

Special Meeting, Town of Monroe, Town Board, September 8, 2015

A special meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Monroe, County of Orange and the State of New York was held at the Bais Rachel Paradise Hall, 5 Israel Zupnick Dr., Monroe, New York 10950, Monroe, and New York on the 8th day of September 2015.

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Present: Harley Doles | Supervisor |
| Gerard McQuade | Councilman |
| Daniel Burke | Councilman |
| Dennis McWatters | Councilman |
| Richard Colon | Councilman |
| Peter Tilem | Town Attorney |
| Michael Donnelly | Attorney |
| Mary Ellen F. Beams | Town Clerk |

Special Meeting

Supervisor Doles called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:00 P.M.

The Board discussed the proposed annexations.

Please see attached resolution.

Adjourn the Meeting

On motion by Councilman McQuade, seconded by Councilman Colon the following was

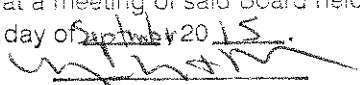
Approved Ayes 5 McQuade, Colon, Doles, Burke, McWatters

Nays 0

Approval to adjourn the meeting of September 8, 2015.

Mary Ellen F. Beams, Town Clerk, Town of Monroe

I hereby certify that this is a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Town Board of the Town of Monroe at a meeting of said Board held on the 8 day of September 2015.


MARY ELLEN F. BEAMS
Town Clerk

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Town of Monroe
Town Clerk's Office

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SPECIAL MEETING
TOWN OF MONROE
TOWN BOARD

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

ATTENDEES

| | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| HARLEY DOLES | SUPERVISOR |
| GERARD McQUADE | COUNCILMAN |
| DANIEL BURKE | COUNCILMAN |
| DENNIS McWATTERS | COUNCILMAN |
| RICHARD COLON | COUNCILMAN |
| PETER TILEM | TOWN ATTORNEY |
| MICHAEL DONNELLY | ATTORNEY |
| MARY ELLEN F. BEAMS | TOWN CLERK |

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

1 TOWN OF MONROE

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

1 TOWN OF MONROE

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

1 TOWN OF MONROE

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

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

Putting aside political, emotional or philosophical considerations, my vote is based upon the comment of the town's consultants. There needs to be a supplemental EIS that includes a longer term extrapolation of population growth so that a build out 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

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2 Mr. McWatters said, there has been a
3 lot of information and misinformation
4 and a lot of emotion has been keyed
5 up on both sides of this issue.

6 There are no easy answers in
7 this. And as a Board, we've agonized
8 over this for almost two years now, a
9 year and a half. And I dare say that
10 after all the calls, after all the
11 messages, positive and negative
12 messages, all the hurtful things that
13 have been said on both sides, I think
14 as a town we have to take a step back
15 and take a breath and look at the
16 facts.

17 I think there's too much
18 emotional tied up in what we think is
19 going to happen and not will really
20 happen. In this area we already have
21 two building sites that are built
22 out. We have more on the way. And
23 what we're looking at as a Board is
24 trying to find a solution that would
25 serve the people who live in this

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2 area.

3 The town has limited resources.

4 The area in question, the town cannot

5 provide what is necessary as far as

6 water, sewer, fire and protection.

7 It's an issue. It doesn't mean that

8 it's said and done here and done

9 tonight. It's an issue that I think

10 that as a town, as people, as family

11 members we should come together and

12 try to bring some sensibility to

13 what's going on. And I know that

14 right now it's not going to happen

15 tonight as far as toning down the

16 emotion because too many people have

17 been talked up on one side or the

18 other.

19 I am ready to make my decision

20 and it has not been made lightly; I

21 have been up for months. I know that

22 in the end that both sides probably

23 won't like exactly what I'm going to

24 say. But I will stand my decision

25 and I'm still willing to listen and

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2 to work with people to join our town
3 back together. Our town has been
4 torn apart, the village has been torn
5 apart. This has been very arduous.

6 So I will make my vote, but
7 understand this, it has not been
8 easy, not one bit.

9 MR. McQUADE: I'd like to make
10 a few comments on this issue which
11 has been contentious and problematic
12 for a lot of people.

13 As the other members of the
14 Board said, there's no easy solution.
15 No one's going to be perfectly happy
16 and no one's going to be perfectly
17 upset. It's going to be something
18 that will, in my opinion, the motion
19 puts forth is more to me what I
20 consider a compromise.

21 We have two different opinions
22 that are strong on both ends, equally
23 forceful and equally passionate. I
24 think our responsibility as
25 representatives of everyone is to try

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2 and consider some ground where we can
3 at least have a compromise.

4 Now if you look at the one --
5 we call it the 164. If you look at
6 that, that's less than one-third of
7 the 507.

8 Now, I've always followed
9 politics and decision makers who've
10 had difficult decisions to make, and
11 I remember some quotes from someone
12 that sometimes you have to take half
13 of loaf, it's better than nothing,
14 and if you are on the opposition, if
15 you're to give half a loaf, it's
16 better than giving a whole loaf. So
17 you got to meet somewhere in the
18 middle.

19 My opinion is, as someone who
20 has to make these decisions, is that
21 if you at it less than a third, I
22 think we have to -- I will look upon
23 it as difficult, but something
24 proper. We, as a community, have a
25 deep division, probably deeper than I

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2 ever knew.

3 I've lived here for most of my
4 life and it's been kind of
5 disappointing, but that's just the
6 way it is.

7 So looking at the reality of
8 it, I think that the 507 was too
9 much, it had a lot of people upset
10 and I think rightfully so.

11 Maybe this should have been
12 done as a smaller annexation petition
13 in the first place. Maybe it
14 wouldn't have unnerved people so
15 much. I know that there was a lot of
16 bad talk perhaps from everywhere and
17 I think a lot of hurt feelings, and I
18 hope in the future we can move away
19 from that.

20 But there's technical reasons
21 where there's effects, and with any
22 development there will be effects.
23 Any development in the village of
24 Monroe where I lived, there's
25 developments going on right now

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2 that's been approved that's going to
3 affect my life in the village and the
4 traffic and everything else. It has
5 throughout the county. Orange County
6 is developing, it's growing, people
7 are moving up here. In the case of
8 the Hasidic community, they have a
9 high birthrate, they're growing, they
10 need some room to expand. So one way
11 or the other there's developments
12 happening everywhere.

13 So we can't put our head in the
14 sand and expect to have no
15 development in the Town of Monroe
16 anywhere because it's happening all
17 around us. Slowly but surely the
18 town is developing. And when we say
19 the rural character of our town,
20 honestly, this town of Monroe is not
21 really rural. It's suburban to New
22 York City more than rural. And we
23 have to accept the fact that our
24 location to the highways and the
25 trains, it's a perfect spot to

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2 commute where many of us do, both in
3 the Hasidic and the non-Hasidic
4 community, a lot of us head down to
5 the city every morning to earn our
6 living.

7 To read some technical stuff,
8 when you look at the benefit and
9 detriments that are customarily
10 defined in the terms of municipal
11 services, such as police and fire
12 protection, health regulations, sewer
13 and water service, public utilities
14 and public education, this involves
15 examining the physical impacts on
16 both municipalities, particularly the
17 relative ability of each to supply
18 water, sewer and emergency services
19 to that territory. It's pretty
20 obvious to all of us who the
21 documents we've been given, the
22 experts that studied it, that the
23 village of KJ is more able to give
24 these type of services to the people
25 who are looking to annex into KJ;

1 TOWN OF MONROE

2 that is a fact that's unavoidable.

3 It's usually that way in any

4 annexation. The rulings usually go

5 in favor of people who will be able

6 to provide the services to the people

7 who are looking to annex in. That's

8 part of what we have to look at and

9 that's the honest fact. We have to

10 look at that.

11 We have to balance it against

12 benefits and detriments of the other

13 community. We have to find a balance

14 of the impacts, and that's a hard

15 balance to find.

16 The fact is is that we have to

17 actually, in our heads, draw a line

18 where the 164, perhaps, is a better

19 boundary where the higher density

20 housing of KJ would end and then the

21 lower density housing of the Town of

22 Monroe would begin.

23 When you look at the fingers in

24 the way that KJ was initially

25 established, a lot of people back

1 TOWN OF MONROE

2 then thought the fingers that it made
3 more sense to probably to be inside
4 KJ, the village itself. So this
5 could be looked upon as correcting
6 past mistakes, in my opinion. I
7 think that it makes sense.

8 The village's growth has
9 required major investments in
10 infrastructure, which can be extended
11 at a relatively low margin of cost to
12 the territory while providing
13 additional tax base to the village to
14 support these investments. The town
15 board finds that the additional
16 territory will help defray the
17 village's higher cost, for example,
18 for professional police, fire
19 services, water and sewer. The town
20 cannot provide water and sewer to the
21 Village of KJ. We don't have the
22 capacity, we don't have the money to
23 do it and we cannot do it.

24 We also feel that in the future
25 there's greater denser development

1 TOWN OF MONROE

2 allowed in the town. That we think
3 will be almost inevitable. But in
4 the 164, you have a lot of URN zoning
5 which is denser development allowed
6 than in the other parts of the town
7 of Monroe. So it sort of correlates
8 if you look at it logically.

9 This annexation is favored by
10 some of the members of the Board
11 because it will enable development in
12 locations where services are
13 available and only the political
14 boundary prevents such development.

15 The village's land use
16 regulations that extend to the
17 annexation territory are likely to
18 allow higher density development and,
19 hence, higher tax rates and revenues
20 to support better and more
21 comprehensive public services.

22 The town's rural residential
23 zoning classification restricts the
24 construction of the multi-family
25 housing typical in the village near

1 TOWN OF MONROE

2 the annexation territory. If the
3 annexation is completed, the village
4 is expected, after further planning
5 and environmental analysis, to zone
6 the area in a manner consistent with
7 that in the village and the
8 annexation territory that can be
9 provided to moderate and low income
10 families. There are a lot of
11 moderate and low income families in
12 KJ that are looking for housing.

13 Now, I'm not going to judge
14 anyone because we all have our own
15 built in and perhaps learned thought
16 process, but when I talk with my
17 village residents where I live in the
18 village of Monroe, I always point out
19 that if you don't want -- if you have
20 a distinction where you don't
21 necessarily want the people of KJ,
22 primarily the Hasidic people, to come
23 out into our school district and into
24 our neighborhoods to buy homes, the
25 annexation actually makes sense.

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2 Now, I personally think -- I
3 personally think that if we look at
4 this just technically without looking
5 at people's opinion against it and
6 the uproar that's been caused, which
7 we have to consider as a town board,
8 I would actually think 507 is the
9 logical solution. But I will say --
10 I will say that the Board is not
11 considering that now.

12 We considered it. We came up
13 with a compromise and we are not
14 unaware of the fact of the feelings
15 of half of the community. We're
16 basically half a community and half a
17 community; non Hasidic and Hasidic.

18 The Town Board has taken very
19 seriously the complaints and the
20 fears and worries of the non Hasidic
21 community in order to go through a
22 compromised position.

23 And the last thing I'll get
24 into is one thing that has disturbed
25 some of the members of the town board

1 TOWN OF MONROE

2 recently, some of the members
3 mentioned it and I'm just going to
4 read something here, and it has to do
5 with the educational system.

6 I've been contacted by many of
7 the members of my area town about the
8 school districts and the effect on
9 the school district if any or all the
10 annexation were to go through.

11 Now, I'm going to read you
12 something here quickly. The school
13 district boundary. The annexation
14 will not automatically reconfigure
15 the boundaries of the two school
16 districts in the area.

17 Therefore, the town board has
18 considered both the effects to the
19 districts if their boundaries remain
20 as they are and the effects that the
21 boundaries have changed to conform to
22 the new or possible new municipal
23 boundaries. If the annexation
24 occurs, but school district
25 boundaries do not change, the village

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2 residents and expected additional
3 inhabitants of the annexation
4 territory are unlikely to attend
5 Monroe-Woodbury Central Schools,
6 attending, instead, their private
7 parochial schools in similar fashion
8 as occurs within the Village of KJ.

9 However, private school
10 students are entitled to
11 transportation, remedial services,
12 books and other services provided by
13 the public school district at a cost.

14 Therefore, if the annexation
15 enables additional growth in the
16 annexation territory, but the
17 territory remains in the
18 Monroe-Woodbury Central School
19 District, additional services will be
20 required.

21 However, if the territory
22 remains in the MWCSO as it develops,
23 increased property valuations and
24 therefore additional tax revenues
25 should provide for the increased

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services demanded from the projected additional families in the annexation territory once it develops. The specter of the problems, famously put forth many times, under which the East Ramapo School District now labors, as well known by all of us, surfacing here has been argued by some as a near certainty, we do not see it that way as a town board and the experts we deal with do not see it that way.

East Ramapo had no second school district. It's a totally different situation, there's no boundaries, there's no separate district. A judgment of the school district boundary to conform to any new municipal boundary if any annexation is to occur, avoiding the East Ramapo problem.

I said this a year and a half ago. If you want to keep our schools as our schools and their schools as

1 TOWN OF MONROE

2 their schools, the annexation and
3 then an almost immediate changing of
4 the school boundaries agreed upon by
5 both school boards, KJ and
6 Monroe-Woodbury, would have the
7 desired effect of preventing for the
8 far future any issue of becoming what
9 has happened to be a mess down in
10 East Ramapo school district.

11 I think it makes sense, if you
12 look at it logically, without emotion
13 and think about what I'm saying here.
14 I'm not saying it just to convince
15 you. If you don't agree, I
16 understand. But at least think about
17 what happened in East Ramapo. They
18 were all in the same school district.

19 If you do not or we do not and
20 the courts do not agree to have the
21 annexation, I think what's going to
22 happen inevitably, because I've
23 talked to School District
24 Superintendent Petlin, I see what's
25 going on around the town as I speak

1 TOWN OF MONROE

2 to both groups in KJ, some of them
3 are desiring to come out and buy a
4 lot of the properties that are now
5 being developed in the Village of
6 Monroe and the Town of Monroe, and in
7 this country you have every right to
8 buy property anywhere you want, and
9 it's inevitable if they don't have
10 room to grow.

11 But because the KJ school
12 district has already voted, as it
13 says here, to adjust the school
14 district boundaries upon any
15 annexation occurring, I think that
16 they're making the step in the right
17 direction and I hope that our
18 Monroe-Woodbury school district would
19 do the same thing, get past the
20 emotion, some of the political
21 rhetoric that happens in every town
22 and in this town over a heated issue,
23 and change the school district
24 boundaries.

25 I'll read something here for

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2 you. This change will be authorized
3 by state law, Education Law Section
4 1507, and may well indeed -- and we
5 think indeed should occur.
6 Resolution of that issue rests
7 squarely in the control of the
8 Monroe-Woodbury School District and
9 the Kiryas Joel School District. The
10 KJ district has already resolved to
11 adjust the district boundary. I take
12 this issue extremely seriously.

13 Now, I went through the school
14 Monroe-Woodbury School District as a
15 high schooler from Greenwood Lake.
16 It's a great school system. It still
17 is and I think it always will be. My
18 children go here. A lot of your
19 children go here. We will protect
20 the school system. We will protect
21 it by the agreement of both school
22 boards if the annexation goes
23 through. I will urge both school
24 boards, as KJ already did it, I will
25 urge my Monroe-Woodbury school board

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2 to step up to the plate, make
3 statements that make sense, stop
4 letting this rhetoric and fear
5 tactics go on and agree to change the
6 school boundary district if any
7 annexation occurs.

8 Once that occurs, change the
9 boundaries. The issue will be
10 resolved. We can all move on. It
11 makes perfect sense.

12 Now this last thing I'll say is
13 about the 163. What will probably
14 happen, in my opinion, is we might
15 wind up in a court case both against
16 the 164 and against the 507. The
17 petitioners are likely to sue to get
18 the rest of their petition in court.
19 There are groups in our town who will
20 sue to stop the 164.

21 I think what Dennis said
22 earlier -- Councilman McWatters,
23 excuse me, made perfect sense. I
24 think that a negotiation should be
25 done on all sides calmly and quickly

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to beat the 30-day deadline of the court case. If the papers are filed, we can still negotiate before we all spend a lot of money in court and waste our time and efforts and build up more animosity between the two groups. If we can come to some kind of settlement or agreement where both groups in KJ and both sides of the quick way, the non Hasidic side and the Hasidic side can come to some kind of agreement.

I had a person stand up at the town board meeting and voice their opinion, which they're allowed to do and it's wonderful we all do it, and the lady said she wanted us to send all the Hasidics back to Brooklyn.

Now, I let her know right then and there we are not in the business and not able or wanting to send anyone anywhere. We are all here, we all live in a community. No one should feel pressured to leave by any

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2 decision made here tonight because
3 Monroe's a beautiful place, a great
4 school system and a wonderful
5 community.

6 So I just say let's work it out
7 with cooler heads, let's get together
8 and have a nice good community from
9 now on, reduce animosity and work
10 together and be open. We need all
11 governments to be open. We need all
12 governments to stop discriminating
13 against certain groups. We all need
14 to get along, otherwise we're all
15 going to destroy each other. If we
16 don't take this seriously on all
17 sides, look deep into our souls and
18 in the mirror and treat everyone as
19 we want to be treated, it won't work,
20 it won't work. So let's do that now
21 while we have a good chance to do it
22 and I'll proudly cast my vote the way
23 I see fit tonight and I hope we can
24 all move on from there. Thank you.

25 MR. DOLES: Ladies and

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2 gentlemen, I'll try to wrap this up
3 as quickly and without duplicating
4 some of the efforts and the comments
5 that the other councilmen made.

6 This afternoon I spoke with a
7 Charles Szuberla. Mr. Szuberla is
8 the New York State Deputy
9 Commissioner on Education. I wrote
10 to the commissioner last week. I
11 spoke to their office last week and I
12 asked them to come. I asked them to
13 come down and hear what was being
14 said about the demise of the school
15 systems here in the Town of Monroe.

16 That's not only the
17 Monroe-Woodbury School District, but
18 the Kiryas Joel School District.

19 Mr. Szuberla, the New York
20 State Deputy Commissioner, was quite
21 frankly unaware of many of the issues
22 we face today, but he certainly was
23 well aware of some of the issues that
24 are faced in East Ramapo.

25 We all agreed that the issue of

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2 East Ramapo is completely different
3 than the issues here that we face.

4 New York State Education Law
5 1507, it allows for the redrawing of
6 district lines. It's something which
7 is imbedded in the law, it's
8 something which the creation of the
9 Kiryas Joel School District is not
10 exempt by.

11 However, regardless of whether
12 or not the Monroe-Woodbury school
13 district will continue after two
14 years to vet the issue and analyze it
15 and analyze it until it reaches a
16 threshold point where someone else
17 has to step in and rule for or
18 against them. Regardless, it appears
19 as though the KJ school district and
20 the Monroe-Woodbury school district
21 do have the right to be able to
22 redraw district lines.

23 But more important than that,
24 it's not the redrawing of the
25 district lines. It's the fear, that

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2 as Councilman McWatters said, it's
3 the fear that's being installed in
4 the families as we speak.

5 Last week we had a board
6 meeting. You could hear and feel the
7 deceit and anger and anguish that the
8 parents had. You could see the
9 terror in some of the kids' eyes.
10 It's not something which falls on our
11 deaf ears and it is something that
12 not only the parents of the
13 Monroe-Woodbury school district hold
14 dear to them, but it's something that
15 the families and the parents of the
16 Kiryas Joel school district hold
17 equally as close.

18 It appears as though, despite
19 the extraordinary efforts by the two
20 extraordinary superintendents, that
21 is Elsie Rodriguez and Joel Petlin,
22 despite everything they tried to do,
23 to do all that's right for the
24 children, we, as a community, are not
25 able to come together.

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2 We are not as a community able
3 to sit and realize that if a new
4 district is -- if lines are redrawn,
5 what does that mean in terms of being
6 able to prevent an East Ramapo kind
7 of a scenario from unfolding?

8 We need to listen better to
9 both Mr. Petlin and Ms. Rodriguez.
10 We need them to be able to stand
11 together and have a discourse amongst
12 themselves and out of the public,
13 including the New York State Board of
14 Education, to be able to give us some
15 kind of understanding what can and
16 what cannot occur.

17 The biggest problem here was
18 someone wrote in one of these social
19 media that the day after a yes vote,
20 that programs would close and
21 immediately jeopardize the future of
22 the after-school programs in the
23 Monroe-Woodbury School District.

24 This a lie. It won't happen.
25 It could not happen. And according

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2 to Mr. Szuberla, the budget had
3 already been sent and the tax levies
4 had already been computed. It would
5 be constitutionally impossible. It
6 would violate New York State law.

7 But that doesn't mean anything
8 because when you want to instill fear
9 and panic into a community, fear and
10 panic into the hearts of parents who
11 want nothing better than their
12 children's education, whether they're
13 Satmar children or they're non Satmar
14 children, people go to any lengths to
15 be able to undue the things that
16 school districts are trying to
17 provide, and that is a future for
18 these children.

19 Moving to one other subject and
20 that is regarding the infrastructure.
21 The Town of Monroe, for whatever
22 reason over the last 20, 30, 40 years
23 never invested in infrastructure. It
24 was something which my predecessors
25 felt was not something which the

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2 unincorporated part of the town,
3 which is more rural in character,
4 that it should invest in.

5 We have a lot of money in
6 what's called fund balance. We have
7 more money and we're in a healthier
8 position than probably any community
9 in Orange County and it shows in your
10 taxes; not your school taxes, not
11 your village taxes, but in your
12 incorporated taxes. We have a lot of
13 money, but we have very little
14 infrastructure.

15 The fingers are a perfect
16 example. The fingers many years ago,
17 those are the areas that were not
18 incorporated into the Kiryas Joel
19 village. They remained outside, but
20 literally inside the fingers, as we
21 call them, inside Kiryas Joel,
22 culturally, physically, in all way
23 shape or form, there was some kind of
24 not only overlap, but there was a
25 seamless integration.

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2 As we review this request for
3 500 acres, if we look and we say,
4 What is the likelihood that Kiryas
5 Joel, in the near future, could
6 provide the kind of infrastructure in
7 507 acres?

8 We questioned that. We
9 wondered if that is absolutely
10 possible, given the extraordinary
11 type of infrastructure that is going
12 to be required. We have seen Kiryas
13 Joel 15 years ago, 15 years ago it
14 started the process of trying to get
15 a water pipeline in.

16 Look how long this journey has
17 been for something that we consider
18 to be a lifeline to this community,
19 as it is to 75 other communities
20 which share water from the New York
21 City aqueduct.

22 We all assume that this journey
23 regarding the property rights in the
24 fingers and outside of the fingers is
25 going to take a long journey and the

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1 courts will ultimately decide. The
2 courts will look at quality of life
3 as defined by law and not as we see
4 it as human beings, but as the courts
5 see it. This is something which
6 preserves the integrity of democratic
7 process above and beyond everything
8 else that we as moms and dads and
9 members of the community wish for
10 ourselves. The courts will
11 ultimately be the people that decide
12 the future of this community and they
13 will look at the facts.

14 Kiryas Joel will grow. Orange
15 County will grow. And we all have
16 that right to be able to provide the
17 services that are needed, and if
18 we're willing to pay the price to
19 make them come true in the form of
20 taxes, so be it.

21 However, what is the actual
22 likelihood that in a reasonable time
23 500 acres are going to be developed?

24 Anyone who drives around the
25

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2 500 acres or in the -- I think it's
3 called the Allegra (phonetic)
4 annexation, we will look at this,
5 which is almost 800 acres altogether,
6 if we look and say we can't provide,
7 we admit we cannot provide either in
8 the 300 some odd acres under the
9 Allegra annexation, we cannot provide
10 sewer and water and different kinds
11 of requirements that they have
12 requested. We cannot provide that
13 either in the 507. But what we can
14 reasonably ascertain is that under
15 the URN zoning that we currently
16 have, that there is a likelihood that
17 the Village of Monroe -- sorry, the
18 Village of Kiryas Joel, if that
19 annexation does goes through for only
20 the 164 acres, that they will be able
21 to provide the kind of infrastructure
22 that's needed for the 164, not for
23 the 507. And then when you look at
24 it and you reduce down the likelihood
25 that many of those acres are not

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2 going to be developed. We have a
3 lake which is 40 acres, we have grove
4 trees, fruit trees which are not
5 developable. There are many spots
6 here in the 164 -- I will finish --
7 that are not developable. Others,
8 like Vantage Vista are all already
9 developed. And the likelihood of
10 that -- ladies and gentleman --
11 ladies and gentleman, we're going to
12 continue.

13 But we have a community which
14 needs to grow. We have a town board
15 which never, in the 30 or 40 years
16 that I can go back, ever provided the
17 infrastructure that was needed to be
18 able to prevent annexations from
19 occurring because we do not provide
20 the services that are needed.

21 In summary, this annexation
22 request we've had for almost two
23 years. And for almost two years, the
24 only voices that we've heard are
25 members of this town board. County

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2 exec has been silent. Senators have
3 been silent. Congressmen have been
4 silent. U.S. senators have been
5 silent. Everyone has been silent.
6 The only time that we hear from them
7 is when they're prodding the public
8 either for support or they're
9 prodding the public because they
10 don't have answers.

11 The Town of Monroe is now faced
12 with an enormous decision. What do
13 we do and how do we go about to make
14 sure that rights under the
15 establishment laws are not violated,
16 that we do not give any one
17 particular group a right because of
18 religion reasons over anyone else.

19 However, the issue of the
20 infrastructure is critical to the --
21 the issue of infrastructure is
22 critical. Can the Village of Kiryas
23 Joel complete what is necessary to be
24 able to provide the type of
25 infrastructure and can it provide the

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2 infrastructure which is necessary
3 outside the 164 acres?

4 I believe this vote reflects
5 that we disprove the 507 acres and
6 that we approve the 164 acres. Thank
7 you.

8 That being said, and with the
9 full confidence that both the
10 superintendents for Monroe-Woodbury
11 School District and Joel Petlin for
12 the Kiryas Joel School District,
13 including Deputy Commissioner
14 Szuberla get together and make sure
15 that we all understand that our
16 children are not at risk, that
17 tomorrow morning when we wake up
18 nothing will change, and nothing will
19 change in the great, great
20 foreseeable future.

21 Gentlemen, that being said, my
22 vote -- Mr. Donnelly, should we read
23 the decision from page 21 forward?

24 MR. DONNELLY: No, I think you
25 have a motion and a second, and you

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2 shall call for a roll call vote.

3 MR. DOLAN: We need a roll call
4 vote. This is a roll call vote for
5 the approval 163 acres, with the
6 disapproval of 507.4 acres; 163.8,
7 507.4.

8 Harley Doles, Aye.

9 Rick Colon.

10 MR. COLON: Aye.

11 MR. DOLES: Dennis McWatters.

12 MR. McWATTERS: For the reasons
13 I stated before. No.

14 MR. DOLES: Gerard McQuade.

15 MR. McQUADE: Aye.

16 MR. DOLES: Daniel Burke.

17 MR. BURKE: Aye.

18 MR. DOLES: We have four ayes
19 and one nay. The motion stands.

20 Ladies and gentlemen, board
21 members, we need to make a motion to
22 adjourn, but before we do that, is
23 there anything that the board members
24 would like to tell the public.

25 Ladies and gentleman, that

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2 being said, we need a motion to
3 adjourn, but before we do that --
4 make the motion -- before we leave,
5 and this is my mistake, we want to
6 recognize 21 West Point.

7 Ladies and gentlemen, we need a
8 motion to adjourn.

9 MR. MCQUADE: I'll make the
10 motion that we adjourn the meeting.

11 MR. COLON: Seconded.

12 MR. BURKE: I'll second that
13 motion.

14 MR. DOLAN: Seconded by
15 Mr. Colon and Mr. Burke. I call the
16 question.

17 (Continued on the next page.)

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2 MR. BURKE: Aye.

3 MR. COLON: Aye.

4 MR. McQUADE: Aye.

5 MR. DONNELLY: Aye.

6 MR. McWATTERS: Aye.

7 MR. DOLES: Ladies and

8 gentlemen, thank you.

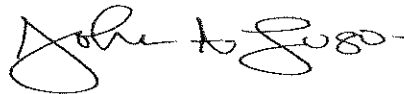
9 (Whereupon, at 7:58 p.m., the
10 above matter concluded.)

11

12 I, JOHN LUGO, a Notary Public
13 for and within the State of New York,
14 do hereby certify that the above is a
15 correct transcription of my
16 stenographic notes.

17

18



JOHN A. LUGO

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Diamond Errata Sheet

Plaintiff(s): _____

Defendant(s): _____

[illegible]

Date: _____

Name of Witness: _____

Signature: _____

Subscribed and sworn to before me

This of _____ 20 _____

Notary Public