

## MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF ESOPUS

### ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD

May 21, 2008

PRESENT: Andy and Elka Bicking, Susan Holland, Michelle Higgins, David Higgins, Emily P. Cathy Quick, Louise Ferrente, Dan Shapley, David Murray, Laura Petit

TOWN LIAISON: Deborah Silvestro

Chairman Bicking called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. He announced that Robert Yerry may attend. He said the Committee deserved a round of applause for a successful Tree Giveaway event in April. Silvestro noted that a letter submitted to the Daily Freeman by Marion Zimmer and himself. Chairman Bicking welcomed Dan Shapley who was interested in becoming a member of the Environmental Board. He should be formally appointed at the next Town Board meeting. Shapley said he had an environmental background and an interest in the Hudson River. He is a correspondent with public relations experience.

Chairman Bicking said he would like to review Susan Holland's web site and discuss a summer event. He also has two draft proposals for the Town Board for their approval and then would like to discuss implementing the programs.

**WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT:** Susan Holland received authorization from the Town web master to maintain the environmental committee website. She said she just received the IP address info and reported that she has just started the "Sustain Esopus" blog. She asked for the Board members addresses so she could invite them to her page to post. Holland distributed copies of the blog for the Committee to review. She said the blog would be linked to the Town webpage. Her next instructions forwarded to Committee members would be about blogging.

Chairman Bicking would like to keep website development on the agenda for a few more meetings, so Holland can update the Board. Silvestro said she will continue to inform the public on the Esopus public access show.

**WATERFRONT ADVISORY BOARD** – Quick reported that the WAB did not meet in April since they had the Hudson River Clean Sweep on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008. She explained that the WAB was interested in updated its LWRP which served as a tool for development and public access. It also was instrumental in getting grants. Silvestro said that anyone interested in reviewing the document could do so at the Town Hall during office hours.

Quick discussed the water chestnut harvesting event schedule in June. She said that Chairman Zimmer had contacted NYSDEC to make sure there would be no issues. Quick said that the water chestnuts had to be harvested by hand since the Harvester/Cutter was not in service. They had to be pulled before they went to seed. Silvestro said that no grants were available for a harvester only to eradicate the plants which could not be done on the River. There was discussion on a joint effort for the water chestnut pulling event, and what would be done with the plants once they were pulled. Quick offered to speak with Chairman Zimmer on the WAB about helping plan and advertise the event.

**RECYCLING** – Chairman Bicking circulated some handouts for the energy audit and recycling. He was hoping to develop some plans, time lines, and job assignments for this project. He discussed the recycling rates, and three phase goals. The first goal was to improve the image of the recycling center including landscaping and signage, then upgrade potholes, begin steps in developing a pamphlet, and review financial responsibilities of Town for Transfer Station. Silvestro said she was influenced by Dankelmann's presentation and his suggestion that the more people that used the facility the less it would cost the Town. She felt it would be cheaper for her than paying a private hauler.

Higgins asked whose responsibility it was to repair potholes. Silvestro said that the Town dropped off Item 4 and Dankelmann would be using his equipment to spread the material. Chairman Bicking reminded the Board that they had discussed changing the name from Town transfer station to Town recycling center. Silvestro noted that the contract for operating the Transfer Station had been renewed, and that the contractor was responsible for public education. Chairman Bicking offered to contact Dankelmann about developing some new material. Ferrente thought that the Board should consider a publication. She said that years ago there was one available at local stores for the residents.

Petit offered to prepare a NYSDEC education grant for the Town since funds were being expended that could be reimbursed up to 50%. Higgins offered to help to. Petit also reminded the Board that a member was needed on the County Environment Management Council to represent the Town.

**ENERGY AUDIT** - David Murray gave update on the energy audit. He felt the group he contacted wasn't enthusiastic about working with the Town since the lighting and Town Hall was already in place. He said they recommended he call a program called Flex Tech but they felt that since the Town pays for the street lighting which is owned by Central Hudson, it wouldn't actually benefit the Town. Murray found out from the Town bookkeeper that \$180,00 a year was spent on electrical costs. Silvestro said that the new Town Hall would be using geothermal and solar panels which would save in energy costs. Higgins asked if the Town would get credit back for generating its own electric. Silvestro said municipalities didn't qualify for the net meter service savings. She also said that the architects didn't think enough solar energy could be generated to supply the

entire Town Hall. The solar field could be moved manually to follow the path of the sun and would be free from vegetative overgrowth that would block sunlight. Murray asked if an analysis was done to see how long it would take to pay back the cost of the panels through energy savings. Silvestro said that it would require further bonding and didn't feel that the cost to the taxpayer would outweigh the cost of the panels. Higgins thought that the conduit should be run in the trench for future installation. Silvestro felt that there were other options including the new solar companies being invited into the area that may be more cost effective in the future.

Murray felt that the community should go through a comprehensive review and see which of the street lights are needed. Some of the Central Hudson lighting is competing with the street lights just installed by the State. Higgins agreed that it didn't make sense to have two sets of street lights. Quick said the Central Hudson lights took away from the Town street lights, and maybe there could be a way to save some money.

**NEW BUSINESS** – There was discussion on developing the Town and perhaps bringing in a farmer's market. Ferrente said that Europe had traveling markets that were in different locations on different days. Silvestro said she was working on bringing a market into Town that specialized in smaller communities. She found out that a community had petitioned for a market like Trader Joe's.

Ferrente informed the Board that she had been behind the Stewart's on Route 9W and there was a ditch that was filled with garbage including sinks. She wanted to know if the Board had been in the back of the building and what could be done. Silvestro said it would be the building inspector.

Silvestro discussed the newest NYSDEC regulations to ban backyard burning. She said currently it was enforced for municipalities of over 20,000 but it would be revised to include certain materials that could not be burned.

**ADJOURN** Meeting adjourned at 8:30PM

Prepared by Laura Petit