

July 30, 2019

Notes from the Streetlight Workshop held Tuesday, July 30, 2019, at 6:00 PM, at the Keene Valley Library. The following Town Board Members were present: Joseph P. Wilson, Supervisor, Michael J. Buysse, Jerry D. Smith and Teresa Cheetham-Palen, Members of Council. Absent: Robert M. Biesemeyer, Member of Council. Also present were: 9 residents and Ellen Estes, Town Clerk.

Discussion on the streetlights began at approximately 6:00 PM.

Ms. Cheetham-Palen began by explaining how the proposal of streetlight removal came about; she said it began with the streetlight conversion to LED, she said the Keene Energy Committee was formed and continued this project. She said the two options were to hire a streetlight designer or adopt a policy; she said the decision was made to go with the formation of a policy. She said the next step is to review the lights and make a decision on which lights would be removed; she said she wanted to make sure that everyone understood that it was the Town Board that made the decision to remove some of the streetlights, not the Keene Energy Committee.

She said the question is "Are there places where there are lights we don't need?" She said she has been driving around a lot and had talked to a lot of people. She said she has a list of lots of lights for removal which she would like to get feedback on.

Ms. Cheetham-Palen began her presentation showing lights for removal in St. Huberts, she said the two on Route 73 would stay, the two on St. Huberts Road will go.

She said the lights are random going into Keene Valley and some will be removed; she said that ultimately if a landowner has a light near their property and they love it, this light will be grandfathered in.

Michael Buysse said he was speaking for Rusty Hall who had to leave for an EMS call; he said Mr. Hall likes the light near his property and would like to have it stay.

She said the goal for this plan is to have a policy in place for the future.

She showed how many lights are on Market Street, the removal of every other one was suggested by Mr. Smith.

Mr. Wilson said this process is made harder since NYSEG has not responded to let him know which lights are public and which are private.

Mr. Buysse stated that the new lights will be different than the existing saying they may be brighter and less may be needed. He said maybe what is removed from Market Street could be added to Adirondack Street saying the stretch between Wade Whitney's and Adrian Edmond's is dark and has a sidewalk.

Mr. Smith said that shrouds may be added, he said that Mr. Ferebee had a shroud put on the light near his house.

Discussion moved back to Route 73, North of Adirondack Street, where Ms. Cheetham-Palen said 1 or 2 lights will be removed. The light near Peg Wilson's and Jerilea Zemple's was discussed for removal with their blessings. The light in the Town Parking Lot was discussed, this light is currently not working.

Ms. Cheetham-Palen said she talked to Paula McDonough about the light on Mason Young Road behind the hardware, Ms. McDonough said she would think about whether she wants it or not and get back to her.

Beede Road was discussed briefly, Ms. Cheetham-Palen said she hadn't been able to contact the Ishams yet; Ms. Estes said it was important that she does saying that Gavin came to the Town Hall and has voiced that he would like them left saying one is at the bridge and another is over a hydrant.

The presentation continued around Hurricane Road into the Hamlet of Keene. There was not a lot of discussion about these areas, they were covered at the first meeting. The light on Church Street was discussed; seems this light shines on the playground and the driveway to the skating rink.

More removals were discussed for Alstead and Gilmore Hill Roads.

Ms. Cheetham-Palen said the Board is trying to be creative with the plan; she said lots of lights are listed but not all are going. She said she has been getting a lot of feedback which is what she is asking for.

Katherine Brown asked how long the grandfathering would last; Mr. Wilson said that was hard to predict; David Craig said it would make the most sense to last the life of the LED bulb which is 20 years.

Ms. Cheetham-Palen stressed that it is the Board's intention to keep safety in mind.

Mr. Craig informed everyone present that there were informational brochures available at the front of the room.

Bunny Goodwin stated that the current lights have a yellow tinge and said the LED replacements will not.

Mr. Craig and Ms. Goodwin explained the difference the character of light makes to the dark skies. Mr. Craig said that while the LED looks whiter, the 3000K (2700 lumens) that the Town is changing to won't look as white since they have a little more blue in them.

Rusty Hall returned from his EMS call and was asked if he had anything to add. He began by saying he isn't concerned about light pollution; he is concerned about safety. He told about an incident that his son experienced saying he had a car accident and when he stood on Route 73 where it was dark, no one would stop, when he walked to the nearest light, the first car that came along stopped. He said he doesn't understand the push to get rid of them.

Ms. Cheetham-Palen again said she is trying to create consistency by creating a policy that reflects consistency.

She said she feels like light pollution has become a problem around the world. She says she believes the night sky is part of why people come here.

Mr. Hall told another incident that occurred near his house with hikers walking on the dark road; he asked how much it would cost to remove lights and then have to have them replaced.

Ms. Cheetham-Palen said she doesn't have that information saying that NYSEG is not easy to deal with.

It was mentioned that the Town is waiting to receive an inventory and audit from NYSEG.

Ms. Cheetham-Palen said that now is the time to look this situation over since it would be the cheapest time for removal.

Mr. Craig again recommended the public look at the brochures; he also spoke about how the street lights are a form of pollution and their effects on wildlife.

Ms. Cheetham-Palen encouraged anyone with feedback to email her or to send her a message on Nextdoor Keene.

This meeting wrapped up at approximately 6:45 PM.

Ellen S. Estes, Town Clerk
August 2, 2019

Joseph P. Wilson, Supervisor
Robert M. Biesemeyer, Councilman
Michael J. Buysse, Councilman
Jerry D. Smith, Councilman
Teresa Cheetham-Palen, Councilwoman

