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# THE RIGA RECORD

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Issue 1 Spring 2006

## WELCOME TO THE RIGA RECORD!

In an effort to insure good communication throughout our town, a group of concerned citizens have decided to publish a newsletter and deliver it throughout our town to people like you who are interested in an accurate record of issues and activities that are happening in our community.

The Town of Riga formerly published a newsletter and distributed it to residents. With the change of administration this year, the newsletter was put on hold. The administration has used the *Suburban News* to distribute information about the town. This has resulted in some very costly advertising being purchased by our Recreation and Highway Departments to notify residents of programs and services that they are offering. It also disregarded the participation by many of the non-profit community groups who utilized the newsletter to promote meetings and events.

As a result of citizens' concerns about not receiving a newsletter, the administration has decided to distribute a recreation programs folder as a handout at the schools and the Supervisor will be printing a newsletter with information about the town.

Our purpose is to correctly convey information to the community. We hope you enjoy this publication and encourage you to access our website for current updates on these and future issues. Also, we would entertain comments and suggestions. We want your input!

Mail your comments to:

The Riga Record  
P.O. Box 583  
Churchville, NY 14428

Or e-mail us at [feedback@rigarepublicans.com](mailto:feedback@rigarepublicans.com).

If your organization would like to be included in our next issue to publicize an event or meeting, please submit your request by August 10, 2006.

We hope you enjoy this publication. Remember, stay informed between newsletters!

Sincerely,

*Citizens for Truth*

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## VILLAGE ANNEXATION

The Town of Riga and Village of Churchville have been considering a proposal by Stonewall Development to annex a portion of their property into the village of Churchville. A joint public hearing was held on March 21, 2005, and both boards have been waiting for a finding on the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). The Village was the lead agency on this action and first found there to be a significant impact on the environment. That action required additional study and input from the developer on the SEQR application. With that information completed, the Village then accepted the SEQR application. With the acceptance of SEQR, both boards could then move forward on the vote for annexation.

*At the February 6<sup>th</sup> Village Board meeting, the Board unanimously voted no to annexing the Visca property east of the American Legion Post. Although the Board is in favor of annexation, this particular parcel was not in the best interest of the Village for annexation. One significant reason was that the proposal did not fit into our vision for a small village atmosphere. (Appeared in the Village Newsletter.)*

At the February 21, 2006 Town Board Workshop on the matter, many negative comments were made on the annexation of the Stonewall property. Several citizens spoke in opposition to the proposal. The findings of the Village in their decision to vote down the annexation were many; there are areas that are already contiguous to the village that could or should be annexed, and since the Town and Village are in the middle of comprehensive planning it would be best to wait until that process is complete before moving ahead on an issue having impact on the shape of the Village and Town. On March 14, 2006, the Riga Town Board voted unanimously to deny the annexation of the Stonewall Land. Supervisor Moore stated that "proper procedure had not been followed therefore the entire review process was defective." Councilmember Fodge stated that the annexation "did not fit the real character of the community" and Councilmember Otley stated that it "did not make sense to have a peninsula of the Village out into the town."

It is unknown at this time what the plans of the developer are for this parcel.

## RIGA'S ACCOUNTING WOES

If you have been following the accounting woes in the *Suburban News* you probably noticed the Town being "out of compliance with NYS laws" in an article that ran on March 19, 2006. The Town Supervisor made these remarks in the article in an effort to support the request for additional money to develop new accounting systems for the Town and to support the request for an audit by the State Comptroller's Office.

Councilman Ottley wrote in a letter to the editor in the *Suburban News* dated March 26, 2006, that "had the *Suburban News* taken the time to review the auditors report and then verified the Supervisor's claims with Raymond Wager, the CPA who issued the report, they would have found that the Supervisor's claims were not completely accurate." Councilman Ottley continued to say that "the report from the accountant did make several good suggestions on how we can improve our system as well as improving a few procedures."

Councilman Ottley encouraged residents to take the time to read the short four page report. The full report can be viewed either at the Town Hall Office or by accessing it through the website at [www.rigarepublicans.com](http://www.rigarepublicans.com).

In January the Town Board passed a resolution to ask for the NYS Comptroller's Office to provide an audit on the Town's finances. This is a much requested service from all new administrations in the State. After receiving the Town's request and reviewing the alleged problems in the Town, the Comptroller declined to include Riga as a town that would receive an audit. Instead, the NYS Comptroller's Office said they would be happy to work with our staff by providing training and technical assistance.

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## GREEN ENERGY WASTED

A state of the art flare at Mill Seat Landfill is burning off 2100 cubic feet per minute of useable methane gas. During 2005, 1.1 billion cubic feet of methane gas was wasted. The County has been trying to install a landfill gas recovery facility to take advantage of this needed resource. For over a year they have been attempting to establish a power generation facility to utilize the methane gas that is coming out of the landfill. Once the plant is operational it will produce enough electricity to provide heat to 4,000 homes. This makes good sense and is a great idea, but the process is moving slowly.

It is unfortunate that in these days of gas prices approaching and sometimes exceeding three dollars per gallon, that making use of a viable source of green energy has not been a high priority.

What is taking so long to get this facility operating? There are many details and procedures that the County needs to work through to site this facility. They are seeking bonding for it and are planning to lease the operation to Waste Management. All of this takes time, but we hope they are moving ahead expeditiously on this issue.

The other possible reason for this process moving slowly may be from actions taken by our Town. It seems that there may be a question as to the interpretation of the Host Community Agreement as to whether or not the County can even burn the gas to generate electricity. Some are trying to interpret the clause stating that the "Mill Seat is not permitted to burn solid waste" to mean that this process is in essence doing just that. The next point, and one that deserves further review, is whether the Town might be eligible to receive additional revenue from the generation of the gas. These are two very important issues for our Town to consider; however, they should not be used to stop or slow down the process of utilizing this methane gas.

There are many benefits to our Town in moving this project ahead now. We can improve our environment, stimulate economic growth, and create jobs in our community. All this can be done without waiting to make changes to the Host Community Agreement when it is re-opened at the end of the seven years. Let's move forward with this Green Energy Plan!

## TAX REBATES? WATER LINES? WHERE ARE THEY?

In 2005 the Riga Town Board worked with Senator James Alesi and State Legislator Susan John in presenting a bill to the State governing bodies to enact a local Home Rule Law that would allow the Riga Town Board to determine and the Riga residents to vote on this issue, by means of a mandatory referendum. There were several examples of how to use the surplus funds given in the law such as water lines, sewer lines, drainage districts, and tax rebates. The proposed legislation was supported by Senator Alesi and passed in the Senate, however, Legislator Susan John failed to introduce the bill in the Assembly and therefore it never received a vote. Without both houses of the State passing the bill and a signature from the Governor, the proposed legislation failed.

It was our hope that this issue would be brought up by the new Town administration early in 2006. Without the passage of this local Home Rule Law, the Town of Riga is limited by law on how to use surplus funds. The limited options include building huge reserves of money that can only be spent on very specific projects e.g.; new buildings and more equipment. The surpluses will continue to grow our local government and its expenses. When the landfill closes and the Town needs to collect taxes again, we will have built a huge amount of expenses that will mean increased taxes for our nearly 6,000 residents.

The clock is ticking away for Riga residents to be given the choice they deserve. The State legislature will be ending their session in June of this year. That leaves little time to get this done or the Town will be without a choice for another year.

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## UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

July 23<sup>rd</sup>

Riga Republican Golf Outing

Contact Scott Cullen at 293-1465

September 9<sup>th</sup>

Riga Republican Steak Roast

Contact Steve Brew at 293-2776

### Upcoming Town Board Meetings

7:00 p.m.

Riga Town Hall

May 9

May 23

June 13

June 27

July 11

July 25

August 8

August 22

Visit the new Riga Republican website at [www.rigarpublicans.com](http://www.rigarpublicans.com).

To include your event e-mail us at [feedback@rigarepublicans.com](mailto:feedback@rigarepublicans.com).

Deadline for next newsletter is August 10, 2006.

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