



VILLAGE OF DOBBS FERRY BOARD OF TRUSTEES AGENDA

MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 13, 2020
AGENDA ITEM SECTION: MATTERS REQUIRING ACTION
AGENDA ITEM NO. : 8
AGENDA ITEM: DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT A POLICY FOR MANDATORY CONTINUING EDUCATION BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ITEM BACKUP DOCUMENTATION: 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND PROPOSED RESOLUTION

VILLAGE OF DOBBS FERRY - BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CONTINUING EDUCATION POLICY

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Board of Trustees intends to establish a policy voluntarily committing to complete annual educational training in general topics of public interest and governance and specific topics of land use, planning and zoning as already required by law for members of the Village Planning Board with whom they share site plan review jurisdiction.

RATIONALE

The Trustees firmly believe that keeping current on noteworthy or innovative topics of public interest and general governance is of significant value to the effective representation of the Village and all of its residents. The Board intends to utilize opportunities to maximize the depth of knowledge among the Trustees through the use of all available formats.

Additionally, this policy will also provide the Trustees with an opportunity to obtain a deeper understanding in the specific areas of land use, zoning and planning given their commensurate authority with the Planning Board for the review and approval of Site Plan applications (Zoning Code Section 300-52). Specifically, the Zoning Code states that Board of Trustees is the final approval authority for review of all site plans in the zoning districts enumerated in Section 300-52(B)(1)(a-e). Further, Section 300-52(B)(2) also provides the Board of Trustees with the option to retain final site plan approval authority in all other zoning districts if the site plan impacts, in any way, at least one acre of property. The Planning Board has final site plan review and approval for properties in all zoning districts not included among the list enumerated in Section 300-52(B)(1) (a-e) and where the Board of Trustees chooses not exercise its discretion to act in accordance with Section 300-52(B)(2).

In light of this equal responsibility for site plan review in the Village of Dobbs Ferry, the Board of Trustees believes it is also in the public interest to voluntarily commit to an equal level of training and education as that already required by Chapter 662 of the laws of 2006 for members of the Planning Board.

BACKGROUND on Chapter 662 of the Laws of 2006

In 2006 the New York State legislature approved a bill to establish minimum training requirements for members of Planning and Zoning Boards statewide. The Governor signed the bill into law, and it took effect on January 1, 2007. The law provides a statewide uniform minimum training standard of four hours annually for each member of planning and zoning boards. Those members who fail to receive the training are ineligible for re-appointment unless exempted by the local governing board. Municipalities are recommended to have a system in place for keeping track of the training received by the individual board members.

Since municipalities in New York have primary responsibility to regulate private land use through volunteer-citizen boards, their actions have a profound impact on local, regional and state land use policies and on individual landowners. Well-considered, consistent and timely reviews and decisions by municipal boards attract quality community development and result in less use of public funds to defend challenges to local decision-making and to pay higher premiums for liability insurance.

Under the law, the legislative body for each municipality approves the course or courses of training for its individual board members. Municipalities also have discretion to mandate more than the minimum hours of

training. The type of training is also left to the discretion of individual municipalities and may vary from board member to board member depending on the needs and circumstances. Training may provide basic skills or may involve more advanced topics or new planning and zoning approaches. The formats may also be varied including traditional classroom format, distance learning or self-study.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees understands the importance of ongoing education in general topics of public interest and governance to the effectiveness of their representation of the Village and its residents; and

WHEREAS, the Dobbs Ferry Zoning Code provides the Board of Trustees and the Planning Board with commensurate authority to review and approve site plan applications; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 662 of the laws of 2006 mandates a minimum amount of annual educational training for Dobbs Ferry Planning Board members but is silent on a similar requirement for other board members who may share commensurate jurisdictional authority.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that in recognition of the importance to the public of effective government and well-reasoned, consistent and timely decision-making in all Village matters, the Board of Trustees hereby adopts a policy committing each Trustee to completing no less than six hours of annual educational training to include at least four hours of education specifically related to land use topics and two hours of general education related to board governance and leadership roles and responsibilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the individual Trustees shall provide documentation evidencing compliance with this policy to the Village Clerk by no later than the first day of November each year, who shall maintain a record of compliance among the official Village records.