

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS & REAL PROPERTY TAX SERVICES

DATE: SEPTEMBER 10, 2020

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS: BRAYMER
DICKINSON
HOGAN
BEATY
MERLINO
SIMPSON
STROUGH

OTHERS PRESENT:

LEXIE DELUREY, DIRECTOR OF REAL PROPERTY TAX SERVICES
MICHAEL SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER
FRANK E. THOMAS, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
MARY ELIZABETH KISSANE, COUNTY ATTORNEY
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD
SUPERVISORS DRISCOLL
MAGOWAN
MCDEVITT
LEGGETT
SEEBER
DON LEHMAN, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
JEREMY SCRIME, SENIOR COMPUTER SYSTEMS ANALYST/PROGRAMMER
MOLLY GANOTES-GLEASON, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Please note, the following contains a summarization of the September 10, 2020 meeting of the Environmental Concerns & Real Property Tax Service Committee; the meeting in its entirety can be viewed on the Warren County website using the following link: <https://www.warrencountyny.gov/gov/comm/Archive/2020/environmental/>

Note: As per Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 202.1: "Article 7 of the Public Officers Law, to the extent necessary to permit any public body to meet and take such actions authorized by the law without permitting in public in-person access to meetings and authorizing such meetings to be held remotely by conference call or similar service, provided that the public has the ability to view or listen to such proceeding and that such meetings are recorded and later transcribed". All of the Committee members in attendance participated via video or teleconference except for Supervisors Braymer, Merlino and Simpson who were physically present.

Copies of the Real Property Tax Services and Environmental Concerns agendas were distributed to those in attendance, those participating remotely accessed the agendas via the Warren County website. *Copies of both agendas are on file with the meeting minutes.*

Ms. Braymer called the meeting of the Environmental Concerns & Real Property Tax Services Committee to order at 9:31 a.m

Motion was made by Mr. Beaty, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Lexie Delurey, *Director of Real Property Tax Services*, who commenced the review of the Real Property Tax Services agenda with a request to approve special guidelines for the 2020 Warren County Tax Foreclosure Auction due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, which she proceeded to review. A discussion followed with regard to the guidelines and other ideas for proper social distancing, such as holding the Auction outside or in the newly constructed Office of Emergency Services equipment storage building. Ms. Delurey apprised that the Auction packet would be available on the County website and the County's Director of Public Affairs would also help to spread this, and the revised guidelines for social distancing during the Auction, to the public. Mr. Merlino asked when the Auction packets would be available and Ms. Delurey replied they should be available September 17th or 18th. Ms. Delurey informed there were 26-28 parcels included in this year's Auction and

she estimated there could be as many as fifty individuals at a time bidding per town.

Motion was made by Mr. Merlino, seconded by Ms. Hogan and carried unanimously to approve the special guidelines for the 2020 Warren County Tax Foreclosure Auction, as presented, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the September 18th Board Meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Beaty announced that he would need to leave the meeting shortly for an appointment, but wanted to voice his support for the septic inspection at transfer law proposed for discussion on the Environmental Concerns agenda.

Mr. Simpson entered the meeting at 9:42 a.m.

Mr. Beaty exited the meeting at 9:45 a.m.

Next, Ms. Delurey introduced a request to amend Resolution No. 339 of 2019, which approved the terms and conditions of sale for the Warren County Tax Foreclosure Auction, to reduce the buyer's premium from 6% to 5% in line with the new auction company being used this year. Ms. Braymer reminded the Committee that a provision was previously included in the terms and conditions of sale which required the purchaser to rehabilitate any building on the property to bring it to compliance with all State, County and Local standards within twenty-four months of the date of the deed transfer.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Ms. Hogan and carried unanimously to approve the request as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the September 18th Board Meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Merlino exited the meeting at 10:06 a.m.

Concluding her agenda review, Ms. Delurey spoke regarding Town of Stony Creek Tax Map Parcel No. 233.-1-73, owned by Lucas Blanchard. She noted that Mr. Blanchard's parcel was included in the 2020 Foreclosure Auction for back taxes owed in the amount of \$3,488.19; she further noted that Mr. Blanchard was willing and able to pay the outstanding amount that day to save his property from being included in the Auction. Mike Swan, *County Treasurer*, informed that if the Committee approved acceptance of the payment Mr. Blanchard would only need to contact his Office and schedule an appointment to make payment. Ms. Braymer suggested allowing Mr. Blanchard until September 17th to make payment.

Motion was made by Mr. Strough, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to authorize acceptance of Mr. Blanchard's payment of outstanding taxes owed in full until September 17, 2020.

Regarding the Foreclosure Proceeding against Mr. Blanchard's property, Mary Elizabeth Kissane, *County Attorney*, notified the default judgement had been filed and it was in front of the Court; however, she noted, she did not want them to sign the judgement until Mr. Blanchard paid his outstanding taxes because his property was included in the judgement. She indicated on Thursday September 17th she would submit a new letter to the Court asking them to sign a new judgement removing Mr. Blanchard's property, assuming payment was made. Ms. Braymer asked if the current pandemic would cause any interruptions within the Court and Ms. Kissane replied that for some of the foreclosure cases the court would hold settlement conferences, but that would not pertain to this case. Ms. Braymer asked Ms. Delurey to contact Mr. Blanchard as soon as possible to get the process started.

Ms. Braymer asked if there were any public comments concerning Real Property Tax Services and Don Lehman, *Director of Public Affairs*, replied in the negative.

Regarding the Mullen's property located on Bay Road in the Town of Queensbury, Mr. Magowan asked if the

property was included in the current judgement and Ms. Kissane replied the judgement for that property had already been filed. She indicated the Judge wanted to hold a settlement conference on the property where she had hoped a member of the Mullen's family would consent to the foreclosure. Mr. Swan advised he had spoken to Mrs. Mullen and she indicated she would not be responding to the Court, conveying she did not want the property and the County should take it.

There being no further Real Property Tax Services business to discuss, Ms. Braymer commenced review of the Environmental Concerns agenda, beginning with discussion regarding the Septic Inspection at Transfer Law. She advised Robert Terwilliger, *Second Assistant County Attorney*, had made some changes to the proposed Law; she advised she had not brought her copy of the Law with her today and she suggested this matter be discussed further at the next Committee meeting. Mr. Dickinson informed he was not in favor of the Law and did not want it to pertain to the Town of Lake George. Ms. Braymer advised the Finger Lakes required inspections every three months, not at transfer, she asked Mr. Dickinson to send her the septic guidelines the Town of Lake George used and Mr. Dickinson agreed to do so. Mr. Strough said the Town of Lake George already had a team in place to handle inspections and he suggested that the County provide inspections for the other towns; Mr. Dickinson said he agreed with this suggestion. Mr. Strough then proceeded to outline a number of areas of the proposed Law which may require review and revision. Ms. Braymer indicated that the Law would be discussed further at the next Committee meeting.

Concluding the agenda review, Ms. Braymer presented a request to support a Green Amendment to the New York State Constitution which would give New Yorkers the right to clean water and air. Mr. Simpson indicated there were a lot of unanswered questions with regard to this Amendment which made him uneasy about it being approved at this point. He said they should determine what impacts there may be and how to help communities with complying with current standards. Mr. Dickinson addressed the fact that mandates were given to the County and Towns that were not affordable and he suggested tabling the request for the time being. Mr. Strough said this was a concept that needed to be worked on. Mr. Simpson informed there would be a shift in the way environmental concerns were handled. Ms. Hogan stated she believed the amendment was important and the County should continue to set the standard for clean air and water.

Motion was made by Mr. Strough, seconded by Mr. Simpson and carried unanimously to table the request pending further information on the impacts of the Amendment.

Ms. Braymer asked if there were any public comments regarding Environment Concerns and Mr. Lehman replied in the negative.

As there was no further business to come before the Environmental Concerns & Real Property Tax Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mr. Simpson and carried unanimously, Ms. Braymer adjourned the meeting at 10:24 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Molly Ganotes-Gleason, Legislative Office Specialist