

Editorials

Hammond's Secrecy

Why can't the Hammond Town Board provide the public with copies of the ordinance the town board is drafting?

Town board members have no one but themselves to blame for the appearance they've created that they are operating in secrecy.

They are the only town board or elected body that we are aware of in the state that routinely refuses to provide its citizens with copies of draft ordinances they are considering.

At last night's Hammond Town Board meeting, we specifically directed one of our reporter's to request a copy of the draft ordinance that town board members are reviewing.

Town Supervisor Janie Hollister repeatedly refused to provide a copy of the changes that are being made in the ordinance.

Hammond citizens need to hold the entire town board accountable for what the people they have elected are doing.

Town board owe it to the citizens who elected them to conduct the public's business transparently.

While town board members may refer those kinds of decisions to the town supervisor, the reality is that any of the town board members could, if they wanted to keep the public informed, provide citizens with the public documents.

Citizens ought to be able to follow along with the town board as they review ordinances to see what changes are being made and what kind of laws are being considered.

That's not happening in Hammond.

Mrs. Hollister and the current town board can blame the press, blame the critical citizens who they have antagonized, and blame everyone else, but the sad reality of Hammond is that the town board's actions have created the polarization in their community.

Despite what town board members would like everyone to believe, they are not the first town board in New York State to face a controversial issue.

Many town boards have discussed and debated controversial issues.

The difference is that most town boards realize that the best way to keep the community from becoming too polarized is to keep them as informed as possible about what is occurring and to make sure that all citizens feel like their concerns are at least being considered.

Hammond's town board needs to change its tactics and its treatment of its citizens and the public.
