

Village of Coxsackie

Public Hearing Minutes

Proposed Highway Garage SEQR Initiation

May 11, 2026

The Public Hearing was called to order by Mayor Mark Evans at 6:45 p.m. Present were Trustee Christopher Hanse, Trustee Katlyn Irwin, and Trustee Rodney Levine. Trustee Deidre Meier was absent.

Mayor Evans stated that the purpose of this Public Hearing is to read comments received into the public record, and make an Environmental Impact determination, for the purpose of completing the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process for the new proposed Village of Coxsackie Department of Public Works Garage.

Mayor Evans stated that the Village Board needed to read the Short Environmental Assessment Form (SEAF) Part 2 questions aloud. The Board responded with answers supporting the declaration that there were no significant adverse environmental impacts.

Mayor Evans read the Negative Declaration aloud which stated the reasons for supporting the SEQR determination.

Arlene Matthews, of 176 Mansion Street, stated that she is concerned about what "small impact" means on the SEAF Form, because she already has damage done to her home from when the Dog Park went in behind her property. She doesn't know what more to expect from this project.

Mayor Evans stated that Ms. Matthews shouldn't experience any issues with this project, because the proposed garage location will be set way back from her house on Mansion Street.

Arlene Matthews asked if they will be using an entrance on Mansion Street, or Cato Street.

Mayor Evans stated that they will be using an entrance on Cato Street.

James Oberlander, of 180 Mansion Street, asked if this would be true for during the construction phase as well.

Mayor Evans stated that they will only be using the entrance off of Cato Street for the project.

James Oberlander asked if the SEAF Part 2 and 3 forms, that the Board just read aloud, were posted on the Village website.

Clerk Nikki Bereznak stated that the forms were posted on the Village website.

James Oberlander asked for clarification on what the "SEAF" forms are.

Clerk Nikki Bereznak stated that "SEAF" stands for Short Environmental Assessment Form.

James Oberlander asked what the process is for this project. He asked if he understood correctly that the Village is following the SEQR process.

Clerk Nikki Berezna stated that that is correct. The Village is following the SEQR process, and this SEAF form is part of that process.

James Oberlander asked what the next steps are in the process.

Clerk Nikki Berezna stated that the next steps are actually up to the Village Board. After the Public Hearing commences, the approval of the Resolution declaring a negative SEQRA designation is on the agenda for tonight's Board Meeting.

Mayor Evans stated that the Village's Engineers are the ones who walk the Board through the process. They are involved in the process of designing the building, doing any environmental work that needs to be done, testing the ground for support structures, soil testing, etc. They are also required to come up with a stormwater plan, so that runoff stays within the property itself.

James Oberlander asked where that part of the process is documented.

Mayor Evans stated that the Village Engineers have all of the reports.

James Oberlander asked if they can be shared publicly.

Mayor Evans stated that they can be shared publicly.

James Oberlander stated that he is just having a hard time following along, in terms of understanding the process. The only way he found information on the project is by going to the Daily Gazette and listening to a news report. He asked if there is a more comprehensive outline of the project, that the public could read, and understand where the Village is in the process.

Mayor Evans stated that you can go to NYS DEC's website, and view all of the information on the SEQR process.

James Oberlander stated that this project is going on near his house, and he wouldn't just know to go on DEC's website to look for information, without coming here tonight and asking these questions. He said that there doesn't seem to be an outline anywhere in relation to this project.

Trustee Levine asked if he understood correctly that what Mr. Oberlander is asking is where the Village is at presently with this project.

James Oberlander stated that that is correct. Even with the name of this SEAF form, a regular person would not know that the SEAF form is part of the SEQR process. He is assuming that after this Public Hearing concludes, the Board moves on to the next step, but the public has not had time to process the information. They don't know what they don't know. He asked if going forward, there can be more of a project outline that the residents can follow.

Mayor Evans stated that there are, and have been, lots of projects on the Village website.

James Oberlander stated that he looked on the Village website, and only found the most recent 3 documents. When looking at the SEAF form, there is no reference to SEQR, that would trigger

him to know how to look on DEC's website to follow along the SEQR process.

Mayor Evans stated that the Village can create an area on the website to post documents and things in relation to this project going forward. The Village has done that with various projects over the last few years. The Village isn't far enough along in this process that they thought to create a separate section yet, but they can do so.

Trustee Hanse stated that on DEC's website, they do have a step-by-step guideline through the SEQR process. It is 12 steps, and right now, the Village is only on step 2. He stated that the Village Clerk can post a link to the SEQR process on the Village website, since this is a common practice to follow for all projects.

Mayor Evans stated that the Village Board generally relies on both the Village Engineer and Village Attorney to step the Board through the process during projects, so that everything is done correctly. He said that the Village will put the information on the website, and will post things as they come up, and move through the process. In relation to the SEQR process, there is a lot of environmental criteria that the Village Engineers look at and go through, and direct the Board on. Based on the established criteria, it will then be determined as to whether or not there is an impact or not.

James Oberlander asked if the Village Engineers have this environmental review background information.

Mayor Evans stated that he imagines that the Village Engineer has this information on file. The Village Board does not always ask for all of the background information. They trust in the Village Engineer's recommendation that is given on the SEAF forms. He said that if Mr. Oberlander would like to see it, he can ask the Village Engineers for copies. The Board is not well enough versed in knowing whether or not there are certain environmental impacts. That is why they rely on the Engineers as experts.

James Oberlander asked if there will be other forums, or opportunities for public input on this project.

Mayor Evans stated that when the Village gets to the point of submitting a Site Plan, it would then have to go before the Planning Board. The Site Plan shows exactly where the proposed building is supposed to go, all of the structures, the fuel island, retention pond for runoff, etc. Once the project is at that point, there are Public Hearing requirements as part of the Site Plan process.

James Oberlander asked if the timeline is still for the project to be ultimately done in 2028.

Mayor Evans stated that at the rate things are moving, he doesn't think that the Village will break ground until 2028. There is still a lot of development of the project to go. The Village will also be looking for funding. So, once the design is done, then they can try to seek funding.

James Oberlander asked if he understood correctly that it sounds like the Village is still in the beginning of this process.

Mayor Evans stated that that is correct. The existing DPW garage is 50+ years old, and has none of the up-to-date safety, or space requirements. It has served its purpose, but it is time to get a new facility.

No further public comments were offered.

A motion to adjourn the Public Hearing was made by Trustee Hanse and seconded by Trustee Levine. Trustee Hanse voted yes. Trustee Irwin voted yes. Trustee Levine voted yes. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nikki Berezna". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nikki Berezna
Clerk