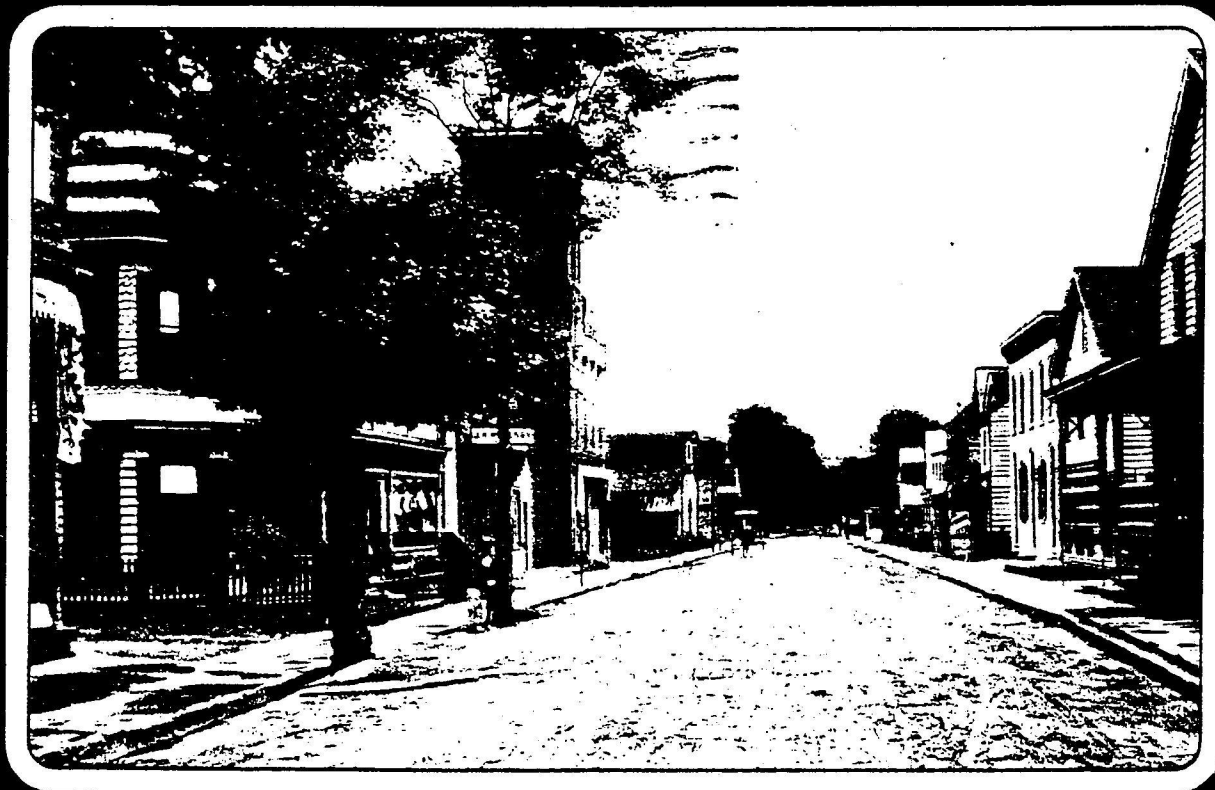


**BEYOND ART  
DISSOLUTION OF  
ROSENDALE, N.Y.**



A public work by  
**RAIVO PUUSEMP**

# Rosendale

Art has no Parameters . . . Artists do, they continually re-define them.

It is in this context of parameter definition that "Rosendale" was undertaken. It is my belief that those constantly re-defining form, perceive reality differently. They conceive visually, and therefore can retain and examine abstract concepts in a formal structure. Esthetics is particularly well suited for such visual conceptualization.

Esthetic structure and form can be applied equally well to social and political systems as physical ones. Most political structures lack formal concept and move from crisis to crisis. The lack of conceptual structure limits them to being responsive rather than initiative.

In "Rosendale, A Public Work", the attempt was made to superimpose a formal concept upon an essentially directionless political micro-system and to affect that system permanently by doing so, politically it was successful. A community of 1,500, founded in 1669, having gone through a rich and varied past, being faced with a less than glorious present, was disincorporated forever.

Rosendale, laboring under archaic tax loads, was suffering from power struggles between irreconcilable groups, as was the rest of this country during that time. The political structure was primarily preoccupied with maintaining its control. Any possibility of compromise with the changing population, a more liberal segment, was responded to defensively. It was within this conflict and reality that "Rosendale, A Public Work" was born.

In March 1975 we won the hotly contested campaign. I, as mayor, Mark Phalen, like myself basically A-political, as trustee. Political unknowns, we won by a vote against our opposition. Through the next few years until December 31, 1977 the concept of dissolving Rosendale evolved.

Dissolution as the only rational course became evident to me in February of 1975, two months prior to the election, but disincorporation was too radical an issue to be successfully undertaken by political new-comers. Over the course of the next two years, credibility had to be established and disincorporation strategy developed and implemented. Deliberate changes in political structures don't just happen, they are planned and occur because they seem inevitable.

To make changes seem inevitable requires a clear structure and a systematic **process**.

Disincorporation, at first, was perceived as radical and politically controversial, but by the time of the required referendum it had become accepted as an inevitability and was endorsed by over 70% of the voters. It is that **process** from being nominated to the final dissolution that constitutes "Rosendale, A Public Work".

Artistically "Rosendale" followed a sequence in my art, beginning with the "discovery" and "phenomena" works of the late sixties. The art consisted of examples of physical and perceptual discoveries I had made during that period. The discoveries were attractively packaged, compatible with existent art forms and well received.

During this period, however, many changes were taking place in my thinking of art which precipitated the re-definition to political art and made "Rosendale" possible.

One very important change was my participation at the organizational level of a group called "Museum", an underground art group in New York City. It was my first opportunity to participate in the development of a formal group structure. I became fascinated by the social and political process.

During that period a different perspective on art became clear to me as well. It became apparent that art was a continuum of predictable steps each built upon the last. It seemed that by being familiar with the then accepted formal parameters of art, and by doing work within those parameters, there was a great likelihood of art community acceptance of that work. Creative leaps were reduced to inevitable innovations and predictable steps. I became fascinated with the process of conception to completion rather than the product.

From that point I found it difficult to continue making art within the standard context. However, my fascination with "process", "group dynamics", and the newly discovered predictable innovation principal continued.

My first attempts at combining these elements

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

occurred in 1970, when I attempted the first "idea plants" or "influence pieces", as I refer to them.

The principal was this, if it was correct; that the next step in art was predictable, then it didn't matter who took it. Anyone actualizing that step would enjoy some degree of acceptance based on the accuracy of apparent inevitability of that step. The steps might be suggested to someone else, and they might produce the work, unaware of my influence. When their piece was accepted by either being published or shown, my piece would be completed. The principal worked, the process was predictable. I became somewhat apprehensive of the manipulative aspects of this direction and discontinued any further pursuit.

In 1974 I discovered that the political arena is where influence and concept come together compatibly. From this grew "Rosendale, A Public Work". It was a very time consuming and complicated work, in retrospect worthwhile and compatible with the continuum of my art. I felt that the political process like any other had predictable results given controlled input. In the case of Rosendale the process was a two year sequence of semi-controlled events to achieve a desired product — dissolution.

**Raivo Puusemp**

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*Though, through the course of "Rosendale" nearly 1500 people participated, the efforts of Mark Phelan, the trustees, village employees, Pat Argiro of the New Paltz News, and the reporters of the "Kingston Freeman," and "Huguenot Herald" stand out.*

NOMINATION .....	2
ELECTIONS.....	3
POLITICAL ACCEPTANCE.....	4
DISSOLUTION .....	6
ESTABLISHING CREDIBILITY	
WATER WORKS.....	7
SEWERS .....	8
POLICE REORGANIZATION .....	10
DISSOLUTION AT BOARD MEETING .....	14
PROCEDURAL OUTLINE.....	15
PUBLIC HEARING .....	16
PUBLIC INFORMATION LETTER .....	18
TOWN ACCEPTANCE RESOLUTION .....	20
VILLAGE — TOWN AGREEMENT .....	21
FORMAL PROPOSITION .....	22
DISSOLUTION REFERENDUM.....	23
REFLECTIONS .....	24
MAYOR RESIGNS.....	26
CONGRESSIONAL CONGRATULATIONS .....	27
LAST BOARD MINUTES .....	28

# Rosendale Dems Tab Mayor

## ROSENDALE

The Rosendale Democratic Party nominated an Ulster County Community College (UCCC) staff member to run for mayor of the village of Rosendale, and the Town Democratic Chairman Paul Cahill to run for trustee, when the party met in caucus Tuesday night. Raivo Puusemp, the 32-year-old head of the instructional media center at UCCC, is the Democratic mayoral candidate. Cahill said Puusemp was unopposed.

Cahill said Puusemp has had, as head of a department, experience in personnel matters, and "has handled budgets larger than the village has, so he certainly knows something about fiscal responsibility."

The town chairman for two years, Cahill defeated Mat-

thew Dwender in a runoff at the caucus to become candidate for trustee. Cahill ran for mayor two years ago, and lost by four votes. He is a retired chief petty officer from the U. S. Navy.

Cahill said incumbent Mayor Robert Sheehan, registered as a Democrat but elected on the Conservative line, had sent a letter to the caucus saying he could not attend. He "left no doubt" that he was not running this year, according to Cahill.

Both the mayor and trustee positions are for two years, with the election held in March.

Cahill said about 65 people turned out for the caucus, which he said was "very encouraging."

The caucus was chaired by incumbent Trustee Barbara DeStefano.

## INCORPORATED VILLAGE OF ROSENDALE

Rosendale, Ulster County, New York 12472

*The Village*

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED: That ~~an~~ Election will be held ~~will be held~~ for the Office of Village Trustee and the Office of Village Mayor of the Village of Rosendale New York for a term of 2 years at the Village Hall Located on Main Street Rosendale New York Between the Hours of Noon and Nine pm on March 18, 1975 and

Be It Further Resolved: that the following candidates have been duly nominated for such offices in accordance with the provisions of Article 17 of the New York State Election Law:

Raivo Puusemp

Burrs Crossing Road

Rosendale New York Democratic nominee for The Public office of Village Mayor

*Kathleen C. Mihm*

Kathleen C. Mihm

Village Clerk

# Puusemp, Phelan Sweep Elections



Mark Phelan, Trustee-elect, advocates "improved communication in the village, leading to a stronger sense of community".

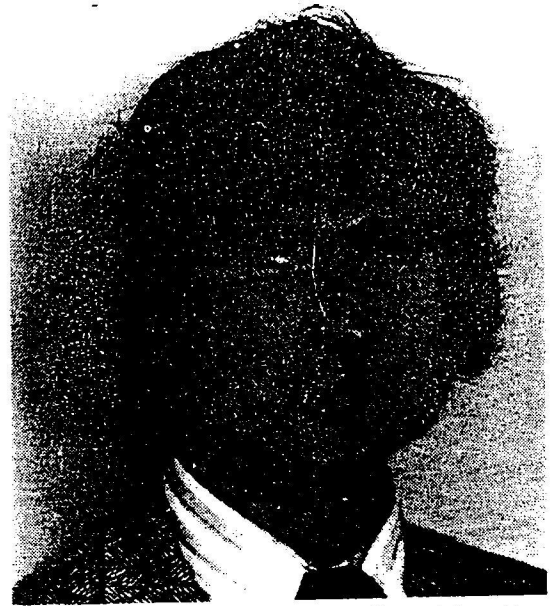
ROSENDALE (HVN): Democrat Raivo Puusemp, whose campaign "accentuated the positive" by stirring up enthusiasm for the rejuvenation of the Village of Rosendale, has won the Mayorality with a huge majority. He polled 304 votes to Republican Harriet Mulligan's 144. George Montgomery, the independent candidate whose petition failed, received about 50 write-in votes, 42 of which were counted as accurately filed. A few ballots were found to be blank.

Mark Phelan, Democratic candidate for Trustee also won handily, with a total vote of 258 to Republic Lloyd Gersback's 182. Billy Gouldy, whose petition was also found unacceptable, received about 50 write-in votes, 42 of which were accurately made out and therefore acceptable.

The Tuesday election was an outstanding example of community concern, as 504 of the 600 eligible voters turned out to participate in choosing a Mayor and a Trustee.

Mayor-elect Puusemp told the NEW PALTZ NEWS Tuesday night that "the vote was very encouraging. It indicated that more and more people are showing a real interest in participating in the political process, which is just what is needed if the process is to remain viable. The support I received indicates to me that people are genuinely interested in the programs and goals I outlined in my campaign. That support will make it possible to achieve the goals I have set."

Mayor Sheehan, who did not



Raivo Puusemp, Mayor-elect of the Village of Rosendale, looks forward to realizing his goal of "rejuvenation of the village".

seek re-election, said that he feels that "Raivo Puusemp will definitely do the job if he has the support of the people, which I think I have had".

Trustee Barbara DeStefano, who won re-election in a landslide vote last year, was very please with the election results. She said that "Both of these young men are responsible, enthusiastic and highly intelligent individuals. Most important, I

think they will provide the kind of responsive leadership we so desperately need. I also feel that the kind of work I have been trying to do on the Village Board will now meet with genuine support. The people have spoken loud and clear. They will not longer tolerate unresponsive government officials. I am looking forward to working with people who are themselves looking forward to working with people."

## INCORPORATED VILLAGE OF ROSENDALE

Rosendale, Ulster County, New York 12472

Raivo Puusemp  
Burrs Crossing Road  
Rosendale, New York 12472

March 20, 1975

Dear Mr. Puusemp:

Pursant to Village Election Law of the State of New York I hereby inform you that you have been elected to serve as Mayor of the Village of Rosendale for a term of two years beginning on the first Monday of April, 1975.

Sincerely yours

*Kathleen C. Mihm*

Kathleen C. Mihm  
Village Clerk

# Villagers React to Catskill Commission Consolidation Plan

By JON POWERS

## ROSENDALE

Officials of two Ulster County municipalities say they aren't committed one way or the other to recommendations by the Catskill Study Commission that they either incorporate or disincorporate.

And a third says the status quo is just fine but it may change.

In its preliminary report released last week, the study commission listed four criteria which should determine whether a village maintains its official identity or merges with the surrounding township. Both Rosendale and Pine Hill easily meet the commission's criteria for dissolution.

At the same time, the commission recommended that the Town of Hardenburgh, located in westernmost Ulster County, split itself in half and merge with adjoining townships in Delaware and Sullivan Counties.

These suggestions have been heard before and even though the Catskill Study Commission doesn't have the authority to mandate reorganization of a municipality, the mere fact that it took the time to discuss such matters has rekindled public and private interest in the proposals.

The four criteria listed by the commission, which should determine whether a village dissolves, are:

- \* Population of less than 1,500
- \* A population density of less than 1,500 people per square mile
- \* Road mileage of less than 10 miles
- \* A combined county-town-village tax rate of more than 12% per \$1,000 of full value assessment

Rosendale and Pine Hill are the only villages in Ulster County which meet all four criteria.

Suggestions that disincorporate are being heard in the village of Rosendale. In 1972, the village board voted to put the question to a public referendum, but then

changed its mind when it realized that the Town of Rosendale would have to absorb \$60,000 in village debts should a merger take place.

Nevertheless, Mayor Robert Sheehan still feels that "incorporation runs quite high on disincorporation" among the village's 1,500 residents. He said he personally isn't sure what course the village should take.

"There's no doubt that people are paying double taxes in some cases," Sheehan commented, "but there's no certainty that the services would be as good under the town." He pointed out that village residents would lose the refuse collection, police protection and highway maintenance currently offered by the village, as well as the traditionally close contact with elected village officials.

Mayor Leonard VanVleetburgh of Pine Hill, however, says the village's residents seem to prefer things just the way they are and he personally would vote against any move to dissolve the village.

"The bigger the get, the less the little guy has to say about the way things are run," said VanVleetburgh. "If one of our people has a problem, he stops in or the street corner and takes about it. That wouldn't happen — it couldn't happen — in Kingston."

And then there's the Town of Hardenburgh, bordered on the west by Delaware County and on the south by Sullivan County. It is virtually inaccessible from Ulster County. The 200 residents do their shopping in Margaretville, Livingston Manor or Liberty. The same post office is in Delaware County.

The Catskill Study Commission recommended that the town split itself in half with the northeastern portion joining the Town of Middletown in Delaware County and the southwestern portion joining the Town of Iona and its near county. Bowman Green, the Ulster County supervisor



IT'S FUTURE UNCERTAIN

(Freeman photos)

and listing resident of the Town of Hardenburgh, is taking a cautious approach to the commission's recommendations.

"If we had some assurances that our taxes would be lower, that our services would be just as good as they are now, and that the benefits would be guaranteed over the long run, then I might be in favor of it," he told the Freeman, "but I've never known of a consolidation that didn't cost more in the long run."

And the supervisor noted that there are political considerations as well. "We're a Republican town," he said, "and Ulster County has traditionally been a Republican

county. What we do would also depend on whether we're a burden to the county, or whether we are politically helpful.

"There are a lot of considerations. We'll be discussing it in the future. But there's nothing urgent about it now."

But the Catskill Study Commission apparently feels that something is going to have to be done sometime. In its preliminary report, the commission states: "These recommendations are intended as suggestions for consideration by state and local officials because it is they who must combat themselves to the difficult problems of government reform and improved efficiency."



ROSENDALE VILLAGE

The above article outlines the study conducted by Catskill Commission Re: Relative merits of small communities remaining incorporated. It outlined four criteria for recommended dissolution.

- 1) Population 1,500 or less
- 2) Population density less than 1,500 per square mile
- 3) Road mileage less than 10 miles
- 4) A combined tax rate more than \$20 per 1,000 of full value assessment

Rosendale met or came close to all of the above, however, dissolution was a very emotional and controversial issue for first-time candidates to tackle with certainty of success. So, a campaign to solve other community problems, specifically Police Department reorganization, sewer system construction, and water system renovation were undertaken. They, among other things, established the credibility from which a successful disincorporation campaign could be launched. The following pages outline the pre-disincorporation projects.

read a prepared statement that is attached to these minutes concerning the safety of the village and asking for resignations. The Mayor answered that it is this kind of incident and reflection, this kind of attitude, these adversary opinions that bring the residents of Rosendale to a Village Board meeting. The Village Office especially that of Mayor is not one which is accompanied by dictatorial powers. The Mayor is bound by law to follow and uphold that law. It is easy to say we have to do something about it but what we are talking about is civil rights. If you have a solution other than just being here and demanding resignations this board is more than happy to work with you but on no ground will this board buckle under that kind of pressure.

6-A September 10, 1975

## Mayor Defends Village And Board

ROSENDALE (HVN): Mayor Raivo Pousemp who, together with the two Village Trustees, was publicly castigated at the August 27th Village Board meeting by a group who called themselves the "concerned citizens," this week responded to the group's outspoken criticism of the village and its administration.

The Mayor, who campaigned and won office on a platform of positivism about the future of the village said in a statement to the press that "Rosendale is not the deplorable hot spot of crime and violence that a small but vocal minority claim it to be. The exaggerations of this group do an injustice to the rest of the citizens of Rosendale by creating a negative image. The lawless picture of our village painted by the spokesmen of this group is simply not true."

Clarifying his position in reference to the specific criticisms of the group spokesman, Mayor Pousemp went on to say that "There were two incidents during this administration that relate to any of the claims made. The 'riot' as it was called was

handled extremely well by our police chief and a potentially explosive situation was reduced to minor incidents. The other was an unfortunate stabbing which took place at a time when our village police were not on duty." The Mayor was referring here to the brutal stabbing of Larry Wasdyke of Fairlawn, New Jersey between the hours of 4 and 5 a.m. on Main Street the week before the meeting. Police later arrested several people, also from New Jersey, in connection with the crime. At the time of this occurrence, there were no all-night police patrols in the village.

The Mayor pointed out that "back-up" police protection was, however, available. He said, "The call was responded to by the Ulster County Sheriff's Department as has always been the procedure when our part-time Village force is off. As a result of those incidents and before the indignant outcry for our resignations we increased our night shift by 25 hours per week, as well as initiating radio assisted foot patrols for Main Street.

These steps give the village more coverage than it has had at any time in the past and hopefully, enough. Should we need more, we will again reassess the situation."

Pointing out that the addition of a man to patrol the Village between the hours of midnight and 5 a.m. on every weeknight will cost the Village \$2900 between now and the end of the fiscal year, the Mayor said, "It must be mentioned that there is a cost attached to each new obligation. If the citizens of Rosendale feel they want full time protection we can provide it, but at the expense of higher taxes." The additional night patrolman plus the purchase of a walkie-talkie radio system is costing the Village almost one-third of the total police budget allocated for this fiscal year.

Commenting on still another of the charges made by the group, the Mayor said, "In response to claims that we condone transient trade, it is not our position within the law to categorically exclude anyone from our village. We have never heard a more irresponsible statement. What would they have us do, post NO ENTRY signs at village boundaries? The law, fortunately, is intended to protect us all from that mentality and such arbitrary enforcement. We feel it would serve the best interest of all citizens of Rosendale to discuss these matters in a civilized manner rather than using hysterical

bad-publicity methods. If the 'concerned citizens' really are concerned citizens they should try to work with the administration for mutually beneficial solutions in a constructive manner. The slander, innuendo and exaggerating tactics of the group are reminiscent of an immature, old style Rosendale political campaign."

Summing up his positive position on the village and the ac-

tions of his administration, the Mayor concluded, "It is our hope that the steps we have taken and our willingness to take further action are reassuring to those truly concerned about the well-being of our village. We do hope that the belligerent minority can learn that the antagonistic adversary position is no longer the only way to implement governmental change in Rosendale."

## Sgt. Harold Arnold Resigns Police Post

ROSENDALE (HVN): On Wednesday evening, October 1st, the entire police force and the Village Board met for a departmental hearing to review charges brought against a member of the Village Police Force, Police Sergeant Harold Arnold, against whom the charges were brought, was also present at the meeting.

The charges were made as part of a regular administrative report by Chief Kenneth Gordon,

and corroborated by the testimony of four other members of the force.

As a result of the hearing, the consensus of the Village Board was that Mr. Arnold should be asked to submit his resignation. Mr. Arnold agreed to do so. The charges were not made public.

Mr. Harold Arnold has been a member of the Village of Rosendale police force for the past three years.

### ROSENDALE NEWS

REPORTER PATRICIA ARGIRO 691-2000

# To Be Or Not To Be? Big Village Question

ROSENDALE (HVN) - For two days, in rapid succession, the Village of Rosendale's residents and officials have discussed the concept of dissolution. The subject arose at the regular Village Board meeting on Wednesday, January 28th. It was more thoroughly explored at the public hearing scheduled specifically for that purpose on Thursday, January 29th.

From the point of view of the present administration of the Village, Mayor Raivo Puusemp and Trustee Mark Phelan, the question is primarily one of economics. Both at the Board meeting and at the hearing, they pointed out the difficulties that face the Village as an administrative entity in these times of the exploding cost of government. Among these difficulties is the imminent necessity of all full-time Village employees going under Civil Service regulation of salaries and other benefits such as retirement funds, insurance, guaranteed vacation pay and the like. The Village has already been notified that it is in violation of Civil Service regulations.

Central to Mayor Puusemp's argument is the idea of duplication of tax charges for such services as highway maintenance and snow removal. At present, he pointed out, the Village taxpayers (who number only about 500) are paying \$23,000 to the Town for these services, then paying "additional taxes to the Village for their own Highway Department. In addition to the \$23,000, the Village is charged on an hourly basis when the Town men and equipment are asked to help out the Village department.

Former Mayor Robert Sheehan accused Mayor Puusemp of having alienated the Town, and claimed that when he was Mayor the Village was not charged for this help. Later in the meeting, this point was clarified when Town Supervisor Richard Glazer, who joined the residents, was asked directly whether this was the case. Mr. Glazer said that the policy has not changed, and denied that there was any lack of understanding between himself and Mayor Puusemp. "There is a perfectly amenable relationship between the Town and the Village at this time," he said. Glazer did not comment publicly on the fact that residents opposing dissolution claimed that the Town Supervisors salary and other Town officials salaries would go up if the Village became a part of the Town, adding its 1200 population to the present Town population of about 6600. However, at a later interview, he said that this assumption is a big one, since any changes in salary must be passed by a vote of the entire Town Board. He also commented on the statement of some villagers that "the Town

would have to have another Town Justice," saying that Town Law limits the number of Town Justices to two.

The most outspoken opposition to the idea of dissolution came from former Mayor Robert Sheehan and former Trustee Harriet Mulligan. Mrs. Mulligan, in particular, attempted to indicate that there would be no financial advantage to Village taxpayers if dissolution were to occur. She said that the water, street lighting and fire costs would continue, and that residents would find themselves paying upwards of \$60 per year for once a week garbage pickup. The water and lighting district costs are now subsumed under taxes, which also cover a twice-weekly Village operated garbage pickup. A Tillson resident questioned her figure for garbage pickup, saying that he paid only \$3 per month for twice-weekly pickup of garbage.

Mayor Puusemp, returning to his explanation of the probable savings of Villagers offered by dissolution, said that though the water, fire and lighting costs would still be paid, under a district arrangement, by users of these services, that these costs are only a portion of the total village budget. Excepting these items would still leave an estimated savings of between \$40 and \$45 thousand dollars per year.

Walter Byers brought up the fact that dissolution was not only discussed before, but was part of the platform of Conservative Carl Grassi when he conducted a successful campaign for Mayor in 1970. "At that time, we went to Albany to discuss the possibility. Our visit helped to liberalize the laws governing dissolution, which were changed in 1973, Byers said. He explained that the present law eliminates the difficulties that the Village faced when dissolution was discussed previously. One major objection at that time was that the law at that time allowed a Town takeover of Village owned equipment without recompense. That is no longer the case.

At this point in the discussion the question was raised, "Is this only a matter of money, or are there other considerations here?" Mrs. Mulligan replied, "I don't want to see this little village dissolved. I don't want us to lose our own voice."

Mayor Puusemp said, "Now we are finding out what the feelings and issues really are."

Emphasizing that point, former Mayor Robert Sheehan asked who would be allowed to vote when the question of dissolution went on the ballot as a referendum on March 16th. When he was informed that all Village registered voters would decide the question, he objected characteristically, saying that "only



Mayor Raivo Puusemp outlines alternatives: higher taxes for properly run Village, or dissolution.



Former Trustee Harriet Mulligan says "I don't want to see this little Village dissolved."



Mr. Schoonmaker, a Village resident for 35 years, says "politics" is source of many problems.



Walter Byers recalls former attempts to dissolve Village as neighbor behind him argues against dissolution.



Town Supervisor Richard Glazer denies Bob Sheehan's allegation that present Village Mayor Puusemp has alienated Town.



Joe Estvanik says that all the facts should be made clear to the people at another hearing before a vote is taken.

taxpayers should be allowed to vote -- not that bunch of hairbags and halfeggs that don't really belong here," Mayor Puusemp reminded Mr. Sheehan, as he has done before, that the Democratic process must be observed.

Long-time Village resident and former Mayor Schoonmaker talked about how it was in the "good old days" before political deals allowed abuses such as the installation of 2 inch water mains servicing many homes. He asked Puusemp and Phelan where they got the \$23,000 figure, claiming that he pays only \$20 per year in taxes to the Town. Phelan explained that the item is in the Town Budget for anyone to see. Mayor Puusemp noted that some people (himself included) pay considerably more. Were the \$23,000 charge divided on a per capita basis among all taxpayers in the Village, it would come to \$46 per year each. When Trustee Phelan attempted to give a fuller explanation of some of the economic realities that confront the Village, Mr. Schoonmaker interrupted him saying, "how long have you been here? You are just a newcomer. You should listen, not talk. We have lived in this Village for 35 years." Young Trustee Phelan, who has not lived anywhere for 35 years yet, ignored this remark, and continued to explain why continuance of the Village as a separate entity would inevitably mean a marked increase in taxes, since the cost of all services, if properly administered, would have to go up.

Mayor Puusemp, responding

to the sentiments expressed by those who blanch at the thought of seeing the Village become part of the Town, said that "the Village is people -- the feeling of community would continue. I like that Village feeling. That is why I chose to live here. But the Village as a separate administrative unit is rapidly becoming a luxury that none of us are going to be able to afford."

Mr. McNamara, another long-time resident of the Village, objected to the fact that the referendum is being scheduled for March 16th. "You should wait until you have all the facts and figures, until June or so," he said. Puusemp replied that this would mean an expensive special election. "We expect to have one or two more hearings, with full facts and figures, before March," he noted.

Puusemp said that this is the optimum time for the villagers to consider dissolution; as the outstanding debts of the Village total only \$39,587 at this time. He also noted that the Village is owed \$30,000 in back taxes (not including interest) by its residents. He added that every conceivable effort will be made to collect this money, which constitutes a major asset. He said that the reason for so many overdue taxes is that in the previous system (before his administration) back taxes due were not automatically added to yearly tax bills. "This is being done now, and some people are going to get \$7000 tax bills this year," he concluded. A visible shudder went through the

assembled residents at this revelation. Listing other Village assets, Puusemp said that the Village owned an estimated \$15 to \$20 thousand dollars worth of vehicles, and half of the landfill. There are other properties that could be liquidated as well.

Summing up his position, Mayor Puusemp stated firmly that the question of whether the Village should opt for dissolution was one that only the entire voting populace should decide, and that a referendum will be held for this reason. He noted, however, that the Villagers should be fully aware of what their alternatives really are, and that "business as usual" is not one of them. "This Village either has to start functioning properly, which will cost a lot more money in taxes than are presently being collected, or dissolve, and become an integral part of the Town, which is being run properly."

Harriet Mulligan snapped, "If you scare them badly enough, they'll vote to dissolve." Mayor Puusemp replied, "I am not trying to scare anyone, only to make them aware of the realities that face them." He added that, should the Villagers vote to dissolve the Village on March 16th, two years (until December 31st, 1977) will remain before the dissolution is final. During this time, he said, "I will devote all of my energies to getting a decent water and sewer system for the Village area. This is an absolute necessity that must take priority."



# Air Dissolution Facts At Meeting

ROSENDALE (HVN) - The second public hearing on the proposal to dissolve the Village of Rosendale was held at the Village Hall on February 24th. What appeared to be a burning question at the last regular meeting of the Village Board, and again at the Democratic Caucus, when the subject erupted into an animated discussion, seems to have cooled. Only three village residents attended the formal public hearing.

Mayor Raivo Puusemp, who was criticized by some villagers for not "having all the facts and figures on what this would mean to us tax-wise" at the first hearing, held on January 29th, was certainly fully informed, and informative, at the February 24th hearing.

Organizing his material under three major categories,

the Mayor gave the residents and the press the real low-down on what would be saved in terms of village taxes. The first category he outlined was services to be eliminated. Under this heading he listed all of the officials of the village. It was clear from the response of those at the hearing and of many more residents for whom the Mayor repeated the facts and figures at the regular Board meeting the following night that people had never really focused on how much money in the village budget is for administrative costs that would be completely eliminated by dissolution. The list includes the Board of Trustees: \$1000, the Village Justice: \$735, the Mayor: \$700, Treasurer: \$2320, Budget Officer: \$240, Assessor: \$500, Tax advertising: \$175, Village Clerk:

\$2255, Village Attorney: \$4000, Electricity: \$625, Unallocated insurance: \$6000, Associations dues: \$250, Uncollected tax provisions: \$1000, Contingency account: \$1000, Building Inspector: \$450, Registrar of vital statistics: \$36, Zoning and Planning Boards: \$50, Refuse collection (salaries only) \$7726, and half of present employee benefits; \$2000. This category alone totals \$31,062 that taxpayers would save. This category is a critical one for residents to understand, because at previous meetings it appeared that citizens of the village did not realize how much money was involved in the simple existence of a village government. Now they have the figure, and its breakdown. When these figures were presented, two aspects of this cost were also clarified. At previous meetings some residents had claimed that the Town would have to add another Justice if the Village Justice no longer handled cases. This is neither true nor



Attorney Louis Klein, who assisted village officials in the preparation of facts and figures on the dissolution, comments on affects of dissolution on Federal and State aid to area.

## MINUTES OF FIRST PUBLIC HEARING ON DISSOLUTION - January 29, 1976

The Mayor stated that this meeting was called to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of dissolving. An issue that has come up in the past, and we have learned that some of the things that prevented dissolution have now been legally changed so it is possible at this point to liquidate its ~~deficits~~ <sup>ASSETS</sup> and dissolve without any cost. The debts are not that great at this point and we certainly have enough assets to consider doing it and the advantages are: We discovered that the Town Taxes collected from the Villagers and go to the Highway Dept. are about \$23,000. and we are specifically exempted from those services and, therefore, we have to duplicate that service with our own Highway Dept. and in fact our own Highway Dept. does not have enough equipment or time to handle ~~one~~ <sup>ALL</sup> of the jobs, the Town has always obliged us but we do have to pay them hourly for their men. This is one example of one area. The same applies with Police and all other areas that are duplicated. The Village, as we all know, is a small unit politically, has a very small tax base, solutions to problems we see often take more planning, money and engineering

Dissolution

The Mayor stated that our entire system is so marginal that he really can't see how we can keep this up. If we do not dissolve the Village this election, we are going to see a large increase in taxes or a greatly reduced service in order to survive. Trustee DeStefano stated that the Village meets all the criteria established by New York State for dissolution. The Village Board concurred with the basic premise that the Village as a separate government entity is no longer viable. A discussion followed indicating several reasons why dissolution should be seriously considered.

EWIG, KLEIN, KLEIN ~~EX-MULTI-ANX~~  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW  
65 JOHN STREET  
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(84) 331-0386

AARON E. KLEIN  
LOUIS M. KLEIN  
~~WIKI... ..~~  
ANDREW J. GILDAY

ARTHUR B. EWIG  
COUNSEL

November 18, 1975

Hon. Raivo Puusemp  
Mayor, Village of Rosendale  
Burr's Crossing Road  
Rosendale, New York 12472

Dear Raivo:

Pursuant to your request I am hastening to forward to you answers to the specific questions which you asked concerning dissolution of the Village of Rosendale.

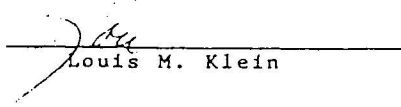
I have completed my research and prepared my report in hand-written form because you advised me that time was of the extreme essence. I sincerely hope that my handwriting is intelligible to you. As to your questions concerning enforcement of the Village tax lien for unpaid Village taxes, I point out that the necessary procedure is outlined in Sections 1450, 1452, 1454, 1456 and 1458 of the Real Property Tax Law of the State of New York. In essence, these sections provide that all unpaid taxes or tax liens shall be enforced by tax sale unless the Village board shall determine by resolution that all or a portion of such unpaid taxes or tax liens shall be collected by civil action.

I trust that this satisfies your inquire.

Yours very truly,

EWIG, KLEIN & KLEIN

By:

  
Louis M. Klein

THIS AGREEMENT, dated the 1st day of June 1977, by and between the Village Board of the Village of Rosendale hereinafter referred to as the "Village" and the Town Board of the Town of Rosendale hereinafter referred to as the "Town,"

W I T N E S S E T H :

For and in consideration of the sum of \$1.00 and such other good and valuable consideration as hereafter enumerated, the aforesaid Village and Town agree as follows:

The Town agrees to assume from the Village full and complete responsibility for the operation, maintenance and control of the Rosendale Flood Control Project and in so doing do assume each and every responsibility heretofore imposed upon the Village of Rosendale by the State of New York.

In assuming and performing these responsibilities, the Town agrees to utilize its best efforts to continue to employ area youth in the maintenance of the said Rosendale Flood Control Project.

In consideration of the above the Village agrees to pay to the Town all monies presently contained within the 1977 Village budget allocated to the Flood Control Project in Account No. 8745, to wit:  
.1 Salaries, \$1,458.33; .2, Equipment, \$200.67; .4 Contractual Expenses \$1,041.00, said monies to be paid to said Town on or before the 15th day of July 1977.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have set their hands and seals in the year and date above set forth.

BY ORDER OF THE VILLAGE BOARD

BY ORDER OF THE TOWN BOARD

\_\_\_\_\_  
Marc Phelan, Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard B. Glazer

PROPOSITIONS FOR DISPOSITION OF VILLAGE PROPERTY

TAX AND ESTABLISHMENT OF IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

Shall the Village of Rosendale, County of Ulster, State of New York, be dissolved with the remaining property of the said Village transferred to the Town of Rosendale and the Town Improvement District hereinafter provided for and shall the Town Improvement District hereinafter provided for be created to carry on and operate certain existing Village Improvements as follows:

(1) The Board of Trustees shall sell, transfer and turn over all water system property to a town improvement district to take over, carry on and operate the water system of the Village of Rosendale, which said district is by the approval of these proposals hereby created as provided for by Section 19-1914 of the Village Law and also by the Town Law, Chapter 634 of the Laws of 1932, upon the assumption by such town improvement district of the payment of the interest and principal of various bonds in the sum of \$4,320.00, such bonds to continue and constitute a valid subsisting obligation upon the real estate within said District, and there shall be raised annually, by tax upon the taxable property within said District, a sum sufficient to pay the interest and the balance of the principal of said bonds as the same shall become due.

(2) A lighting district shall be created and established as provided by Section 19-1914, of the Village Law and by Chapter 634 of the Laws of 1932, which said District shall assume, conduct and carry out all the lighting rights and such of the lighting duties and obligations of the said Village of Rosendale as are not assumed by the Town of Rosendale.

(3) The Board of Trustees shall convey and transfer all of the Fire Protection property of the Village of Rosendale, Ulster County, New York, consisting of the Village Fire Department of the Village of Rosendale, to a Town Improvement Fire District, which is hereby created and established, pursuant to Section 19-1914 of the Village Law and to the Town Law governing the creation of Fire Districts, and in addition thereto the said Town of Rosendale Improvement Fire District shall assume all of the then existing bonded indebtedness of the Village of Rosendale which was incurred for the improvement of the said Fire Protection Property or Equipment. There shall be raised annually upon taxable property within said District a sum sufficient to pay the interest and principal of said bond as same becomes due, together with operating expenses of the District. The existing bonded indebtedness of the Village of Rosendale as related to the Fire Improvement Property and Equipment is in the amount of \$4,800.00.

(4) There shall be created a Town Improvement Sewer District, pursuant to Section 19-1914 of the Village Law and to the Town Law being Section 634 of the Laws of 1932, to carry on and operate a sewer system.

(5) The Board of Trustees shall dispose of all remaining property, including real property situated in Tillson presently used as a secondary water supply, with exception of right of way and access to water rights from said property. Upon the assumption by the Town of Rosendale of outstanding bonded indebtedness of the Village in present amount of \$10,000, by conveyance to the Town of Rosendale at no further consideration.

4-B March 10, 1976

*New Paltz News*

## Dissolution Referendum March 16

ROSENDALE (HVN): As the date set for the village vote on dissolution, village officials have continued to make their assessment of the situation facing the village clear. Two public hearings have been held to inform the people of the facts concerning dissolution. The subject has been discussed at several regular Board meetings, and has spontaneously arisen at other village gatherings, such as the Democratic Caucus.

This week Mayor Raivo Puusemp issued a statement concerning the proposition on dissolution that will appear on the ballot on March 16th. The Mayor said that villagers should be aware that, should dissolution be voted down now, the opportunity to vote on it again will not come again for five years, until 1981, according to law. "Should the proposition be defeated, we will all have to live with the increas-

ed taxes that are in the offering for this period," he said.

Mayor Puusemp also sought to reassure residents who have heard rumors that additional costs to the Town would erase any savings achieved by dissolving the village. "After two hearings, and going very carefully all of the documents assembled to give residents a full and fair picture of the advantages of dissolution, we have not found any evidence to substantiate this fear. In fact it appears more than likely that any additional expense to the Town will be offset by the additional Revenue Sharing Funds and State Aid for Highways that the Town would receive should the municipalities be joined." In answer to another village rumor that has alarmed people, which is that the Town might not want the village, Puusemp said, "The Town has no choice but to accept the Village should it dissolve.

While the village is a voluntary government entity, the Township is a mandatory one, and the village would automatically be subsumed within the Town if and when it dissolves."

Puusemp also pointed out that the Town would have a marked saving in the cost of fire protection districts following dissolution of the village. "Since there is a minimum charge of \$600 per year for all districts, this sum is now being paid for separate districts that could be combined with the others," he said.

Trustee Marc Phelan also issued a statement to the voters this week. Phelan noted that "During my campaigning to run for this office, I had occasion to go to almost every house in the village and speak with the people. There was a great number of people who expressed the sentiment that the village was a

positive aspect of local government and should continue to exist. An equal amount of people thought the village was not large enough to continue as a government separate from the town. I was elected on a platform to bring back Rosendale. It meant that I intended to try to take politics out of the government in the village and bring back a sense of community to the villagers.

"I took office to find a village that was without adequate bookkeeping; uncollected taxes; unrealistic budgets; no filing system, in violation of Civil Service regulations for two years, and generally unkempt ways. As I am sure many of you know, most of these problems have been taken care of through consolidation of the various aspects of the village government.

## Dissolve Rosendale? 'Yes'

ROSENDALE—Despite bad weather, more than half of the registered voters of Rosendale turned out Tuesday to approve dissolution of the village.

Results of the voting showed a turnout of 278, with 179 favoring dissolution, 87 opposed, and 12 blank ballots. The referendum, which could have been advisory only, was made mandatory, which means curtains for the village as a municipality.

"I feel pretty good about it," said Mayor Raivo Puusemp, an outspoken friend of dissolution. "Of course, there is some sadness, but I know how much it costs to run this village."

In the only other contest, Democrat Kathleen Mihm, who was village clerk under former Mayor Robert Sheehan, was unopposed in her bid to win the trustee's seat vacated by Barbara DeStefano when she was elected to the Ulster County Legislature. Mrs. Mihm drew 176 votes.

Mrs. DeStefano, another supporter of dissolution, was happy with the result of the voting.

"I feel that I was a good official during my almost four years on the village board," she said. "But looking back, I feel that I was just spinning my wheels. We were faced with a stagnant tax base, and the demand for increased services coupled with inflation just made village government a luxury we could no longer afford. And there were very few qualified people who were willing to put up with such time-consuming jobs."

Rosendale residents were slated to vote on dissolution once before, in the March 18, 1969, election, but the issue was withdrawn from the ballot at the last minute by then Mayor Joseph S. Reid.

Puusemp said his administration would not be a "caretaker," but would actively work toward an orderly transition of the village into the town government.

"Our first step will be a series of workshop sessions with town officials to work out the details of dissolving the village into the town," he said. "Since we

do not dissolve until Dec. 31, 1977, we hope to have a smooth transition worked out by them."

Puusemp said the village will pursue all state and federal grants and will attempt to carry out major reforms before it goes out of business. He listed a new water system, new sewers, grants for public parks, a roadway behind Main Street to help alleviate parking problems along the village's principal street, solution of the water drainage problem in Washington Park, and several other items that will receive his attention.

"We hope to have most of our problems solved when we dissolve," he said.

Puusemp said at a Feb. 24 informational meeting that village residents could save more than \$44,000 annually by dissolving the village government.

Major items in that saving were divided into two parts. The first included elimination of the mayor, trustees, village clerk, village attorney, insurance and several

other lesser items that he said would save \$31,062, based on current budget figures.

The second category included services that would be assumed by the town, including police, flood control, highway services, snow removal, employe benefits and debt service for a total of \$46,196, which would be reduced by the 17.6 percent of town taxes paid by village residents for a net saving of \$38,066.

Puusemp then reduced the sum of the two categories, \$69,128 by the estimated \$25,000 in federal and state aid that would be lost to arrive at his \$44,028 savings estimate, which represents 58 percent of the tax revenue raised by the village last year.

The only village debt the town will have to take over would be for 44 acres of land in Tillson owned by the village water district. This debt, now about \$15,000, will be down to \$10,000 by the time the village dissolves, Puusemp said.

# Farewell to Rosendale (1890-1977)

(Stories and Photos by Bea Havranek)

## Village Government to Dissolve at Midnight Saturday

ROSENDALE — In just a few more days, it will all come to an end. Dissolution of the Village of Rosendale will take effect at the stroke of midnight Saturday. Besides saying goodbye to 1977 this New Year's Eve, village residents will be bidding farewell to the 87 year old village that has served them through the years.

In 1890, residents living in the central portion of Rosendale, the business district of the town, voted to form the incorporated village of Rosendale. Their reasons were numerous, but most important was the fact that they would be able to make their own laws and ordinances for the business section of town. Through the years, they established many specialized services for the village and its residents: Villagers formed a water company that would bring municipal water right into their homes; a police department was organized, giving residents additional police protection; a village fire department was organized, and they also took care of their own road maintenance and snow removal.

All of these required additional money, and the expenses of the village came out of the pockets of its residents.

The decision to dissolve was an economic one - the tax burden has become too difficult to bear, even though village officials continuously attempted to keep the cost of services to a minimum. So, in March of 1976, village residents went to the polls and, by a two to one margin decided to dissolve their municipality.

It is ironic that, at a time when the village will cease to exist, several of the services that it established will be drastically improved. A \$1,800,000 municipal sewer system will be constructed in the near future for most of the present village. The federal and state government will provide 87 1/2 percent funding for the project which will eliminate the dumping of raw sewage into the Rondout Creek.

A water system improvement project will also begin shortly. Village residents will finally get meters in their homes, and the antiquated distribution system, which is over fifty years old, will be replaced at key points. This, too, will be funded by the federal government.

Even though residents will no longer have to pay village taxes, they will pay separate and additional taxes to the Town of Rosendale for the upkeep of these projects. They will also have a separate fire and lighting district to financially support. It is hoped by present village officials that these expenses will be lower than the village tax bill that will be eliminated.

The Village of Rosendale will go out with more and better municipal services than it had in the past, at a lower cost. This in itself is reason to rejoice, yet emotions are still mixed about dissolution. Even though it was a majority decision to dissolve, there are some who will be sad to see the little village lose its entity.

The future of the village will remain in the hands of the Rosendale Town Board. Although the village can no longer exercise its power as a separate entity, residents should keep in mind that they possess the largest voting block in the entire town. They can make their future needs known to those who will run the town. Village residents will not lose their powerful voice in government if they continue to exercise it properly.

Tonight (Wednesday, December 28), at 7:30 p.m. the Village Board will hold its final regular meeting and the Village Hall and officials anticipate a record turnout for this last meeting. It will be a time to settle last minute business, to reminisce about the past, and to say goodbye to the Village of Rosendale that has served its residents for the past 87 years.



With ten days to go before dissolution, Mayor Marc Phalen (left) handed the keys to the Rosendale Village Police Vehicles over to Town Supervisor Richard Glazer (center) last week. On hand for the transfer was Sgt. John McKinstry

(right) a special officer for the Village Police Department with 33 years on the job. McKinstry is in charge of Village Police Communications.

## Dissolution: Rosendale Mood Happy and Sad

ROSENDALE — The Village of Rosendale is dissolving and residents said this makes them feel both happy and sad.

In a random sample of residents varying emotions about the upcoming December 31, dissolution of this village into the Town of Rosendale were revealed. Judy O'Sullivan has mixed emotions about the

dissolution because she was "born and raised in the village." Because duplication of services will no longer exist, she hopes that the tax dollar will go further and that the village resident will be relieved of paying for duplication. "There are too many political personalities involved in the governing of the village and this has gotten out of hand when it

comes to making decisions on issues," she said.

Susan Miniter, former village clerk, says she is "happy and sad about the dissolution. I hate to see something be destroyed, yet time will tell whether the Village will be better off in the way of taxes," she said. As the former village clerk, she thinks that some residents, particularly

senior citizens, will be surprised when they are taxed by the town for the various districts it will have to create for the Village such as water, sewer, fire and lighting.

Dorothy Smith thinks that dissolution "is a good idea." At present she thinks that village residents are paying double for certain things. "If done right, it should be

beneficial to everyone," she said.

Doris Erlsson says, "It's got to be better. The way it is now, is pretty bad."

Art Hopkins thinks that the dissolution will be beneficial to both town and village because it will expand the tax base. "If the lines of the new sewer district are extended outside the Village, this will be a big benefit. I just hate to see the Village lose (sense of being an) its entity, though," said Hopkins.

John Fanelli says he doesn't think that dissolution will make much of a difference. As a local cab

driver, he says he sees more and more people coming into Rosendale from the City and from out of town. He feels that this will continue even after dissolution. "Less taxes for the village is the benefit," said Fanelli.

NOTE TO READERS: As Rosendale correspondent, I am presently working on a "Farewell Village" story for the Huguenot Herald. If anyone has information or old photographs they would lend me for use in this article, I would appreciate it. All material will be returned unharmed. Please call Bea Havranek (658-9705) if you have any contributions.

## Mayor, Trustees Reflect on Dissolution

ROSENDALE — Dissolution of the village here will mark the end of an era. The three "last Board members," Mayor Marc Phalen, and Trustees Kathy Mihm and Ruth Ghear all expressed their own personal feelings about dissolution in a recent interview.

Marc Phalen  
Mayor Marc Phalen feels that dissolution represents "a very positive energy that will come on December 31, 1977." It is his belief that the burden on village taxpayer will finally be relieved and he thinks the new sewer system the village will be getting within the next year will be a bonus for its residents.

Villagers represent the largest voting block in the Town of Rosendale, something Phalen wants to remind residents about. He thinks residents should become involved in town government in order to protect their rights. "This is imperative. If village residents had gone down to the town budget

meeting, and demanded these rights, then it is possible that the town wouldn't have approved an arbitrary budget for the fire district," said Phalen, referring to the \$20,000 1978 budget approved by the town for the village fire district.

"This is an example of taxation without representation," he said.

"If we use this voting power properly, and seek representation for our needs, dissolution will be the most positive aspect of the Village in the past decades," said

coming to an end, you know, no more Board meetings on the third Wednesday of the month," said Trustee Kathy Mihm about dissolution. She said she has mixed feelings about dissolution but thinks that things will be a lot better for the Village after dissolution. "The tax base will be down then," she said.

Ruth Ghear

"In my heart, I feel bad to see it go, even though I know it is for the best," said Trustee Ruth Ghear. The fact that village officials will no longer have to deal with town officials pleases Ghear who says that throughout the years both entities had difficulties getting along. "It depended on who was in office during the past years. Why, sometimes town and village administrations wouldn't even talk," she said.

Ghear feels taxpayers should see a savings in that they will no longer be double-taxed for services such as snow removal and highway maintenance and this should help relieve the burden.

"There are over 450 families in the Village and it has the largest voting block in the town," said Ghear. She says she sees a great future for the town and she hopes the village will "help mold that future."

"The village began to outlive its usefulness years ago, and even though I feel bad to see it go, it is the best thing," said Ghear.

December 28, 1977

### LAST BOARD MINUTES

The December Board Meeting was held on the 28th day of Dec., 1977 at 7:30 P.M. at the Village Fire House. The meeting was opened with the Pledge to the Flag followed by a silent prayer. The November minutes were read and duly accepted, the treasurers report was read and duly accepted.

### SPECIAL MEETING

On December 21st. 1977 at 9:40 AM in the Village Hall a special Meeting was Called -Trustee Ghear made a motion that all village employees will receive a dissolution bonus of \$35, with the exception of the Clerk-Treasurer who will receive \$50. it was 2nd by the Mayor. The meeting was left open to facilitate the paying of bills which have not come in Trustee Ghear made a motion that (2) Smith & Wessons be sold Serial #'s are on file - the motion was 2nd by the Mayor, - Trustee Ghear made a motion that village property pertaining to water was turned over to the Water Dept. the motion was 2nd by the Mayor. The special meeting minutes were read and duly accepted.

The mayor made a call to another village that was dissolving, The Village of Friendship, N.Y.

The Mayor also stated that the village has approximately \$25,800

### CORRESPONDENCE

The Mayor received a letter from Mr. Dickson of D.O.T. about the meeting they had with Councilmen Hinchey, Supervisor Glazer. The Dept. of Transportation stated that they would prepare a summary report outlined at that meeting about the rerouting of Rte 213 and a few other items that they discussed.

A motion was made by Trustee Mihm to transfer funds from one account to another to balance out the Village Books-the motion was 2nd and it was unanimous.

Mr. Walter Williams arrived to receive the Village seal and the First minutes and the Village Board presented Mr. Williams with a check for \$1,500, and a sketch of a suitable case for the minutes & the seal

CORRESPONDENCE - Cont.

Trustee Ghear made a motion that the Village seal be used for the last time on the dissolution contract it was 2nd and it was unanimous and the dissolution contract was read/and signed & sealed awaiting the signatures of the Town.

A Resolution was read by Trustee Ghear that the Deed to the Fire House and to the Village Hall all property thereof be turned over to the newly created Fire District effective January 1st 1978 by the Board of Trustees it was 2nd and it was unanimous.

Trustee Mihm made a motion that money be left to the Town for the paying of Bills incurred by the Village the amount of \$730.17, or what is left of said money after the Bills come in- The motion was 2nd and it was unanimous.

- A) Mr. Joseph LeFera thanked the Board for their Service to the Village
- B) Mr. Glazer also thanked the Board for all the work they have done towards the Dissolving of the Village
- C) Each Board member thanked the Villagers for letting them serve for the past years.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Vouchers were paid from the General Fund From A119 - A146 Totalling \$6,165.67  
Vouchers were paid from the Water Fund From F38-F47 Totalling \$1,817.85

A Special meeting was called Dec.30, 1977 at 1:20 PM in the Village Hall to amend resolution of the Deed to the Fire House & Village Hall to include the Liber #'s 1155-662 & 888.47. The transfer will be from the Village of Rosendale to the Rosendale Fire District, effective immediately. The motion was made by Trustee Ghear 2nd by Trustee Mihm and was unanimous.

A motion was made by Trustee Ghear that any funds that were needed at the last minute would be taken from the Rosendale Water District money the motion was 2nd by Mayor Phelan and was unanimous.

*Marquette Tronlich*



Wendy Alexander Allan Kap

Rick Arnold art - the  
Rosendale library 914-658-901  
Borden Kiddell  
914-687-5133  
9-3  
914-332  
5100-  
K  
County  
Stonridge

The third example (discovering high art everywhere) was the most sophisticated release from the tangible side of normal art production. It tacitly acknowledged that culture, like reality, is created in the mind, and can be de-created. It was cheap, flexible, and left nothing behind. Yet for all that, the artist doing this kind of mental framing was like the critic who saw action painting in a rubble-strewn lot, he or she was an art lover who couldn't say goodbye to tradition. It was witty at the time, but with one foot in straight art and one foot in life, it was self-canceling.

In each of these steps toward a lifelike art, if the genre was strikingly fresh, the frame, the public, and the purpose of our choices were still typical of artlike art. It wasn't enough to discover that an elevator ride or a sandwich could be art, we had to ask where it belonged, whom it was for, and why. The philosophical sense of what was happening was unclear to most of us, and the impression left upon the curious and interested was of "novelty" rather than of a shift to a radically different world view, in which reality was a seamless fabric.

So it was necessary to change the whole situation, not just the genre, which was the easiest part. It took some years to iron things out. Many lifelike artists continued to put together more or less artified packages of elements drawn from the everyday environment (most effectively from the political arena), a second generation has conventionalized this route into acceptable arts festivals, exhibitions, multimedia poetry readings, new-wave concerts, TV shows, and big time show-biz performances. But for those artists tracking the "real thing", the investigation had to lead away from the traditional community of the fine arts, as well as from the traditional community of the commercial arts.

Here is a real event that took place in 1975. An artist named Raivo Puusemp (who had begun in New York as a conceptualist working at the more sociometric edge of the genre) ran for mayor in Rosendale, N.Y., and was elected. Although he lived there at the time, he was not a native or long-term resident of Rosendale, and was considered a "political unknown."

**R**osendale Village, a historic community of fifteen-hundred people and dating from the 17th century, was in financial trouble, had serious water supply and sewage problems, and couldn't govern itself. Its only realistic solution had been known for some time: to disincorporate and become part of the geographically larger Rosendale Township. But disincorporation was an emotionally charged issue for many in the village, and as no other alternatives were apparent, bills weren't paid, sewage backed up into houses and polluted the local stream, and human initiative seemed paralyzed. Puusemp, who had been an art instructor in the area and was Director of Instructional Resources at nearby Ulster Community College, believed he could do something positive about it. He would apply to Rosendale what he had been doing as an artist in group dynamics and predictive behavior. He would

consider the project an artwork in the form of a political problem.

So he ran, successfully, for the job of mayor. But his campaign didn't mention art. Nor did it mention disincorporation. Instead, it proposed an "upbeat community involvement in the political process" that accentuated the positive (as local newspapers described it).

**D**uring the next two years, Puusemp and his associate Mark Phelan, who was elected on the same ticket as trustee, guided Rosendale to its survival through dissolution. In a booklet published in 1980, entitled "Beyond Art: Dissolution of Rosendale, N.Y.," Puusemp documented the steps of that process through official records, legal letters, public notices, minutes of Village meetings, referenda, and many news accounts from neighboring papers, which followed the events with great interest.

First, Puusemp persuaded residents of Rosendale to face their own disastrous condition, and to see that if they did face it, they could not only save the village but could reduce local taxes and costs. Everyone got their first look at the line-by-line expenses of running a village government, and at precisely how much they could save by handling their affairs responsibly. Taxes, administrative procedures, services, and the police force were reorganized. Village assets were identified, assessed, and reviewed for possible liquidation and revenues. The water and sewage problems were solved by voting a bond issue and receiving federal and state assistance. Eventually residents saw that the inevitable "next step" for Rosendale was to cease being a separate entity. The moment at last was right, and they voted to dissolve.

Townpeople didn't discover, through their mayor, a new solution to their problems. They knew what their solution was. Neither did he urge them, romantically, to stick to their independence at a time when this would have been clearly futile. He came to Rosendale, detached from its history and personalities, and made it possible for everyone to see what had to be done. The vote to dissolve was theirs, not his.

But, it must be added, besides helping the village to put its practical affairs in order, Puusemp was able to reduce long-standing factionalism and to reassure townspeople that dissolution did not have to mean loss of neighborhood and community (as some had feared). Through the process of coming to grips with the village's troubles and deciding to dissolve, they spent more time together and assumed more conscious responsibility for their community than they had for a long time. In this small saga, it was crucial that while Puusemp had approached the survival problem of Rosendale with a conceptual artist's theory of social behavior in mind, his application of it was in day-by-day human terms.

With the task accomplished, he felt that his usefulness was over (and the artwork was complete). He submitted his resignation as mayor for reasons of family health, and Trustee Mark Phelan succeeded him. The documents indicate that the news was sadly re-

and  
mark  
hardly  
dale project  
that followed

Indeed, the story have been published. The artist Paul McC McCarthy was right, welcome it, since they quietly making the role of the conventions of it.

The sequence of many innovative works not simply a novel kind was otherwise encouraged. Its genre was its public, and its purpose what we had come to exemplary.

The genre, of course, problems. The framing place, Rosendale Township more properly the part. Mayor Puusemp, colleagues of the federal and readers of area suggested about such local illness and allowed to go on more consistently.

Taken together, the art, the what, where, and the "whole situation," defined at present. Any merge with one another with the artwork and the "work" merges with really exist by itself.

If we look at the dispute as if it were just liberating implication of image of the famous and of Western dreams— article, but here is the Puusemp announced considered his term, be an artwork. Nor it have been printed with

**T**he reason this art should be self-evident point of saying you're a village's troubles? might feel insulted, mayor. But more basic art to reduce and eliminate with rock stars, social you view the world as including yourself a

12484

LA., Lace Studios, few hundred

in the town. He left amidst public appreciation settled with his family in Utan where today he is a marketer of ski resorts and travel tours. He says that he hardly ever thinks of art anymore but that the Rosendale project was extremely significant for everything that followed

Indeed, the story of Rosendale, N.Y. might never have been published if Puusemp's friend, the performance artist Paul McCarthy, hadn't urged him to do so. McCarthy was right in supposing that artists would welcome it, since the booklet appeared it has been quietly making the rounds of those trying to break out of the conventions of their training.

The sequence of events in Rosendale unlike so many innovative works of art of the '60s and '70s was not simply a novel kind of art event (or genre) which was otherwise encased in perfectly normal high-art contexts. Its genre was unusual, but so were its frame, its public, and its purpose. None of these resembled what we had come to recognize as art. That's why it is exemplary.

The genre, of course, was the village and its survival problems. The frame was concentrated in a geographic place, Rosendale, N.Y., and spread outward to Rosendale Township and Ulster County. The public, more properly the participants, were the townspeople, Mayor Puusemp, county officials, lawyers, representatives of the federal government, and the publishers and readers of area newspapers. The purpose, as I suggested about such art, was therapeutic: to cure a local illness and allow village life, and Puusemp's life to go on more constructively.

Taken together, these four characteristics of lifelike art, the what, where, who, and why, make up what I call the "whole situation," or as much of it as can be identified at present. Anyone can see that the four parts merge with one another, no less that the artist merges with the artwork and its membership. And the work — the "work" merges with its surroundings and doesn't really exist by itself.

If we look at the dissolution of Rosendale for a minute as if it were just another artwork, one of its most liberating implications for artists is the absence of the image of the famous artist at work. This most cherished of Western dreams — fame — has not come up yet in this article, but here is the appropriate place. At no time did Puusemp announce that he was an artist, and that he considered his term as mayor of a troubled village to be an artwork. Nor is it likely that his booklet would have been printed without Paul McCarthy's urging.

The reason this artistic submergence is so crucial should be self-evident. In practical terms, what's the point of saying you're an artist who is making art out of a village's troubles? You would confuse people; they might feel insulted, and you would never become mayor. But more basically, it is in the nature of lifelike art to reduce and eliminate the sort of fame associated with rock stars, socialites, and short-term politicians. If you view the world as a unity, with all things connected including yourself and your work, then being cele-

brated with the exaggerated attention and fame to go with stardom almost invariably leads to importance, separation, and in time, isolation. I don't yet know how to honor someone, or to be honored, without ego getting in the way. It is enough to speculate here that the dissolution of Rosendale Village for the sake of its continued life was equivalent to the dissolution of Raimo Puusemp's political art career for the sake of his life too.

Now consider a different example of lifelike art. Compared to the social goals and public enactment of Rosendale's dissolution, this one was self-transforming and private. The Rosendale story began with political commitment and ended with personal re-evaluation. This second activity began with subjective preoccupation and ended with a nearly mystical sense of nature. All of us are part herd animal and part lone wolf, so the two events should form a nice relationship, each illuminating the other. Since each was unmarked at the time as art of any kind, it is understandable that the artist of this work chooses to be nameless, simply to better emphasize the experiential aspect of what went on.

For each day of a week, around 3 P.M. when the wind rose on the dunes, a woman took a walk and watched her tracks blow away behind her. Every evening she wrote an account of her walk in a journal. To begin each successive day, she read her journal story and then tried to repeat exactly what had happened. She described this experience, in turn, as faithfully as possible, until the week elapsed. Half in jest, she wrote in one passage, "I wanted to see if I could stop change."

Her journal entries were rich in details, including not only the facts of footsteps up and down the dunes, the blowing sand, the color of the sky, the time taken, the distance covered, etc., but her feelings as well. She described the sense of breaking the earth, of disturbing the immaculate and fragile crusts of glass particles, she wrote of her secret pleasure in making her marks in that remote realm free of others; she accepted with satisfaction the absorption of her tracks back into the earth as if they were herself.

There was also fear. She was afraid of the imbalance and disorientation she experienced in a vast space defined by rhythms but not by boundaries. She was afraid of being lost. Now and then she was dizzy. The sting of the sand on her skin seemed an attack on her person. She was afraid, above all, of the enormity of nature and its indifference. Grippled so during these times, the woman found herself often walking nearly backwards, with her head turned round, her eyes holding on to the last shallow craters of her steps, before they were obliterated.

On the second day, for instance, she found it difficult to repeat what she had done and left the day before. She thought that her path was different (the dunes, of course, had changed). Nevertheless, she persevered. She noticed that she was scuffing the sand in an effort to impress upon it her determination. Several times

# EVOLUTION OF "ROSENDALE A PUBLIC WORK"

## PHYSICAL

DISCOVERY PIECES  
PERCEPTUAL PHENOMENA  
1965 TO 1970

WORKS SHOWN AT  
HOWARD WISE, N.Y. 1970  
O.K. HARRIS, N.Y. 1970  
HUNDRED ACRES N.Y. 1971  
BOSTON M.F.A.  
ELEMENTS EXHIBIT 1971

## SOCIAL

"INFLUENCE" WORKS  
CONCEPTUAL SEED PLANTS  
1970-1971

"MUSEUM"  
ART GROUP NYC  
1969-1971

ART INSTRUCTION  
ELLENVILLE N.Y.  
1969-1973

## POLITICAL

ROSENDALE A  
PUBLIC ART WORK  
1974-1977

INSTRUCTIONAL  
RESOURCE DIRECTOR  
ULSTER COUNTY  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
T.V. & FILM  
PRODUCTION  
1973-1976

PROFESSIONAL  
LOBBYIST &  
PRESIDENT OF  
MARKETING CO.  
1976

1980

HIGHLAND ART AGENTS  
240 SO. BROADWAY  
5th FLOOR  
LOS ANGELES, CALIF. 90012



# TOWN OF ROSENDALE

## ***Building Inspector***

Box 423

Rosendale, New York 12472

Phone 658-9639

March 10, 1989

Mr. Dietrich Werner  
Rosendale, New York 12472

Re: Huguenot Historical Society property  
Tax Map No. 70.6-1-19

Dear Mr. Werner:

The above mentioned property, situated within the Town of Rosendale, appears to have been constructed prior to the enactment of zoning laws. No certificate of occupancy would have been required.

Sincerely,

Edward R. Charles  
Building Inspector

ERC/nl