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Committees are active in Tusten

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By SUSAN WADE

NARROWSBURG, NY — The cold and snow has not impeded the progress of various committees within the Town of Tusten.

At the Tusten town meeting on January 9, energy committee liaison Brandi Merolla reported that the committee has set a goal of further educating the public about the benefits of recycling, focusing particularly on decreasing the use of plastic bags. In addition to getting the word out, the committee is taking the additional step of creating 500 reusable tote bags that will proclaim "Tusten recycles." The bags ultimately will be distributed one to a household, and will be available through the town office. They are themselves made out of recycled and recyclable plastic. A sum of \$800 has been allotted for their purchase.

Members of the Energy Committee will also accompany New York Power Authority (NYPA) representatives to see an all-LED-lit town in Westchester County as a follow-up to previous discussions about converting town lighting to energy-efficient LED lamps.

Further, bins will be placed in the town buildings to facilitate recycling of materials other than paper, which is already recycled in the offices.

The receipt of a \$75,000 grant for improvements in the town hall was announced. These include some green action items including LED lighting, repairing brickwork to increase insulation, installation of energy-efficient windows and on-demand hand dryers in the lower level restrooms. Energy improvements in the Tusten Theatre are also planned.

Council member Tony Ritter reported on the constabulary committee progress. He said that much of the information being shared on social media may not be correct, particularly the notion that the board has already determined the outcome of the committee's work.

One suggestion that has arisen in conversations with former law enforcement personnel is that the town explore the possibility of contracting with the sheriff's office for additional manpower during the heavy-traffic summer months, thus eliminating the need for additional training and equipment of its own employees. Supervisor Carol Wingert will follow-up with the sheriff's office to ascertain the cost of such an arrangement.

One member of the public asked whether the sheriffs or state police would be less attentive to the community if a constabulary is established. Another asked whether the idea of establishing a constabulary is based on statistical or anecdotal evidence. Wingert responded that crimes that aren't caught can't be documented. Noting that the constables would be patrolling between Memorial Day and Labor Day, the resident wondered whether the need for such patrol would end on Labor Day.

Ritter said that he is repeatedly asked why there is a need for an on-road constabulary in the town. He shared records of past board actions in 1972 and 1990 appointing constables. "Was there more business or commerce in those years than presently? No," he stated.

He further said that the board is studying the public's interest not in an effort to find something with which to "piss off the community"; rather, it is in response to complaints received by board members, in the town hall and at board meetings.

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