

Town to consider making clerk post appointed

Written by KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM
Wednesday, 24 April 2013 18:09

Port chairman says snafus with land-division meeting underscore need for change

It's time for the Town of Port Washington to consider appointing a clerk rather than electing one, Town Chairman Jim Melichar said after a series of snafus regarding the scheduling of a meeting on a proposed land division last week.

Melichar said the Town Board will consider the change when it meets at 7:30 p.m. Monday, May 6.



Jim Melichar



Jenny Schlenvogt

Although he is conferring with Town Attorney Steve Cain to determine the steps needed to make the change, Melichar said it will require a referendum, possibly in spring 2014.

If approved, a clerk would then be appointed when Clerk Jenny Schlenvogt's term ends in two years, he said.

This would be the second time in recent history the town considers appointing its clerk. In 2010, residents rejected the change by a 25-vote margin.

Melichar's decision came as the Town Board considered a request by Ted Burbach to divide two lots off Dynna Drive.

The Town Plan Commission recommended approval of the certified survey maps that would divide the properties, and officials agreed the Town Board would consider the matter before the town's annual meeting on April 16.

But Melichar said when he got to the meeting, he discovered no agenda had been posted by Schlenvogt and thus the board could not meet.

When he asked her why, Schlenvogt "got mad, yelled at me and stormed out of the room," Melichar said.

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"I thought it was my job to tell her what was going to be on the agenda, and her job to put out the agenda."

The board agreed to reschedule the meeting for Thursday, April 18, he said, and he put together an agenda for that night.

The board met and took action, but after the meeting discovered that it had not been properly noticed, Melichar said. He had posted the agenda at Town Hall, but did not provide notice to Ozaukee Press, the town's official newspaper.

The board then rescheduled the meeting for Monday, April 22, and notified Burbach of the error. On Monday, the Town Board unanimously approved the land divisions.

Melichar said he's always believed Schlenvogt was doing a good job, but his faith in her has been shaken.

"I feel terrible about what happened. I thought we were all on the same page," he said. "We can't have an elected official causing this much havoc."

Schlenvogt said she didn't post an agenda for the April 16 meeting because she didn't receive the certified survey maps ahead of time.

"In the past, we made sure we had the materials before scheduling a meeting," she said, adding she notified supervisors Jim Rychtik and Mike Didier there would not be a meeting but couldn't reach Melichar.

She would not comment on Melichar's statement about a confrontation, but said she wasn't feeling well that night so she left before the annual meeting.

Schlenvogt said she didn't know Melichar had rescheduled the meeting for Thursday until receiving a text message that night. She was at another meeting and could not attend, she said.

Schlenvogt said she was surprised to learn Melichar is planning to look at appointing the next clerk.

"I believe I'm doing my job as required of me," she said. "I believe I'm communicating properly. I do have a lot of responsibilities on my plate."

"I don't think the board disrespects me. I thought we had a good working relationship."