

Judi S. Clippinger

A 2011-78

RECEIVED 1 Main Street West  
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2011 OCT 13 Smyrna, NY New York 13464  
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POSTAL REGULATORY  
COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

October 6, 2011

POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION  
901 NEW YORK AVE NY STE 200  
WASHINGTON DC 20268-0001

Received

re: Closing the Smyrna NY Post Office

OCT 13 2011

Dear PRC:

Office of PAGR

I am appealing the closing of the Smyrna NY Post Office.

I am enclosing my letter of June 6, 2011 minus the attachments, as a statement of my concerns which merit an appeal.

In addition, the September 9, 2011 Final Determination Letter Docket No. 1381921-13464 is full of misinformation, starting with the first concern about parking, at the Sherburne Post Office, which is listed as six miles away and as the post office at which one may open a box and continue to use a Smyrna NY address. Many people have expressed concern about parking at the Sherburne Post Office, based, not on a "site study" but on experience with the lack of parking there. Since first seeing this fatuous statement about the "site study", I have always checked out the parking when I drive by. The referenced parking lot is shared with a couple of businesses, and is frequently full. The traffic pattern is dreadful, in that the "designate entrance and exit" are one lot away from the traffic light at the intersection of two state highways, frequently causing gridlock when a vehicle is unable to turn left into the lot. On-street parking in Smyrna means people can park on either side of the street the length of the Village.

Another response states that Smyrna is an unincorporated village, which as the mayor from 1991 to 1999, I can assure you is untrue -- it is very much incorporated, unlike many other communities in the area which continue to have post offices.

The figures put forth for savings by closing this post office also do not hold up. The office has been run efficiently and in a very friendly manner by the current postal employee, so there is no need to go to a higher paid postmaster; I suspect our current "PMR", who is, by

the way, a somewhat disabled veteran, does not receive fringe benefits @ 33.5%. And the figures do not clearly take into account the additional hours and mileage for the rural delivery carrier.

My husband and I operate a business, a law office, with five employees. We raised concerns in the surveys and in letters about items related to our business, and received contradictory answers:

- A. We need to receive mail in the morning for a quick turn-around for our large clientele, and to have it go out at the end of the same day. As the Sherburne Post Office is open fewer hours than we are (Post Office 9 am - 1 pm and 2 pm to 5 pm as opposed to 8:30 am to 5 pm), we will need to make two trips a day during our work hours to accomplish what we now have, at a cost of over one staff hour, and \$11.00 a day at current mileage rates.
- B. We could have a rural delivery box and either leave the large quantity of legal mail in an unlocked box to be delivered and picked up, or lock it in, and then presumably not be able to have it picked up; in doing this we would also lose our identity of 28 years as a Smyrna business, as we would have to accept a Sherburne address.

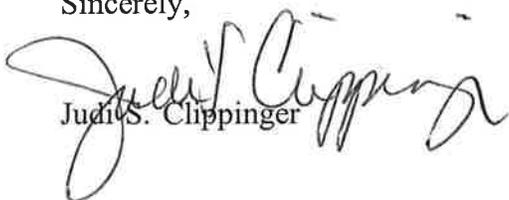
The response to these concerns are indicative of the Postal Service's lack of concern about the real costs of this proposal -- your paragraph responding to the having to travel to Sherburne concern is that one may have a mail box; your paragraphs responding to the concerns about security and loss of identity of our location is that one may have a Post Office Box in Sherburne.

Similarly, the very serious concern in this community about our large low-income and disabled population received contradictory responses -- they can put up mail boxes so as not to have to drive to Sherburne, but they can have boxes in Sherburne if they are unable to erect a mail box.

Smyrna is also a growing community, contrary to assertions from the Final Determination. We had the most growth of any village in this county in the 2000 census, and we are experiencing a "boom" with the incredible growth in the natural gas industry in the Town of Smyrna. I believe the second page of my June 6 letter lays this all out -- and if you read it with an open mind, and not simply in order to rebut it point by point as the response did, perhaps you will reconsider the decision.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

  
Judith S. Clippinger

cc: Governor Andrew Cuomo  
Sen Charles Schumer  
Sen Kirsten Gillibrand  
Congressman Richard Hanna

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June 6, 2011

Nadine Tremblay  
Post Office Review Coordinator  
Albany District, USPS  
30 Karner Road  
Albany NY 12288-9992

**COPY**

re: Smyrna Post Office

Dear Ms. Tremblay:

On behalf of the Ad-Hoc Committee to Save the Smyrna Post Office, I am enclosing:

24 pages of Petition addressed to you, containing over three hundred signatures

Copies of the lists of 75 people who attended the 5/19/11 meeting your office organized

Copies of 4 newspaper articles on the subject

Copy of the Village Mayor's letter to Congressman Richard Hanna; similar letters were sent to Sen. Gillibrand, Sen. Schumer, and Gov. Cuomo, and copies were sent to the 4 newspapers which serve the area

I stated at the meeting that I have calculated at the current government rate of \$.51 a mile, it will cost annually almost \$1600 for anyone who wishes to maintain his or her current mailbox address to do the 10 mile round-trip to the Sherburne Post Office every day on which mail is delivered. There are three major problems with the "free" alternative of delivery to a mailbox:

- A. Security, especially on week-ends
- B. Changing one's address and identity to Sherburne, especially for a business which would have to list both on letterheads
- C. Mailboxes along Route 80 (Main Street) will interfere with parking for

community events such as the summer Monday night band concerts (Smyrna Town Band is the oldest continuously-playing of its kind in NYS) and our famous chicken BBQ's -- attendees park a quarter mile in each direction from the center of the village for both types of events

We understand that Brian Sherpardson is no longer with the USPS, which may explain the lack of information provided at the May 19 meeting. Or perhaps after hearing how few people in the greater Smyrna area can go on-line or even have computers, and how many are truly low income, he decided it was wiser NOT to tell the audience that being on-line is apparently necessary to obtain the wonderful services we were promised from rural carriers if our post office is closed. I had to learn how it is done the next day, by buttonholing postal employees.

How poor is Smyrna? When I was Mayor in the 1990's, we received no-interest loans from FmHA to install a sewer system and complete our water system. One-third of the of the households in the Village qualified to have their sewer hook-ups paid for by the HUD housing-improvement program. At that time, the Smyrna School was converted into eleven affordable apartments, adding to the number of low income families in the community. One woman who volunteers at the Smyrna Methodist Church's food pantry and Christmas program spoke eloquently at the May 19th meeting about the sixty-plus percentage of students in our local school district who qualify for free and reduced-priced lunches, another measure of the poverty in our area.

We have fought hard to keep this community affordable for people with low incomes, who frequently have no or unreliable transportation to Sherburne and other surrounding communities. As several pointed out at the May 19 meeting, closing the Post Office will shift the financial burden to the people who can least afford it. That is antithetical to the word "Service" in your name, and to the promise of the **Postal Reorganization Act of 1970** to *provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal service to rural areas, communities, and small towns where post offices are not financially self-sustaining.*

It will be a domino effect in Smyrna if you close the Post Office -- people who do go to Sherburne for their mail will shop there, and our general store will suffer and close. Without the store, the Fire Department and the Library will lose important donors, and again, those who can travel to Sherburne for mail may start using the larger Sherburne Library, perhaps dooming the Smyrna Library, which will no longer be here to serve those who cannot afford to travel. Several of us with small businesses in this town expressed that we would to use other delivery services, without the convenience of our Post Office.

I am asking you to help us save our post office, because that will be saving our community.

Sincerely,

Judi S. Clippinger