



Ovid Town Pitches In For Trailer Park Signs

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By Bill Chaisson

Councilmember Erik Holmberg appealed to the parental side of his peers at the Ovid town board meeting on June 9 and led them to agree to allocate \$600 to \$1,000 for house number signs for the town's trailer parks. "If there's a baby choking, I don't want the first responders to be looking for my house," said Hulmberg. "Let's spend the money and get the safest the quickest."

The Town of Ovid had received grants from the Greater Rochester Health Foundation and Seneca Meadows to pay for purchase of the signs. The reflective green metal plates with white numbers are to be posted in front of every home in the town. Firefighters and ambulance crews can then find the correct house number on a road.

The subject of signs for mobile homes came up as town attorney Steve Getman was going through changes in the Emergency Sign Law to have them approved by the town council members. It was the consensus of the members that a sign should be posted outside each residence in a trailer park. Initially, Holmberg was in favor of having park owners purchase their own signs because they were they were likely to add units and come back to the town expecting new signs for new units. Town supervisor Walt Prouty, citing absent councilperson John Hubbard, maintained that park owners should not pay for signs because all of the other town residents had had the signs purchased for them.

Prouty also expressed frustration that none of the park owners had come to any of the town board meetings to talk about this issue.

"I talked with two of the park owners," said Al Deming, a member of the town planning board. "One was fine with it and said, 'Who do I pay?' and the other one thought the town should pay."

Councilmember Joe Borst estimated that it would cost the town \$600 to purchase signs for all the parks. It would cost the park owners double that amount because the town gets a discount. Some worried that if the park owners were allowed to purchase their own signs they would not meet specifications. Deming suggested that it be written into the town law that signs must meet rules set by the county 911 office. Getman thanked Deming for the suggestion and added it to the law's text.

"I say we get everyone up to speed now," said Holmberg, revising his initial position, "and then that's it. We're not doing this out of the kindness of our hearts; we got a grant to do it."

With room drifting toward having the town pay for the signs, the discussion turned to who should put them up. "As a practical matter," said Getman, "we can put it up for them, and then if they take it down, well, we did that for you ..." The attorney suggested that the town should pay for everybody, or just stop paying for signs altogether. He also suggested that the town could raise the price of building permit in order to help pay for the emergency signs.

Failure to have a sign up by Nov. 1 will result in a penalty of \$20 per day until it is erected. If a resident refuses to pay, the accumulated sum will be added to their tax bill. Deming predicted that the town crews would have all signs up by October, excluding those in the trailer parks. Because the parks are private property, it was decided that the owners would be responsible for putting signs in front of each unit.

Full-size signs for regular parcels cost \$14.19 for the sign itself and \$6 for the post. The smaller 6-by-6-inch signs for mobile home parks are \$8.42 each.

The town board also discussed complaints they had received regarding out-of-state vehicles that were parked at Sheldrake Point to use the boat ramp there. "Does the 'No Swimming' sign cover [us legally]?" Highway superintendent Jack Wickham asked Getman. "The kids are swimming right under the sign."

It was established that the cars were not blocking driveways or rutting lawns, but that local residents were irritated that non-residents were using the space. "Any restriction [on use of the boat ramp]" said Getman, "would need a local law and then you would have to enforce it." The situation at Second Dam in Ithaca was mentioned as an analogous problem, the Ovid town board agreed that they did not want to hire rangers to enforce a local law.

Holmberg presented a new website for the town as a work in progress. He asked for input regarding design and what content to include, but did not get much response from his fellow board members. Holmberg is using the website of the Town of Halfmoon (north of Albany) as a model and is building his site with Wordpress tools.

It was agreed that he should go forward using colors that reflect the yellow, blue, and purple of the combined South Seneca, Trumansburg, and Romulus school sports teams. A brief history of the town will be written by town historian Gail Snyder. The new site will save the town a little money, as Holmberg will maintain and update it himself.