

Dear Arthur

I take strong exception to the characterization of your latest open letter as "friendly." Where I come from friends don't address their issues in large blue letters on their web site and friends don't end their letters with threats of "it will not bode well." But what really has me floored is your apparent expectation that in three short weeks Jerry and I should have reorganized the town, fixed all its ills and addressed all of the previous year's complaints for good measure.

Since we seem to have fallen well short of your expectations perhaps I should recount what we have been doing with our spare time. Firstly, Jerry and I attended the school for new town officials in Albany (for which I had to take off three days work from my real job). Rather than attend the mixer on the first night we hustled ourselves back to Germantown in time for the reorganization meeting.

We also attended a Democratic fundraiser, even though both of us are registered Republicans, because we wanted to thank our Democratic supporters, talk to them about their issues and expectations, and discuss what we are doing (and intend to do). As you know, we have also attempted to organize our artistic community so that they may contribute their energy and talents to improving our town.

Jerry has been given the task of completing the town's Hazard Mitigation Plan, a task akin to anticipating every disaster, which could possibly befall the town, and planning the proper response. He has been meeting regularly with Supervisor Brown to get up to speed on town issues and he has drafted a lengthy list of proposals, which he has presented to the other board members for their consideration. Many of these proposals directly address the issues, which you raise.

We all agree that the Comprehensive Plan and the Rezoning Committee are important issues. However, without the right people in place to implement them, the Comprehensive Plan is just another document and the Rezoning Committee will never get off the ground. I have been working with Supervisor Brown and Councilwoman Snyder to select the most qualified individuals to fill the key vacancies on the ZBA and Planning Board. I think you will soon see that some of these individuals are people you call friends.

In addition, I drafted and submitted a grant application to the New York Parks & Trails program for assistance in designing a walking trail system for Germantown. This effort was strongly supported by Supervisor Brown and Bruce Bohnsack, Chairman of the Comprehensive Plan Committee.

While doing all this we are struggling to familiarize ourselves with the budget, town policies, and the various committees, employees and volunteers who make up our town. For my part, I'm also working a full time job, raising small children and dealing with the serious illness of a family member. What you need to understand is that some very dedicated people are working very hard to improve our town. Jerry and I are newcomers to the Board and both of us combined still account for only 2/5ths of that Board. It is our job to understand why things are done the way they are and to convince the other three members when we have a better way. To insinuate that we are doing anything less is an insult to us and a disservice to those who supported us.

It is my hope that your web site will be a positive force for Germantown. That it will be used to unify our community, celebrate the positive accomplishments and propose realistic solutions for the issues that we face. Dredging up grievances from last October and heaping them on two newly elected officials does none of this.

Joel Craig