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SPECIAL MEETING
TOWN OF MONROE
TOWN BOARD

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Bais Ruchel Paradise Hall
5 Israel Zupnick Drive
Monroe, New York 10950
September 8, 2015
7:07 p.m.

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ATTENDEES

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HARLEY DOLES SUPERVISOR

13

GERARD McQUADE COUNCILMAN

14

DANIEL BURKE COUNCILMAN

15

DENNIS McWATTERS COUNCILMAN

16

RICHARD COLON COUNCILMAN

17

PETER TILEM TOWN ATTORNEY

18

MICHAEL DONNELLY ATTORNEY

19

MARY ELLEN F. BEAMS TOWN CLERK

20

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25

1 TOWN OF MONROE

2 MR. DOLES: Ladies and
3 gentlemen, before we begin -- ladies
4 and gentlemen. Ladies and
5 gentlemen -- ladies and gentlemen, we
6 have an overflow capacity here. We
7 anticipated to have many, many
8 hundreds of people showing up. We
9 could never imagine that the response
10 would be as great as it is.

11 We ask you -- we ask you to be
12 good neighbors, at this time. The
13 need to be good neighbors, there's no
14 time like right now to begin that
15 practice. I'm asking all of you to
16 please have a seat so that we can
17 begin the town hall meeting at this
18 time to discuss issues relating to
19 annexation.

20 Ladies and gentleman, we're
21 going to begin in a couple of
22 minutes. We need to have everybody
23 seated. Those of you who are on the
24 side and there are no seats, I'm
25 asking -- I'm asking that you

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2 cooperate with the authorities here.

3 We have representatives from
4 the Public Safety, we have
5 representatives from the State
6 Police. We probably have
7 representatives from the sheriff's
8 office.

9 We ask that you just, again, be
10 good neighbors and try to respect
11 each other's rights to be able to attend
12 this meeting for you to be able to
13 hear what is going to be said tonight
14 and what is going to be determined
15 this evening, as well.

16 That being said, welcome and
17 good evening. My name is Harley
18 Doles. I'm the supervisor with the
19 Town of Monroe.

20 For the record -- for the
21 record, please note that if there's
22 going to be calling out, you will be
23 immediately removed. There will be
24 no second warning. If there is
25 calling out, you will be immediately

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2 removed. There will be no second
3 call out. There will be no second
4 chance. Tonight is the night that we
5 are going to do the peoples' business
6 for all 40,000 plus people in the
7 Town of Monroe.

8 There is not a voice out here
9 that we have not heard from. There
10 is not a voice or a family out here
11 that we do not feel for. This is a
12 major deciding issue in the lives of
13 not only our families, our friends,
14 but this community.

15 That gentleman is now leaving
16 the room. Direct him out, please,
17 now. Direct him out, please, now.

18 If we may continue. If we may
19 continue. If we may continue. If we
20 can't continue, the room will be
21 cleared and the Town Board will
22 conduct its discussions and decision
23 in accordance with state law and in
24 accordance with open meetings law.

25 However, if we cannot learn

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2 this evening how to get along for the
3 next half hour to an hour, then I
4 will clear this room in its entirety.

5 That being said, to my
6 immediate left is Councilman and
7 acting supervisor Gerry McQuade. To
8 his left is Councilman Dan Burke. To
9 his left is annexation counsel Mike
10 Donnelly, and for the record, our
11 town clerk, Mary Ellen Beams.

12 To my right is councilman Dan
13 Burke. Councilman McWatters and town
14 -- I'm sorry, Rick Colon. I
15 apologize, Rick. Rick Colon. Dan
16 Burke to my -- Dennis McWatters to my
17 immediate right and at the very end
18 of table the town attorney Peter
19 Tilem.

20 If any of you feel as though
21 speaking before, I would assume, well
22 over a thousand people is an easy
23 thing, it's not an easy thing,
24 especially when you have a thousand
25 people with their families that are

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2 looking for an absolute perfect
3 answer of which I don't think anyone
4 could ever provide, not when you have
5 -- not when you have so many people
6 with so many different, but so many
7 similar dreams for their children and
8 for their community's future.

9 Whether you live in the Village of
10 Harriman, the Village of Monroe, for
11 the Village of Kiryas Joel, Orange
12 County, or anywhere in this country.

13 The one thing that you expect
14 from your elected officials is for
15 them to listen.

16 Some of you feel as though --
17 sir, sit down, please. Sir, sit
18 down. Thank you. Please remain
19 seated. Those who have seats, if
20 you'd like right now to give up your
21 seat to somebody and move to the
22 side, please do so now, we'll give
23 you two minutes. Otherwise, please
24 remain seated.

25 We have before us an approval

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2 of 163.8 acres, with a disapproval of
3 507.4 acres before the Board. We
4 need a motion to be able to enter
5 that into discussion.

6 I'm sorry, my apologies.

7 Counsel has informed me, I failed to
8 do a pledge of allegiance. So, with
9 that being said, please raise for the
10 pledge of allegiance.

11 Ladies and gentlemen, we have
12 before the Board a motion for the
13 approval of is 163.8 acres, with
14 disapproval of 574 acres. The Board
15 has come to a general consensus that
16 that is something which we would like
17 to present. We need a motion to that
18 effect.

19 Counsel, annexation counsel
20 town counsel, if we are procedurally
21 doing something incorrect, please
22 stop us so that we can take the
23 corrective steps.

24 MR. COLON: I'll second that.

25 I'll second that motion for

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2 discussion.

3 MR. DOLES: Counsel wanted to
4 speak about behavior, however, I
5 think that it was discussed already.
6 I think we've done an adequate job.

7 MR. TILEM: I think you did a
8 fine job. Thank you.

9 MR. McQUADE: Okay, so that's
10 over with.

11 MR. DOLAN: Michael, please.
12 Again, this is the first time I think
13 in the history of Orange County,
14 probably in the United States that
15 we've had such an audience for an
16 issue that sometimes tends to go
17 unnoticed, but certainly it hasn't
18 here tonight.

19 MR. TILEM: As everyone present
20 knows, there are two annexation dates
21 pending before the village board and
22 the town board. The first petition
23 was filed December of 2013, and seeks
24 to annex approximately 507 acres of
25 land from the unincorporated portion

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2 of Town of Monroe into the Village of
3 Kiryas Joel.

4 In August of 2014, the second
5 petition was filed with both boards
6 in which 164 acres of land is sought
7 to be annexed, again, from the town
8 into the village.

9 A SECRA study and analysis with
10 the public hearing, as many of you
11 can recall, was conducted. An
12 environmental impact statement in its
13 final form was accepted and issued by
14 the lead agency earlier in August
15 earlier this summer, and the village
16 of Kiryas Joel has issued its SECRA
17 finding statement, as well its
18 resolution in approving both the 507
19 acre petition as well as the 164 acre
20 petition.

21 Tonight it is the time for the
22 town Board to vote on both of those
23 petitions and the issue its SECRA
24 finding statement. I believe that the
25 town board members should discuss the

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2 rationale for any decision they make
3 and they should vote by roll call and
4 that those should be properly
5 recorded.

6 MR. DOLES: Michael, thank you
7 very much.

8 We have a motion that we need
9 to be made concerning an approval of
10 163.8 acres, with disapproval of
11 507.4 acres.

12 MR. McQUADE: I'll make the
13 motion.

14 I move that the town of Monroe
15 consent to the 163.8 acre annexation.
16 The town board hereby finding that
17 it's in the overall public interest
18 and then disapprove the 507.4 acre
19 petition. The Town Board hereby
20 finding that it is not in the overall
21 public interest to grant that
22 petition.

23 Do I have a second?

24 MR. COLON: I'll second that
25 motion for discussion.

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2 MR. DOLES: Gentleman, each
3 person, if you'd like, you can please
4 opine on your position and then we
5 will move forward.

6 Mr. McWatters, if you would
7 like.

8 MR. McWATTERS: Thank you, Mr.
9 Supervisor. I would like to take
10 just a few moments to make some
11 comments.

12 I would like to thank everyone,
13 all you folks who wrote me or called
14 me in the past four days to let me
15 know how you felt about the
16 annexation.

17 I apologize for not getting
18 back to each one of you individually,
19 although that would have been my
20 preference.

21 I did listen to all your
22 messages, I understand your concerns.
23 I took the time to read everything
24 that was presented by every one of
25 the specialist, by every one of the

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2 attorneys and the villages document
3 of Sunday night.

4 There was one overriding theme
5 that I took from all the messages
6 that I did receive, and that was to
7 do the right thing. The dilemma
8 becomes one of, What is the right
9 thing?

10 Everybody presented their case
11 and each one individually seemed to
12 be the right answer.

13 The annexation issue itself is
14 probably one of the most difficult
15 decisions I've ever been faced with,
16 other than the movie theater. I had
17 to lighten it up a little bit.

18 I understand each argument both
19 for and against. I empathize that
20 there has been a frightening amount
21 of misinformation or false
22 information that has been spread
23 through various media.

24 I have friends on both sides of
25 the issue, and that makes me realize

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2 that I will not be able to satisfy or
3 appease everyone with my vote, and
4 that, for me, is troubling.

5 I am troubled by the apparent
6 discrimination that exists in the
7 village against certain members of
8 the Monroe community. I am
9 disappointed by the fact that the
10 school district has not rebuked the
11 statements that if the annexation is
12 approved there will be an immediate
13 reduction of budgeted programs in the
14 Monroe-Woodbury Central School
15 District. That lack of
16 responsiveness has created the
17 disturbing outbreaks of last Monday's
18 town board meeting. The school board
19 could have resolved that with one
20 simple statement.

21 Folks, I am afraid that we,
22 including the Board, this Board, are
23 all guilty of behaving badly over the
24 last 20 months. It is my firm belief
25 that had there been a meeting of all

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1 interested parties before the
2 annexation petitions had been filed,
3 we may have been able to reach an
4 agreement that would have been in the
5 best interest of all of the town
6 residents. And I would suggest even
7 at this late date, as suggested in
8 the county's CGR report, that we try
9 to resolve our issues and not allow
10 the courts to resolve this local
11 issue for us.

12
13 Per the New York State law, if
14 this motion is passed tonight, we
15 still have the ability over the next
16 30 days to have to such discussion.

17 Putting aside political,
18 emotional or philosophical
19 considerations, my vote is based upon
20 the comment of the town's
21 consultants. There needs to be a
22 supplemental EIS that includes a
23 longer term extrapolation of
24 population growth so that a build out
25 scenario could be developed to assess

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2 without a motion the environmental
3 issues to develop proper remediation
4 proposals.

5 The way the SECRA process rests
6 at the moment, I do not believe that
7 the best interest of all of the
8 residents of Monroe is not to be
9 served with a yes vote.

10 MR. DOLES: Is there another
11 member of the Board that would like
12 to speak?

13 MR. BURKE: I will say that
14 I've read every document, read every
15 piece of e-mail, I've spoken to two,
16 three-hundred people on the phone.
17 This was carefully considered and I'm
18 ready to vote tonight.

19 MR. DOLES: Is there anyone
20 else that would like to say
21 something?

22 MR. COLON: Again, I would like
23 to thank everybody for coming down
24 tonight. I know this is a very hot
25 and contentious issue because, as