

Statement to “Stop the Canal Clear Cutting,” Seymour Library, 2/1/18

I regret that, due to a prior engagement, neither I nor my Village Board members can be present this evening to learn what the East Side group has to say about the canal clear cutting and their plans going forward. What I can do is spell out where Brockport stands with this issue as we look to next steps.

Brockport’s situation vis-à-vis the canal embankment is different from that in the other impacted areas. We have 70 properties in close proximity to the canal embankment, some as little as 35 or 40 feet away. We have had leaks in at least three locations on the canal embankment in recent years, two of them on homeowners’ properties, one of them in a Village park.

The primary focus in Brockport is the safety of village homeowners and secondarily remediating the loss of privacy, from clear cutting, on properties adjacent to the canal. After discussions with the Canal Corp we concur that trees do not belong canal embankments and that they represent a threat to the breach of the embankment. That being said, the rollout of this “vegetation management” plan was little short of disastrous. To consider the public informed after a poorly advertised and attended October poster presentation at the College at Brockport was the first mistake. The Canal Corp refusing to hold a follow-up public meeting here was the second. The Canal Corp did agree to a meeting by invitation only which was held at Seymour Library on November 8th. That meeting was attended by Canal Corp and NYPA officials along with representatives from every impacted village street; detailed notes from the meeting were posted on our village website. However, confusion continued to reign with the project as concessions to clear cutting appear to have been granted to East Side communities.

Throughout this project the Village of Brockport has been in regular contact with the Canal Corp, and moving forward we have made the following demands: 1) that the Canal Corp return to Brockport soon for a public meeting to discuss the implementation of these demands 2) that they send invitations to the public meeting to all 70 property owners as well as advertise it

through the usual media channels; 3) that the arborist they are hiring for the east side be available to consult with Brockport homeowners about appropriate plantings on property lines to provide privacy; 4) that the Canal Corp assume the cost of those plantings; 5) That the Canal Corp work with the village to identify and develop several public access points to the canal path; and 6) that when the time comes to discuss options for low growing vegetation on the cleared embankment that the Canal Corp engage the expertise of our local nursery, to advise on embankment plantings. At present we have a verbal agreement, but only a verbal agreement, from the Canal Corp that they will meet these demands. We have also asked that the delayed-for-years repair of our south canal wall at 60 Clinton Street be completed this coming year

We have kept our State Senator, Rob Ortt and our Assemblyman, Steve Hawley, in the loop on all of this and anticipate their attendance at the next public meeting in Brockport with the Canal Corp. We will advertise that meeting and will welcome attendance from East Siders as well as from the impacted villages in Orleans County.

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