



VILLAGE OF COLONIE

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MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING
LOCAL LAW #1 OF 2019
“A LOCAL LAW REMOVING SECTION 225-64 SCHEDULE XXIII: TRAFFIC
RESTRICTION, FROM THE VILLAGE OF COLONIE CODE”
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2019
6:00 P.M.

Mayor Leak opened the public hearing.

Clerk Blot read aloud the notice of advertisement as it appeared in the newspaper and public access places. Clerk Blot also noted that the notice was mailed to residents of Lincoln Avenue, as well as the side streets off of Lincoln Avenue and the adjacent streets to Lincoln Avenue, across from Central Avenue. The notice was also posted on the Village of Colonie website.

The Clerk announced guidelines for public comment. Each speaker would be allotted 3 minutes to voice their concerns.

Mayor Leak gave a brief overview of the proposed Local Law. He added that the traffic control device has been up since 1997 and restricts traffic between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Lincoln Avenue, from Rapp Road. The device is set up to have travelers turn at Petra Lane to continue out to Central Avenue, instead of using Lincoln Avenue. The Village would like to revisit with the public to see if this device is still serving its purpose and to also see if any of the residents would be interested in the removal of the device. The Mayor stated he doesn't have an opinion either way, and wants to hear what the public has to say regarding the subject.

Clerk Blot read off the list of residents signed in to speak, in order of appearance.

Mr. Phil Minnissale, Harriet Street: 40 year+ resident of the Village of Colonie, Mr. Minnissale remembers what the traffic was like before the device was installed. He said that traffic was backed up on Lincoln Avenue sometimes all the way to Village Park Drive. He recalled a time when his son was younger and someone turned onto Harriet Street from Lincoln Avenue to get out of the line they were waiting in on Lincoln Avenue and almost struck their son. He said after the device was installed traffic was significantly reduced. He stated that this law works. Mr. Minnissale said he spoke with Mayor Leak when the law went into effect and Mayor Leak said he was proud of this law. Mr. Minnissale said he is also concerned about the recent reports of

distracted drivers, which seems to be on the rise. He cares strongly about the health, safety and quality of life in this area. He knows that the Mayor and Board care as much as he does. He hopes the board will uphold this law. He understands at times it is inconvenient to go around, but he thinks that the inconvenience is worth keeping people safe. He hopes that the law will not be rescinded.

Debbie Boomhower, Richards Drive: said Mr. Minnissale touched on the areas she wanted to make note of.

Tina Bailey, DeVoe Drive: had concerns with the expansion of Colonie Block and lifting this traffic restriction, and fears that it will make this situation even worse. Especially with the concerts and activity in the park once spring/summer time is here. People are already use to going a certain way now, and leaving it that way might be the way to go. Lincoln Avenue is residential, and she wishes that the construction trucks would continue not to use Lincoln Avenue as a cut through. She said that cars are speeding in that neighborhood. There is a lot more kids in recent years. She stated she is concerned if people are allowed to go through.

Mayor Leak mentioned that the expansion of Colonie Block is not going to have an impact on the traffic on Lincoln Avenue. Clerk Blot stated that Mary Clark, of Colonie Block is on the list of people who will speak, and will touch on that statement when she speaks. Ms. Bailey added she would like the light to remain.

Richard Stack, Nicholas Drive: hears the concerns of fellow residents of traffic in the area and it is an issue. Attended multiple meetings when this traffic device was installed. As a resident wants access to the park, and to our roads. Offered the idea of a permit system for village resident. Lots of cars on Central Avenue, feeding from Petra Lane and it takes a lot of time to go around, and would like some consideration too. He would like the light to stay, but would like a medallion on the car to use the parks, and access the streets as a resident.

Mayor Leak mentioned that the medallion has been requested in the past. Mayor Leak asked that Trustee Sim further elaborate on the medallion. Trustee Sim said that in 1997 this was brought before the traffic committee at that time, and when discussing with the Colonie Police department we had an issue with the constitutional question of restricting the use of a public street. The Police Department had some major issues with that at the time.

Mr. Stack said it's been 20 years, maybe we can look into that again.

Mayor Leak said we would take that into consideration.

Jim Splonskowski, Peter Drive: did not want to speak at this time.

Virginia Angier, Woolard Avenue: Virginia loves the traffic control device on Lincoln Avenue. Speed is an issue in the Village. Attended many traffic safety meeting. Study was done on Harriet Street showing speed is an issue. Stated we are getting big sand trucks on the street to Colonie Block. To relieve the patrol personnel, maybe a camera is a good idea. Grandson getting

bus on corner of Woolard Avenue and Harriet Street and has concerns. When put in effect, it was to prevent traffic from Western Avenue. Virginia would like the light to remain.

Ben Garry, Lincoln Avenue: We now have a safe situation, and is concerned with the board creating an unsafe situation by removing this sign. In recent years, the mail deliveries in the Tanglewood/Ridge Terrace area use to come before 3:00 p.m., now the trucks are out sometimes until 6:00 p.m., and blocking the way on Lincoln Avenue. Mr. Garry also mentioned that the new playground has been installed at Cook Park, and people usually attend the playground between 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. that if traffic is backed up, people won't be able to access the park. Lots of children in the area. There are also some disabled residents on and off of Lincoln Avenue. He said this is a major safety concern, for the sake of convenience. Mr. Garry owns a business on the other side of the sign. He said that he needs to go around to get from his business to his home which is normally a 2 mile distance. He asked that the Mayor and Board uphold the current law and leave the sign in place.

Elaine Sacco, DeVoe Drive: Thanked the Mayor and Board for having this meeting. Did not live here before the sign was enacted, but works off of Washington Avenue, and wondered if the sign could be modified to say "local traffic only". Need to look at traffic patterns throughout the Village and all of Colonie to see about the ongoing developing and pay attention to these traffic concerns. Ms. Sacco is for keeping the light, but would like local traffic exemption added to the light.

Chris Ruff, Lincoln Avenue: lived on Lincoln Avenue for over 20 years. Children are out between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. This law has drastically reduced the traffic. Would like to entice the board to conduct another traffic study be done to compare to the old traffic studies done in the past to show that it has drastically reduced the traffic. His wife used to work on Washington Avenue and at most it would take her 10 minutes to go around to get home. He mentioned that Petra Lane is a commercial intersection, and Lincoln Avenue is a residential street. Lincoln Avenue is one lane, if the traffic light is lifted, there will definitely be a back-up. Mr. Ruff also noted that several people have mentioned a medallion. He stressed that if we issue medallions, and a resident is seen by others going through, the cars behind, resident or not, will follow.

Jim Kralick, Lincoln Avenue: is opposed to taking the sign down. Already had a dog hit. Lives on the side of Lincoln Avenue without the sidewalk. During the trick-or-treating no kids come because of the safety issue. He also mentioned that speeding is an issue on Lincoln Avenue. Is in favor of a medallion system. 1997 he was present a wanted speed bumps installed, but at the time there was a law that prohibited from installing speed bumps. Hopes something can be done so the residents who live there and pay taxes, have access to the street.

Sue O'Grady, Lincoln Avenue: Is for the sign on Lincoln Avenue but would like something on the vehicle to show that she is a resident. Or if pulled over and officer sees by the license they are a resident they should be allowed to continue onto their home. She stated that she has taken Petra Lane to go out to Central Avenue and gets stuck behind a CDTA bus.

John O'Grady, Lincoln Avenue: liked the medallion system or a "no through traffic" sign or "for traffic only sign.

Dan Hornick, Sharon Drive: In favor of removing the light, based on policy decisions in terms of what priorities are in the Village. The use of the time of Colonie Police department, and if they aren't there travelers would go right through. On his way here he saw a few people go past the light onto Lincoln Avenue. Mr. Hornick thinks the priority concern should be speed in the Village. Traffic in the Village has changed, we should be trying to take traffic off of Central Avenue during those peak times, instead of feeding the traffic to Central Avenue. Continue to look at safety. He thinks reducing speed and enforcing speed limits should be the main priority.

Shannon Clegg, Sharon Drive: appreciated all taking the time to listen to the opinions of the residents and appreciated the time the traffic committee puts in to making our road safe. Moved to the Village a few years ago. She teaches in Colonie, and sometimes the traffic device adds 20-30 minutes onto her travel time. In favor of local traffic only. Speed is definitely an issue.

The Mayor thanked all for being orderly tonight and appreciated the comments thus far.

Luig Pinto, Lincoln Avenue: wants to leave the traffic device the way it is.

Tammy Signer-Holmes, Sharon Drive: originally thought that residents should have a medallion. The speed on Lincoln and Harriet isn't going to change whether this gets passed or not. As well as the police officers try to maintain the traffic, saw people go through tonight and people aren't abiding by the laws. A different issue has to be addressed with the speeding. If we keep the sign she would like to see a medallion. Residents pay the taxes and should be able to access the road.

Mr. Minnissale added that the lights are no longer working on the traffic signal, and many people think it is not in effect. The lights should have been kept on until this was discussed.

Ms. Signer-Holmes said the sign still says no traffic between 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. it does not say "when flashing" so that is what should be abided.

Mayor Leak mentioned that the reason the light is not on is because they had to relocate the sign temporarily for the Colonie Block project. The planning commission has approved to the point where any traffic coming out of Colonie Block needs to use Petra Lane. Once that is all complete the Clark's will contact National Grid to reconnect the lights so the road for Colonie Block can be installed. The lights will be turned on as soon as National Grid is notified and connects it back up. Mayor Leak said the Clark's will touch base on that subject when it is their turn to speak.

Steve Garry, Lincoln Avenue: lives across from Cook Park, and owns a business on the other side of the train tracks. If anyone is inconvenienced by this traffic device, it's him. However, that being said, he approves keeping the device. He said it's worth protecting the safety of the people. Had a lot of residents talk about the medallion, and liked that idea. However, said the police can't be there all the time and as soon as one person goes through, you'll have many people follow them. He's seen times where police have someone pulled over in that area and other travelers will go around the police car. Had issues several years ago with firecalls, because we

could not get out of the neighborhood to respond since the traffic on Lincoln Avenue was backed up before the device was installed. His concern is taking a safe situation and making it an unsafe situation. He added that he thinks it's important that we keep the sign in place.

Pat Michalski, Lincoln Avenue: requested to speak after the Clark's speak about Colonie Block and how that is going to affect Lincoln Avenue.

Dennis Michalski, Lincoln Avenue: the road is safe right now. Lots of walker using the sidewalk. Lives on the other side without sidewalk and there are times he is dodging speeding cars. Speed is a huge issue. His home got hit by a speeding motorist years ago. Traffic Safety Committee should look at speeding areas, Harriet Street and Lincoln Avenue. Hopes to keep the device, as it is.

Barbara De Cotis, Debbie Court: Sympathizes with the people on Lincoln Avenue, but that is not the only area in the Village with traffic issues. Mentioned there are issues with traffic on Locust Park. Likes to walk her dog in Cook Park but doesn't want to get a ticket by taking Lincoln Avenue and also doesn't want to use Petra Lane to Central Avenue and risk traffic on Central Avenue. Says more speeding issues are on Central Avenue. Suggested to put the sign after the entrance to the park. So people have access to the park. Wants the light taken down or moved.

Paul Milonivich, Gabriel Way: sympathizes with the folks on Lincoln Avenue but wanted to give a perspective of people on the other side of Central Avenue. When on Central Avenue and trying to make a left hand turn, you're a sitting target. With speeding and distracted drivers it's a dangerous situation. With the light, all you're doing is rerouting the traffic and speed problem onto Central Avenue, an even more dangerous street. Suggested bringing the speed limit down to make the inconvenience onto the people so they won't be enticed to use Lincoln Avenue. Request to take the lights down.

Mary Clark, business owner, Lincoln Avenue: owner of Colonie Block. The flashing light work order has been submitted, waiting on National Grid to have them come connect that back. Apologized for the flatbed that came down Lincoln Avenue. All drivers are instructed to come in through Clark Industrial park. The buildings that are on the front acreage on the property, will have a no right turn onto Lincoln Avenue and will be routed through the industrial park. It is in their contract lease for the tenants to not use Lincoln Avenue, and if caught doing so is a violation of their lease. If anyone has any issues or concerns they can stop in to see Mary in the office, she's usually always around.

James Donnelly, Tanglewood Road: mind has been partially changed. Originally against light being there, for many years worked for the State and this was an inconvenience and tried to avoid tickets, but not enough to risk safety. Wife and him started out on the side of removing it, but now wishes the Village looks into residents being allowed to use the Lincoln Avenue for those who live in that area. Leave the sign, but with some changes.

Laura Ira, Woolard Avenue: in favor of taking down the sign for several reasons. Wrote a letter several years ago about a permit system for all those affected. It is inconvenient. Cares about safety but is inaccessible to houses. Works on Washington Avenue and it is time consuming to

go around. Doesn't want to commute to work. Hopes we can look further into the permit system. People can't use the playground from 4-6 because they don't want to drive all the way around to access the parks. Distracted drivers aren't going to go away whether the sign is there or not. Doesn't believe in fear mongering a law suit for the village if the sign is removed. That statement seems a little excessive. In favor of removal.

Patty Eysaman, Dauphin Drive: appreciates the statements about speed and traffic but coming from Washington Avenue it does add time to your route. Said for years we should have some kind of permit system for residents of the area. Would like the light to come down, does not want to wait anymore in traffic. Would like to see speed bumps installed.

Mayor Leak recalled taking a survey years ago regarding speed bumps but could not remember the results of that.

Mr. Kralick spoke again regarding the speed bump comment. 1997 proposed speed bumps and was told that there was too much traffic on Lincoln Avenue.

Mayor Leak said that there was a need of 60% of residents to be in favor. Mr. Kralick proposed speed bumps and was told speed bumps weren't an option because of the volume of traffic.

Mr. Michalski stated that 92 residents signed the petition that contained 71 in favor of speed bumps. Was told by the traffic committee that speed bumps don't work.

Tracie Dott, Robert Drive: 2012 went door to door with a petition to have the sign taken down. Was told by the Village if received enough signatures we could take it down. Then was told that it had to be Lincoln Avenue residents. We all live here and have to deal with traffic. Remember in 1997 that people came and spoke against putting the sign up. Speeding and distracted drivers have nothing to do with this restriction. Works off Washington Avenue extension, and just wants to be able to go home. Causing people to go out to Central Avenue and go down on Lincoln Avenue in the other direction. Just rerouting traffic. Has everything to do with Central Avenue, they go hand in hand. In 1997 Petra Lane was new. Thinks there should be a turning lane on Lincoln Avenue.

Mr. Minnissale mentioned if you take a right on red you'll end up with an accident. It's all these turns off of side streets. Doesn't want to hear any more about inconvenience.

Mayor Leak said we are here to hear from everyone. Everyone has a right to speak and give their opinion. Let's remain civil and continue on.

Mackenzie Laraway, Hawley Avenue: understands everyone's opinions matter, and knows as a younger resident who doesn't drive yet, but still it's an inconvenience for someone who is driving her home. Would be in favor of a permit system. Speed bumps would be a good idea on Lincoln Avenue. Mentioned weight limits for trucks.

Trustee Lockart commended Ms. Laraway for coming and added it was nice to see younger people taking an interest in the community.

Officer DePaulo was asked by some residents to give his perspective from the Police Department. Officer DePaulo stated he is a lifetime resident of the Village of Colonie and his father, who passed earlier this year, lived on Lincoln Avenue. The only thing that will change behavior is enforcement. When a conscious effort is made to enforce the law on Lincoln Avenue it's noticed. The medallion is a nice idea but where do you put the medallion. For him, he sits in Lincoln Avenue parking lot to patrol... so he would be able to see the medallion if it was placed on the passenger side, but there are some patrolmen who sit on the opposite side over in Petra Lane and wouldn't be able to see it.

Ms. O'Grady asked if when pulled over we could go by the driver's license. Officer DePaulo said he doesn't see the driver's license until he pulls the person over and by then its wasting valuable resources. It's unrealistic to pull over 10 residents to find the 1 non-resident. Officer DePaulo said the only things allowed on the windshield are your registration sticker and your inspection sticker.

Has issued several warning tickets to Village residents so that they are aware they can't go that way.

Mary Kelly, Hawley Avenue: bought house right before the law went into effect. Have a bunch of cars every morning, which is still a problem in that neighborhood from the overpass to Lincoln Avenue. Kids are grown so it doesn't personally effect anymore, but sympathizes with the concerns of the other residents. Hopes the sign remains.

William Boomhower, Richards Drive: is there a way to put a sign with surveillance camera? That way you don't have a policeman sitting there. Someone could just review the tape and see if they live in the Village of not, and issue tickets accordingly.

John Holmes, Sharon Drive: lived in the Village for a long time. Knows that the restriction is an inconvenience. Thinks we should take down the light. Maybe revisit the idea of speed bumps. Try to come up with another solution instead of the traffic device. If speed bumps installed it would deter people from not only using Lincoln Avenue but from speeding.

Wallace Sibblies, Ridge Terrace: sees a difference when Police Department puts up the flashing speed limit signs. If we could invest in two signs, one for each side of the road, it might slow the speeding down. Could you have something similar to a handicap sticker so the officer can see you are a part of the Village of Colonie to be permitted. Would like to see the light stay, but residents have a sticker.

Mayor Leak said that we need to look at how it is now. There is not permit process in place so what is your position on the current sign?

Mr. Sibblies would like to see the sign come down, but if the sign remains maybe put the speed tracker signs up to help slow down the cars.

Fred Herrick, Kenjack Terrace: would like to see the light taken down, takes sometimes a half an hour to get back onto Lincoln Avenue.

Barb DeMare, Tanglewood Road: moved in 2002, and was informed by a neighbor regarding the sign and resents the sign. Speeding is an issue on Tanglewood Road. Would like to request the sign be taken down.

Tom Rajczewski, Lincoln Avenue: Village resident for 60+ years. Has a problem with the garbage trucks and delivery trucks using Lincoln Avenue. There is a 4ton limit sign up, it needs to be bigger. Is in favor of leaving the traffic device and issuing a sticker, and when you get pick up the sticker you would prove to the Village that you're a resident.

Seal Donnelly, Tanglewood Road: have heard several good options tonight. Suggested having police officers sit at Tanglewood Road and Sharon Road by the stop sign to see if anyone actually stops. Would like to see the light remain.

Kevin Kopach, Lincoln Avenue: stated that the Mayor said at one point he would not take the sign down. Lives on the other side of the train tracks so there is no impact on him. Not sure what the answer is, doesn't see the light doing anything. People go through regardless of the light. Mrs. Clark mentioned that there will be rules for the trucks, but those same rules were supposed to be enforced for Freighofer's as well and that wasn't being enforced.

A resident asked why we are having this public hearing.

The Mayor said he was reached out to by several residents who wanted to take it down. After 20 years we are relooking at the device to see if it is working. We are here to hear the residents and get feedback from the residents.

A resident asked when the decision was going to be made.

Clerk Blot stated that the public comment period would be for 30 days, to write in any further responses. And then it will be taken under advisement by the board.

Jen Schlet, Bauer Drive: new resident and felt compelled to speak. Speaking as someone new and fresh. When first encountered sign didn't know what it was for and feels that perspective is important. And didn't fully understand if she could continue to drive down Lincoln Avenue as a resident or not, and just went past it. Felt like this meeting was informative and appreciated the history and insight. The sign is meant to do something but isn't sure if it is. Not for keeping the sign. Hopes in the future to make something of it, but doesn't feel it is working as it is. If it stays up we should have something for especially new residents to inform them why the need for this sign.

Attorney De Cotis said the two major concerns in observing tonight's meeting are speed and traffic.

Barb De Cotis understands that this is about Lincoln Avenue but wants to address Locust Park when the new soccer fields open up, wants to know if the same concern will take place for Locust Park.

Debbie Boomhower, Richards Drive: heard a lot say it is inconvenient to go around. Before 1997 had to wait at the end of her street to be allowed onto Lincoln Avenue to just exit her street. Phil Minnissale, main concerns are with traffic. Address the problem on Lincoln Avenue as a separate issue as Locust Park. These are separate issues and each neighborhood should be addressed separately.

Bill Milke, Village Park Drive: asked what the next board meeting would be to address this issue.

Clerk Blot stated that after the 30 day period of public comment, there is no requirement to decide right after the 30 days, but added when a decision is going to be made the public will be notified, in the same manner the original public hearing was put to notice.

Mayor Leak again thanked everyone for coming out to be a part of this.

Maryanne Rajczewski, Lincoln Avenue: mentioned that the noise and dust from the traffic on Lincoln Avenue is an issue and many times she has to leave her windows down. Quality of life because of the traffic is an issue. Can't leave door open if you have children because if they go outside the traffic safety issue is of concern.

A motion was made by Trustee Lockart to adjourn the public hearing.
Motion seconded by Trustee Tobin.

VOTE:	Trustee Lockart	Yes
	Trustee Sim	Yes
	Trustee Tobin	Yes
	Mayor Leak	Yes

Motion passed.

Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.
Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie L. Blot
Village Clerk
Village of Colonie