic, to me anyway -- the morning I was
7 there they were going from 9 to Fiddlers. Then, I didn't
8 go up there at the close of school, but one of my
9 afternoon investigators did and it's mostly going the
10 other way. So, I would have to say that it's either
11 people bringing their kids or the kids themselves going
12 back and forth.

13 MR. MONETTE: It is a cut-through street and as I
14 said, the volume is just out of control. I'm really
15 worried about the child that's deaf at the end of the
16 street. There is another one that is in his wheelchair.
17 My neighbor is in a wheelchair. You can't even walk
18 your pet for fear of the volume. It is just constant.
19 Fifteeh years ago it wasn't even close to that.

20 MR. DONNELLY: I did inquire the Highway
21 Department about dead-ends because the Chief asked
22 about that. It's not something the Police Department -
23 we don't take part in that. The response that I got was
24 the only problem - - there's a few problems, but the
25 biggest problem is if you were to dead-end it, those

1 people that are now using your street will seek other
2 side streets. What we end up doing is pushing the
3 problem to another street.

4 The second biggest thing is that let's say - I
5 don't even know - let's say there are 30 houses on
6 Homestead. It's just a number and I don't know what it
7 actually is. You have to get all 30 homes to agree to
8 that.

9 I am on the Highway Safety Committee and even to
10 put up a no parking sign, we need to get the whole
11 neighborhood to buy in. Maybe they all would. I don't
12 know. That's pretty drastic.

13 MR. MONETTE: In the last 5 to 8 years a lot of
14 kids have moved on the street under the age of 10. I
15 seriously doubt anyone would contest that, if we tried
16 to go that route. I mean, I think everyone is concerned
17 that it is going to be there kid one day.

18 Think about growing up. How many times were you
19 able to walk down your street to a friends house, go
20 bike riding down your street or even play in your
21 driveway? When your car starts getting smashed in your
22 driveway in your mailbox taken out -

23 MS. WHALEN: I have to admit that when I'm at the
24 Capital Bank and I have to go back out to Route 9, it
25 is difficult to get across if you're going left. I go

1 right out of Capital Bank and go around the block, but
2 I don't speed and I don't hit mailboxes. I am afraid to
3 go left on Route 9 because there is so much traffic
4 there by the Newton Plaza and the bank in the doctor's
5 office. I am someone that does go right and around the
6 block. Then, I take another right. I forgot that
7 street. I go over and I come out.

8 SUPERVISOR MAHAN: There is a left-hand turn
9 there, isn't it?

10 MR. DONNELLY: There didn't used to be, but there
11 is now. That was taken down.

12 MS. WHALEN: It is really dicey when you come out
13 of Capital Bank because you have people across from you
14 coming out of Newton Plaza and it's like oh my gosh. I
15 go right out of Capital Bank.

16 So, I can say that I do attribute to traffic on
17 your street just because I'm afraid to go left on Route
18 9. So, I am sorry. I'll just go right on Route 9 and cut
19 through Starbucks and take that way.

20 MR. MONETTE: You go to the bank like once a week.
21 That's probably not too bad. It's the everyday traffic
22 now.

23 SUPERVISOR MAHAN: The number of kids that drive
24 to school now has increased greatly over the past
25 several years. School buses are hardly even half full.

1 There's just so many kids that drive to school and the
2 parents that drive their kids to school just puts more
3 cars on the road during those school hours. For some
4 reason, I guess they just want the convenience of being
5 dropped off or driving on the road. They don't take the
6 bus anywhere nearly the way they used to in the past.

7 I used to work and teach at the junior high 12
8 years ago and the buses were always full. More and more
9 and more parents are dropping off kids and driving the
10 men. So many kids have cars now that they need more
11 parking. They deal with that issue. Society has changed
12 in that respect.

13 You're probably right. They are cutting through
14 during those time periods to get to the school.

15 MR. MONETTE: If you guys can help us work on a
16 solution, that would be great. Like I said, we have
17 deaf children and children in wheelchairs and my
18 neighbor in a wheelchair. Feel free. I live at 14 and I
19 will walk the street with you. I will show you.

20 MS. WHALEN: Let's just say hypothetically if you
21 went and up and down the street to get his neighbors to
22 sign a petition and he submitted it to you - somebody
23 or the Traffic Committee or some committee, would that
24 be valid or would that be just a good starting point
25 for you all to consider?

1 MR. DONNELLY: It is a starting point.

2 MS. WHALEN: So, you hear what I'm saying, right?

3 MR. DONNELLY: Yes.

4 MS. WHALEN: Do a formal or informal petition. He
5 lives on the street and he knows his neighbors.

6 MR. DONNELLY: Right, so, the Highway Safety
7 Committee is a starting point. Typically, we advise
8 people for signage at least in that would be to request
9 a sign and if you want to get all the people on the
10 street to sign a petition - - the Highway Safety
11 Committee doesn't decide that were going to dead-end
12 the road, or put a sign out there. We can discuss it
13 and that it would ultimately move through the Town.

14 MS. WHALEN: I noticed that there was a street off
15 Central Avenue where there was a car dealership and the
16 folks there dead-ended it, right? It was at the bottom
17 of Central - - or, they tried to.

18 SUPERVISOR MAHAN: No. The Town was built with all
19 kinds of connections and through streets. It depends on
20 where you live. Where we live they cut through because
21 they can get to another area by cutting through. It's
22 difficult to dead-end streets because what Lieutenant
23 Donnelly is saying, it just moves the problem.

24 The other problem is we have so many state highways
25 they go through Town and those state highways have to

1 keep the traffic moving. If we go to the state and say
2 you lower the speed limit on Route 9 and they tell us we
3 have to keep the traffic moving. In many ways, we track
4 pass-through traffic because people have to go through
5 us to get where they're going into their endpoint.

6 MR. MONETTE: Sometimes a solution can balance it
7 out a little bit. If I take some off mine and put it
8 someplace else - I don't think that it is fair being a
9 homeowner especially with children. When it comes to
10 children on the street, I just don't think that's fair.

11 SUPERVISOR MAHAN: I know that you have received
12 some information because the Dhief asked you to be here
13 tonight so I know you're looking at the situation. I
14 don't know if there are signs because I don't remember.
15 There are signs for deaf children.

16 MR. MONETTE: We have those at the end of the
17 street.

18 SUPERVISOR MAHAN: Is it there?

19 MR. MONETTE: Yes.

20 SUPERVISOR MAHAN: Sometimes the extra signage
21 helps. The Town was built with so many different
22 connecting streets and the theory is that's how you
23 move traffic. You have to have a way to disperse it in
24 all different directions. Unfortunately, you happen to
25 be on the path to the school and that's a difficult

1 situation.

2 MR. MONETTE: If we could make it one way or at
3 least it would cut down half the volume.

4 MR. CAREY: Don't forget, too, if you dead-ended
5 that and the ambulance or a fire truck and things - -
6 you don't want to have a police car have to drive a
7 quarter-mile around the entire neighborhood to get to
8 your house. Now it's blocked off coming in on Route 9
9 and the emergency personnel - it's taken them another
10 five, seven or eight minutes to get around to your
11 street. That is a concern, too.

12 MR. MONETTE: Trust me, my daughter had issues
13 growing up and we have had plenty of EMS. Fortunately,
14 they come off of Fiddlers, or they come by Southgate to
15 Maxwell and over Northmeadow.

16 Thank you for your time. If you could help us
17 somehow, that would be great.

18 MR. CAREY: Rob, is that something that you can
19 try to stay in touch with him?

20 MR. DONNELLY: Like I said, I have already been in
21 touch and we have tried to target enforcement out
22 there.

23 In terms of the dead-end, I'm not sure that's the
24 Highway Safety Committee. Typically, that's not what we
25 would handle. If you were to make a request, we would

1 ask that you get all your neighbors on board and then we
2 would move it from there and discuss it.

3 There's also a very thick book that discusses all
4 these things like traffic control devices. Dead-ends are
5 not that, so I don't know 100%. Highway would be the
6 ones to answer that question. Maybe I could find out
7 more.

8 The Supervisor sent a little blurb about
9 essentially what is difficult to do in terms of a
10 dead-end. I think that's may be more of an engineering
11 type of question.

12 MR. MONETTE: Thanks again. I appreciate it.

13 SUPERVISOR MAHAN: Thank you.

14 I think that's a wrap.

15 (Whereas the above entitled proceeding was concluded
16 at 9:20 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATION

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I, NANCY L. STRANG, Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of New York, hereby CERTIFY that the record taken by me at the time and place noted in the heading hereof is a true and accurate transcript of same, to the best of my ability and belief.

NANCY L. STRANG

Dated _____