

In the Matter of the Proposed Closing of the Old Chatham
New York Post Office

Docket Number 1376004 - 12136

Received

Petition

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To Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York Avenue NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20268-0001

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POSTAL REGULATORY
COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Richard J. Dorsey, petitions to appeal the final determination to close the Old Chatham New York post office.

1. I reside at 994 Albany Turnpike, Old Chatham, ^{New York 12136} and am a person served by the Old Chatham Post Office. This appeal is on the following grounds.

2. The general process used by the Postal Service in arriving at this final determination was flawed. The pretext of adding it to the list of post offices considered for closing was the retirement of a post master. Actually the individual who retired was a relatively young employee, who was not completing a long period of service, but someone who was merely going on to a more desirable position in the postal system. The survey sent out to the users of the post office was mainly a set of leading questions designed to provoke answers for which the postal service was ready to respond with canned answers. There was no place in the survey for users other than box holders to give views of favorable or unfavorable. The public meeting held in connection was conducted by a representative who claimed to have no details as to the grounds and financial information. The residents at the meeting itself and local reaction thereafter showed widespread local objection to the proposed closing. Numerous petitions of protest were sent in. Nonetheless the regional decision for closing was issued well before the end of the 60 day comment period. It contained the misleading statement that most survey respondents as having no opinion as to closing.

3. The Old Chatham post office has been a local presence and partner in this historic community almost continually since 1820. But I emphasize it is not merely something connected with our past, but is an active functioning part of the commerce here right up to the present. It has continued to function well even when the Postal Service would not agree to replace a postmaster.

4. The targeting of the Old Chatham for closing did not arise out of any rational plan of the Postal Service for considering the needs of the northern Columbia County postal service users. (Other remaining rural post offices in the same area have either been targeted or will be shortly targeted).

5. From the outset the closing of the Old Chatham post office as been officially linked by the Postal Service with a proposal to shift its operations to the East Chatham post office. This East Chatham facility is not typical of other rural offices historically. It is what I would term a Mega facility built approximately 10 years ago through arrangement of the Postal Service with private

investors. These investors following plans given them built an out- of- scale facility in return for a lucrative long term lease. East Chatham is nowhere near the geographical center of the northern Columbia County area.

6. The rental paid to local owners (under \$10,000 a year) for the existing Old Chatham facility is only a small fraction of the rental for this big block post office, which is reputed to be \$5,000. a month. This big block facility was recently picked up by investors from the west for over \$800,000. The rental flow it is generating at the expense of the postal service must have been recognized from far away as a desirable cash cow.

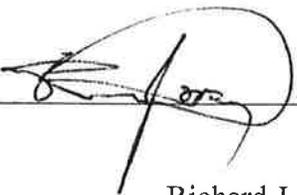
7. Under the guise of supposed savings to the Postal Service, the closing is an attempt to force Old Chatham residents to support an overbuilt and underutilized extravagance.

8. Even worse is the fact that the connecting road between Old Chatham and East Chatham is only a town road with steep hills and a antiquated bridge that crosses railroad tracks. This bridge in the vicinity of the East Chatham post office is a narrow iron bridge over one hundred years old. It is on the dangerous bridge list for the County. Since it is owned by the railroad the county has no direct control over it. This abrupt closure is being accomplished with no recognition of the accompanying travel hardship being offered to area seniors.

9. There is no doubt the Postal Service is experiencing real financial difficulties at the moment. But proposed closings like the one under appeal have a negative effect on the financial base of the enterprise. Such closings are undermining the rural customer base for the entire system. And they are supporting the continuation of past extravagances made in the lease build program.

10. This Commission is charged with ensuring appropriate and transparent performance standards. It is time the Commission required to Postal Service to take a look at the extravagances from the recent past it is willingly continuing before allowing it to further destroying the fabric of its rural customer base. The Postal Service should be required to be transparent and appropriate in this situation rather than being silent on the financial impact of maintaining the big box and being misleading on supposed savings by shifting everything to the big box.

It is respectfully requested that the final determination to close the Old Chatham Post Office be reversed and the matter remanded to the Postal Service for further consideration of its decision to transfer everything to East Chatham.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard J. Dorsey", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

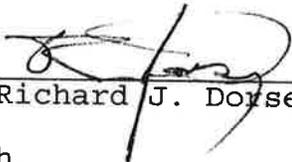
Dated: September 6, 2011

Richard J. Dorsey

V E R I F I C A T I O N

State of New York)
 SS.:
County of Columbia)

Richard J. Dorsey, being duly sworn, deposes and says that I am petitioner herein, that the above petition is true to my own knowledge, except as to matters therein alleged on information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true (belief in the rental figure for the East Chatham facility has not been revealed by the Postal Service, but my belief is based on conversation with a person who has worked in the service).


Richard J. Dorsey

Sworn to before me this 6th
day of September, 2011.


Notary Public

SHANE A. ZONI, ESQ.
Notary Public – State of New York
No. 02ZO6181672
Qualified in Columbia County
My Commission Expires Feb. 4, 2012

Petitioner:
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