

The erosion of transparency.

Dear Editor,

Could a new problematic situation be the result of returning Town Board members to office in 2009 with little voter resistance; despite the fact that, the tally for all the votes to elect, was about 15% of the populous? Or is it that the members themselves have a sense of being impervious to what is right, what is legal, what is expected by the citizenry. Whatever the motivation, the fact of the matter is that, without a horn sounding an alarm, the concept of transparency is being shuttered again; against the eyes and ears of many interested and concerned citizens. In the year 2010, in this technological age, Smithtown's communication is directed at shutting the community out.

No longer are Town Board Work Sessions shown for public viewing on the Government cable stations.

No longer are Town Board Work Sessions available for public viewing on the Town web site along side the disingenuous board meetings.

No longer are Town Board Work Sessions scheduled regularly on a calendar for public notification.

More and more actions are being taken to avoid public scrutiny. What happened to transparency? It was possible to make the sessions available. It was being done. Who would no longer want it done when the public was benefitting?

Furthermore, the issue of FOILs remains on the shelf unresolved. Consider for yourself that it is years that I am passionately pursuing a correction to the Town's interpretations of the New York State Freedom of Information Law, a law meant to be upheld by the Town of Smithtown, yet my efforts are flagrantly ignored. On one issue in particular, where one word has to be changed in the Ethics Code regarding financial disclosure securing a correct meaning to the law; a safeguard for the public, months and months pass while the Town Attorney shakes her curling locks at me and feigns surprised that so much time has passed. In the Fall of 2009 at a board meeting, after my last request for compliance, the Supervisor passed me off to the Town Attorney to discuss the problem. And as of that time, the Town Attorney has used her authority, in what should be the people's honorable office of justice, to brandish a sword of defiance in my face. What is it that they are hiding, that prevents them from upholding the Law?

If these issues are left unchecked, the probability of the corruption arrow points to GO; and the community is the loser. Make your voice heard sooner than later. One person writing letters is never enough. Point the arrow to OPEN GOVERNMENT.

This list could go on but I am going to take small steps. You will hear more.

Lenore Cernitz, St. James

