

Letter to the Editor

02/14/11

“You can't handle the truth!” - A Few Good Men

“The town is finally moving in the right direction”

... if you can believe Riverhead Town Board members, referring to the Riverhead Animal Shelter and quoted in the local newspaper.

Well, it sounds good. But I've been down this road before.

Three years ago, the “right direction” was supposedly “privatization.”

And that “right direction” led across “the bridge to nowhere.”

I asked Councilman Jim Wooten what is standing in the way now?

“It's complicated ...” he replied.

Really?

Lets start with December 21st and take this one step at a time.

That was the day Bruno, a dog at the shelter, was euthanized.

Jim was going to conduct an investigation.

Three (3) people were involved: Animal Control Officer Lou Coronesi, Chief of Police David Hegermiller and Town Supervisor Sean Walter.

And the paperwork.

How complicated could it be?

Jim never did share his findings. Bits and pieces of the story have appeared in the local papers, but key questions go unanswered. Why did Lou Coronesi write contradicting reports – a day apart? Did he in fact, lie to the Supervisor, claiming that the dog bit a child? Did he lie to the Chief of Police as well? Why did the Chief of Police refuse Councilman Wooten's request to delay the dog's death and claim that it was “urgent”? Why has no one been held accountable? But if you ask the Town Board about specifics, it's a “personnel matter” and this convenient veil of secrecy is used to conceal the truth.

Whatever happened to Bruno – a dog in a municipal shelter, funded by taxpayer dollars – is a matter of public concern. And everyone has a right to know what happened. Then, the Town can wrangle with the personnel fallout behind closed doors.

Telling the truth is simple – hiding it gets complicated.

Maybe that is what Jim meant.

It's been nearly two (2) months since Bruno died and with the exception of testing stool samples at the shelter, nothing has changed.

So, Councilman Wooten and Supervisor Walter, please don't tell me about the “right direction”.

Just tell me the truth.

-Sue Hansen

Rocky Point, NY

(631) 219-8529