

PUBLIC COMMENTS
VILLAGE CENTER PLANNING MEETING
JULY 17, 2010 – 11:00 AM – SALTAIRE YACHT CLUB

ELIZABETH STARKEY: Village Historian, 109 Beach Walk

- Provided historical perspective of Village, and commented that many of the shaping events in the Village were unplanned, and endorsed the Board's attempt to plan for the future needs of the Village.
- 14 Bay Prom, the Security Office on the corner of Bay Prom and Broadway was the first house built in Saltaire.
- She raised the question of whether it was necessary for Saltaire Security to have an office on the Bay Front.

SPEAKER #1

- Did not favor the addition of a large recreational or meeting hall. Noted that this was the largest gathering in 40 years of memory, and that it occurred so infrequently that the Yacht Club could accommodate such events when necessary.

SPEAKER #2

- Felt the grant opportunities were unrealistic
- Commented that Saltaire was unique to itself and should not be designed for something it was not, like the Pines.
- Requested to see the economic data in order to make a more informed opinion on the store.

SPEAKER #3

- Raised the question whether the current zoning was adequate to protect the Village from unwanted used of the commercial space.

SPEAKER #4

- Felt that the timing of the S&S initial information gathering in the winter time could not have possibly provided them with the proper sense and feel of Saltaire. They needed to see it work in the summer.
- Was opposed to:
 - Welcome/directional signage – not needed.
 - Post office expansion – always empty
 - Public bathrooms – encourage day trippers

SPEAKER #5

- Gave a history of the Library services
- Felt that the Children's Library was a magical place, and should not be changed in scope or location.
- Felt that there was enough room for both the children's program and the adult space (Wi-Fi Services and book) in the Library

SPEAKER #6

- Values the underdevelopment of the Village, and feels the proposed development and expansion would not feel like Saltaire
- Is prepared to not have a store if it means that the Village must get involved financially in any way to save it.

SPEAKER #7

- Greatly values open space, which the plan diminishes.
- Felt that Saltaire was a better place than to be unwelcoming to newcomers and visitors and that certain amenities for them is appropriate.

SPEAKER #8

- Values the lack of day trippers.
- Values the low key, understated nature of Saltaire and thus opposed:
 - Post Office Expansion/Relocation
 - Additional Signage

SPEAKER #9

- Commended Village for planning and implementation of new dock, dock house and beach management program.
- Urged the Village to focus on the real crux of the Village downtown, the store. Felt the Village needs a market, and the Board should undertake a hard analysis on that aspect and deemphasize the other less essential aspects of the plan.

SPEAKER #10

- Felt that the Village needs to focus more closely on cooperating with the Yacht on the services provided to its residents and the facilities needed to achieve that. Felt that the Village and Club had a good working relationship, and that the Village should concentrate on strengthening that relationship to integrate the needs of both organizations.

SPEAKER #11

- Complimented the Board on its planning efforts, and the report itself. Stated that the report had three deficiencies:
 - Questioned whether the Board had the right to get involved in a private venture operation.
 - Raised DEC and DOH limitations on the property
 - Stated that the risk of failure for the market was too great in his opinion.

SPEAKER #12

- Endorsed quiet and minimalist downtown area
- Did not like the plan because it potentially encourage day trippers, therefore:
 - No bathrooms
 - No food services

SPEAKER #13

- Raised concerns about the process more than the plan. Felt that the first goal of the firm should have been to identify and understand its constituents. Felt that they failed at that, maybe because of the time of year the process started.
- Felt that for the plan to work, it needed to find a structured way for the consultants to reach and get to know its constituents.

SPEAKER #14

- Focused her discussion on the Market. Identified the two biggest problems there as quality and price.
- Residents have gotten used to schlepping and it may be too late to change.
- Questioned FIF involvement for lack of cooperation for shipping from main land locations.

SPEAKER #15

- Felt the Village needed a store.
- Felt that the Board should release the figures on the Market so the public could join the debate on the store.

SPEAKER #16

- Raised the question: Will the Whitney's come back and operate the store if it cannot be sold, or will they close it. Felt that was key to the Board's potential involvement.

SPEAKER #17

- Commended the Village for undertaking the effort
- Identified the Market as the primary, almost singular issue.
- Stated that the crux of the Market issue is whether the Board decides that the store is vital, and if so, how much public funds are necessary to support it.

SPEAKER #18

- Raised two questions:
 - If the store is not sold, what happens to the operation. Does it close or will the current owners continue to open?
 - If the store is viable, then why has no private operator stepped forward to buy it?

SPEAKER #19

- Sated that while the building is dilapidated, it is typical for Fire Island stores, and better than the Fair Harbor store.
- Questioned what the revenue sources from the residential component of the building was, and if it was considered in the analysis.

SPEAKER #20

- Urged the Board to take steps to keep the Village "Charming", not "Commercial"

SPEAKER #21

- Recounted the history of the private meetings conducted the previous summer, where 48 out of the 50 people invited opined that it was a good idea to at least investigate whether the Village should acquire the Market.
- Emphasized that the Village should only be interested as a last resort if there is no private solution, which may happen since the store may no longer be saleable.
- Felt that an acquisition is feasible financially with minimum annual contribution per homeowner, maybe \$100 to \$200 annually.

SPEAKER #22

- Store
 - The problem is that the Market is priced too high, and it needs to be lowered for a realistic sale
 - Many variables to consider and Board needs to proceed with caution
- Plan
 - There are already many gathering places throughout the Village, including peoples homes, the Yacht Club and the Churches, that need to be considered before embarking on a plan to create another one.
 - Improvement without Change
 - No trees in the walkway impeding traffic
- Public Funding
 - Opposed to the options listed because they were designed for lower income communities.

SPEAKER #23

- Saw no need for revising what is already wonderful.
- Felt the store was a private problem, not a public problem, and the Village should stay out of it.

SPEAKER #24

- Encourage Village to be open with financial analysis so as many Village minds as possible can review and offer a solution.

SPEAKER #25

- Values underdeveloped atmosphere.
- Noted that the report stated that there was a trend toward shorter term rentals, and was concerned that the plan would facilitate that trend.
- Felt there was no need for additional activity in the Village center.
- Felt that the Board should allocate the Village's resources toward higher priority infrastructure concerns, such as boardwalks, beaches, etc. than a private market.

SPEAKER #26

- Recent homeowner in the Village, and stated that if the Market did not exist, they would not have purchased a home in Saltaire. Felt the Market was an absolute necessity and its disappearance would impact real estate values.

SPEAKER #27

- Felt the Market was important, for nothing else than to be able to send kids down with their own money to buy small items. Felt it was a big part of building childhood memories.
- Endorses understated welcome signage.
- Would like to see an improved downtown, for such things as:
 - Pizza
 - Ice Cream
 - No Restaurants

SPEAKER #28

- Felt that the ocean beach and the bay beach were the centers of the Village, not the Market, and the Board should focus their efforts there.

SPEAKER #29

- Felt that there was no need to continue with the plan. It should be stopped at this point.
- Felt the Board should focus on the Market if that was their concern, not a redevelopment plan.

SPEAKER #30

- Stated the Market was the main concern, so the focus should be there.
- Felt that the Village should be welcoming to newcomers and day trippers, not develop facilities to encourage more to come.

SPEAKER #31

- Felt that the residents of the Village would feel a duty to support the store if it was well managed, but since it is not, that loyalty is lacking

SPEAKER #32

- Felt the Village needs a market, and just being able to send children to shop by themselves adds to their experience of the place.