

Copenhagen Clerk

From: Kathy Hanchek <khanchek@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 10:38 AM
To: Copenhagen Clerk
Subject: Letter for Village Board Meeting 1-12-2022

Copenhagen Home Days Task Force

Date: 01-09-2022

To: The Village of Copenhagen Mayor and Trustees

From: Copenhagen Home Days Task Force

Dear Mayor Mark Souva, Trustee Gerald Synder, Trustee Ben Shambo, Trustee Kim Vogt and Trustee Shareeff Stokley

We are requesting that our hard earned residual funds that we raised be rightfully transferred back to Copenhagen Home Days Task Force from the Copenhagen CARE Collaborative Committee. We are requesting this be added to the new business for the 12 January Village Board Meeting and notified that we have been placed on the agenda with allotted time to discuss our concerns and issues.

Background information:

First, I want to clear up some confusion about our "start up" funds. It is my understanding that Mayor and some Village Board members believe that our "start up" funds came out of the Village Funds. This is not the truth and this is not where our start up funds came from. Our start up funds of \$3,759.00 came from the residual funds from Copenhagen Community Days held in 2011. The Village kept these funds in a separate account and these funds could only be used for future community wide event per request of the organizers. The Village could not use these funds for any village expenses. Hence, the 150th celebration event qualified for use of these funds for our start up operation. As a result, the 150th Committee was able to ask to use Copenhagen Community Days residual funds. This motion was reviewed by the Village Attorney, Village Accountant and then approved by the Village Board to use residual funds as start up funds for the 150th event.

We had our final meeting for the 150th meeting in early fall which was chaired by Dwayne St Louis, Chairperson. At this meeting there was a discussion to find out who was still interested in forming a new committee with the mission of hosting a summer event similar to the 150th but on a smaller scale. There were only 4 members who were present that were interested in forming a new committee: JoAnn Groff, Kathy Hanchek, Sue Parker, and Sandy Jones. There was discussion to do a joint function with the Fire Department and Ladies Auxiliary if they were interested. The 150th Committee discussed and voted to create a new committee and the remaining money in the 150th account would be used by Copenhagen Home Days Task Force as our start up for our future event. This motion was approved by the 150th committee with no objections.

The 150th Committee worked hard to raise money for the event to cover operational cost such as fireworks, petting zoo, three bounce houses, prizes for the kids games, parade prizes, several bands, bathroom facilities, banners, office supplies etc. We worked for several months to raise money to make this fun filled event a reality and to keep cost to a minimum for the attendees. We had chicken BBQ's, can drives, sponsored tee shirts, sponsored business for the 150th program booklets, written letters to business and key individuals requesting monetary donations, mega raffle items and silent auction. One can not even imagine the amount of time and energy that was involved with our small crew to raise enough money to support event along with all the detailed planning that happen behind the scene.

In October 2019, the Copenhagen Home Days Task Force met a couple of times to discuss what we envisioned our summer event would be like to ensure we included activities and entertainment that the folks really enjoyed. Pat Mahar and Casimir Bigda joined us at our follow up meetings to discuss what the fire department wanted to see happen and how we could make this a successful joint event. The fire department put Casimir Bigda in charge to work with our committee on behalf of the Fire Department. For example, we talked about having the event in June or August as not to compete with the field days in July so the fire department could be a key player. Another example, we talked about was not having food trucks so the fire department would be the only organization selling food. We were just in

the very early stages of planning when pandemic begun and we were on lock down. The task force is currently on hold till end of the pandemic.

Fast forward to November 2021- Transfer residual funds from the 150th Committee to Copenhagen CARE Collaborative Committee without knowledge, and approval from 150th Chairperson and Copenhagen Home Days Task Committee Members and was an illegal action as the money was not Village money.

This information was obtained from the letter that the Copenhagen CARE Collaborative wrote to the board requesting release of residual funds dated 27 November 2021. Member (s) met with Mayor Mark Souva and Trustee Kim Vogt back in September who was advised of what things the committee could do, need to have EIN number and bank account to transfer our funds to their committee.

At this time, the Village Board should have reached out to Dwayne St. Louis, Chairperson and 4 committee members to find out what our plans were for use of our remaining funds. We are told that the Copenhagen CARE Collaborative had no idea of who was on the new committee and neither did the Village board knew who was on the committee. Some of the members on the Copenhagen CARE Collaborative were members on the 150th committee so they should have know the above information. In fact, if they had looked in the 150th box or in the published 150th booklet they could have found this information out. All the information and phone numbers were readily available if the Village Board really wanted to take the time to seek out the information (Attachment #1).

It was not till a few days before the Hometown Holidays (end of November) that we had found out that Copenhagen CARE Collaborative was asking for our funds to be transferred to their committee. Chris Vogt called Jo Ann Groff to see if she had a copy of the minutes from the last meeting of the 150th which she did not have as she was not the secretary for the committee. Chris Vogt advised that they were seeking funds to pay for the fireworks as they did not know how they were going to pay for them. It was suggested to Copenhagen CARE Collaborative that they should start doing fund raising activities.

Jo Ann advised Chris Vogt to contact the other members of the committee Kathy Hanchek, Sue Parker and Sandy Jones to verify that 150th committee voted to create a new committee and transfer the residual funds at the last 150th Committee meeting.

None of the members were contacted to discuss outcome of the final 150th committee. Nor was the Chairperson, Dwayne St. Louis of the 150th committee was not contacted either.

The following individuals were present at the last meeting and can verify that a vote took place to form a new committee "Copenhagen Home Days" Task Force and the residual funds from the 150 event was going to be transferred to Copenhagen Home Days to be uses as start up funds.

*Dwayne St. Louis, Diane Mahar, Kathy Hanchek, JoAnn Groff, Sandy Jones, Sue Parker, Pat Mahar, Casimir Bigda, Richard Hall, and Shari Simmons. (I believe there were a few more committee members present for our last meeting).

At this present moment the minutes of the 150th can not be located. I have spoken with Diane Mahar, 150th Committee Secretary who is trying to locate the minutes. Diane responded that Chris Vogt asked her about transferring the funds. Diane thought the funds were going to our new committee - Copenhagen Home Days Funds not to another committee. Dianne indicated since Chris Vogt was a member of the 150th committee she assumed the funds was going to the Copenhagen Home Days Funds. She did not know till I told her that the request for the transfer of the funds was going to the new committee Copenhagen CARE Collaborative Committee and if she had know that she would not have given her approval.

Lori Wheeler stated that she and the Mayor looked for the minutes from our last 150th meeting in the 150th box at the Village Hall and minutes could not be found. I asked to look in the box and Lorie and I briefly looked thru the box but did not find the minutes from the last meeting. I did find out that the 150th box did not contain the official minute meeting as the items in the box were not official documents of the village. The paperwork in the 150th box belonged to a past employee not the village.

We wanted to clarify that the following statement in the letter that was written to Village Board on November 27, 2021 to release the residual funds is not accurate.

"The committee (referring to the 150th) stated at the end of their event, that funds remaining was to be used for future village events" This is **NOT ACCURATE!**

This is **NOT** what was said or happened at our last 150th meeting!!! In fact, after discussion a vote was taken by members present to form a new committee "Copenhagen Home Days Task Force" to host another event similar to the 150th on smaller scale in conjunction with the fire department and remaining residual funds would be used as start up funds.

At the last Village Board meeting on 2 December there was a motion to transfer funds and motion was approved. The Village Board failed to do their homework and present all the facts prior to the vote. Also, the public was not allowed to speak during the discussion and during public forum. As result, I am pretty sure board members voted not knowing "all" of the facts.

Most importantly, the **Village Board did not have any legal authority** to take funds from the 150th Funds to give to the Copenhagen CARE Collaborative . In case, you have missed the point the check the Village wrote to Copenhagen CARE Collaborative was **NOT the Village Money**. One could say that our money was stolen from our fund. This money belonged to the 150th Committee and our funds were result of fund raising activity not money given to us by the Village.

What should have happened you may ask?

1. When the Village Board wanted to get the money off the books and disperse the funds they should have determined who legally the money belongs to before taking any further actions.
2. Since it was **NOT the village money** the Mayor should have reached out to Dwayne St. Louis, Chairperson of the 150th committee.
3. If the goal was to get the funds off the books the Mayor should have contacted the Dwayne St Louis and the new committee members for input. If they did not know who the members were they should have contacted the Dwayne St. Louis, Chairperson, 150th committee.
4. The Village Board should have advised the new Copenhagen Home Days Task Force that in order to transfer the funds they needed to obtain EIN number and open a bank account. We would have done this in a heartbeat if we knew that this needed to be done!!!
5. Then the Village Board could have transferred the funds to the correct party which is the Copenhagen Home Days Task Force.
6. The Village Board should do the right thing, make motion tonight and vote to collect and return the money from the Copenhagen CARE Collaborative Committee to the Copenhagen Home Days Task Force. The Copenhagen Home Days Task Force will do the paperwork needed to make this happen as get an EIN number and open bank account.

Sincerely,

Copenhagen Home Days Task Force