

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

**June 15, 2011 – 4:45 p.m.**

Chairman Wood called the public hearing to order.

The Clerk read the Notice of Public Hearing on a proposed local law “Prohibiting the disruption of military funerals and events related thereto.”

Chairman Wood told all in attendance the rules of the Public Hearing.

Chairman Wood said “this hearing is on a proposed Local Law prohibiting the disruption of military funerals and events related thereto. The local law is divided into seven (7) sections the first of which describes the legislative intent and purpose. The second section has the definitions. The third section deal with prohibitions and briefly it states that it will be unlawful for any person in the County of Saratoga to engage in a demonstration within 500 feet of a church, synagogue or any other place of worship, mortuary, funeral home, cemetery or other location funeral related event is being held within two hours immediately prior to the commencement of any military funeral and for the two hours immediately following the funeral or funeral related event. The foregoing prohibitions shall not apply to demonstrations at funerals or funeral related events held at cemeteries under the control of the National Cemetery Administration, the prohibition of which demonstrations are governed by federal law. Section four lists the penalties, section five with severability, section six – incorporation into the code of Saratoga County and section seven sets the effective date.”

Chairman Wood stated at this time the individuals that signed up to speak will be called up and following that, he will ask if there is anyone that hasn't signed up but wishes to speak.

Chairman Wood called the first speaker, Richard Voehringer. Mr. Voehringer said he is a resident of the Town of Ballston. He said he is a veteran and he is surprised there aren't more veterans here today to look at this proposal. He said he thinks it is a good one and believes the Board is doing the right thing and he supports the Board wholeheartedly. He said he hopes the sanctions are stiff enough to keep this thing quiet. He said he is from the greater generation WWII, he said he was a little young for WWII he was in the Korean War, he thinks about all the veterans that offered their lives and their lives were taken so that people like us are here and we are here because of that. Mr. Voehringer said we are a great Country and we have a lot of rights and privileges and they shouldn't be taken from us. He said the “framers of our government” had it right and they challenged us in a way that said maybe they knew that our republic would be challenged from time to time and it has been. WWII was the greatest challenge we had and we won, he stated. He said we are here because of it and these people that are protesting are here because of these accomplishments. He said he does not agree with what they are doing, he does not know what their agenda are and he doesn't care. He said he is not happy with the Supreme Court decision and we should not have to be here making a law. He said he supports the Board and asked that the sanctions are made high enough so the protesters won't do it and he is available to help however he can.

Chairman Wood called Barbara Thomas. Ms. Thomas said she is from the Town of Milton and wants to thank all of the veterans who have served this Country and have done a great thing for our nation. She said she is concerned about this law which just addresses military funerals and related events. She said if it is inappropriate to protest within certain distances of military

funerals than it should apply to all funerals. She thinks this law was drafted in response to a particular situation and thinks a broader and more fair law would serve the County better.

Chairman Wood called Jane Bouchard. Ms. Bouchard said she is from the Town of Greenfield and said she would like to thank the Board of Supervisors for bringing this forward and thinks it's an excellent idea. She said her husband is a Vietnam Veteran and everyone knows how they were treated when they came home. She said she does not consider this a free speech issue and who is she to disagree with the Supreme Court but she does see this more as a harassment issue. She said that movie stars and other people are given the right to privacy and they haven't laid down their lives for their Country where these veterans have. These deceased have been taken from their families while fighting for all of our lives, Ms. Bouchard said, and why should they be harassed while grieving. She said there have been massive efforts to curtail harassments in schools, why should this be treated differently. She said people are profiting from lawsuits that are brought about when people protests gays or churches and asked why is this different.

Chairman Wood called Don Fuss. Mr. Fuss said he would like to thank Chairman Wood for this opportunity to speak, the Board of Supervisors, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, and veterans past and present. He said this pertains to all of us veterans and as a retired military man he has folded the flag numerous time and handed it to relatives and he's seen the pain and suffering that the mothers& fathers, brothers & sisters, aunts & uncles, nieces & nephews go through when they receive the flag. He said he thinks it would be very nice if the Board puts this law into effect. He said as a Vietnam Veteran he was scorned on when he returned home to the United States of America; but he said as a true American he still works with veterans groups on a lot of issues, he has folded flags and donated flag cases to widows.

Chairman Wood acknowledged Paul Bouchard. Mr. Bouchard stated he is a veteran from the Vietnam era and he said he would like to caution the Board that the group in Texas is a family of lawyers that are setting up a trap that if anyone tries to stop them they will sue. He said this group is getting great judgments and they really don't care about the process. He said these groups are good enough to argue before the Supreme Court and he would hate to see the County walk into a trap. Mr. Bouchard said the Board's spirit is good but he still sees it as a trap.

Chairman Wood asked if any written communications were received. Being none, the public hearing adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela A. Hargrave, Clerk