

**TOWN OF ESOPUS
MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD
October 15, 2008**

Andy Bicking, Chairman; Susan Holland, Emilie Pereira, Louise Ferranti, Dan Shapely, David Murray, Michelle Higgins

Absent: Corrine Brown, Cathy Quick

TOWN LIAISON: Deb Silvestro

MINTUES

MOTION to approve the July 2008 minutes was made by Emilie Pereira and seconded by Susan Holland. All present in favor.

PAYROLL

MOTION to approve payroll for the secretary was made by Louise Ferrante and seconded by Dan Shapely. All present in favor.

CHAIRMAN's REPORT

Chairman Bicking reported on 2009 budget request from the Town. He read a letter from Supervisor Coutant who was requesting a reduction in the bottom line by 10% due to shortfalls in projected revenues from mortgage tax and other income sources. Chairman Bicking said the budget request submitted was for \$5,000 which included \$4,000 to use as matching funds from the NYSDEC Recycling Grant. Five hundred dollars was for the energy audit which included travel, and \$500 was for the annual tree-giveaway. He said he had discussed the budget with Councilperson Silvestro, and she had requested that the Environmental Committee be flexible due to fiscal constraints. He agreed that the budget could be reduced by \$4,000 for the anticipated grant funds, but asked that the Town be open for discussion should the grant be approved by the State.

Silvestro reminded the Environmental Committee that the reduction in budget should not discourage the Board from seeking other grants. It was recommended that private sources be contacted which would require no matching funding. Murray asked if there was any 2008 funding left, and if it could be carried over to 2009. Silvestro said any residual funds would revert back to the general revenue fund.

ENERGY AUDIT

Murray circulated maps on how many lights, and how much per month was spent. He noted that the maintenance charges exceeded the cost of the electricity. Chairman

Bicking said the savings would be significant if the lights were reduced in quantity. Murray said that the bill for the month of August 2008 was \$7144 for street lighting. He said the Town bookkeeper said the total Town bill was \$180,000 which wasn't all electricity. Silvestro said the Town Water Treatment Plant used electricity which accounts for a lot of the usage. She felt that a survey of Town users and audit would be a useful tool for the Town during the budget process. A public hearing was scheduled for November 3rd. She said the budget had to be adopted by November 20th.

Ferrante suggested that the Town may eliminate some lights during the holiday season when houses were lit up. Murray said Central Hudson warned him to consider the residents when making a decision to eliminate lights. Chairman Bicking said a chart and plan should be prepared before making recommendations.

Shapely suggested that a map of the Town be divided into sections and the work is split up. Murray said out of 450 fixtures, most were located in Port Ewen so it would be easier to start right in Town for the most timely completion of the audit. Chairman Bicking recommended the map be divided into four sections: New Salem, Rifton, Port Ewen, and South Rondout. Silvestro asked if the type of lighting (vapor, mercury, sodium, etc) should also be noted on the audit. Murray said that an identification tag was on the base of the pole for the type of lighting. Chairman Bicking suggested that volunteers be solicited and information gathered in one evening event. The Board agreed. Murray would create a methodology and chart. Higgins asked if Ulster Park would be included. Murray said there weren't many lights in the area.

RECYCLING REPORT

Chairman Bicking reported that he had stopped at the Esopus transfer station, and Robert Yerry was "sprucing" up the site. Yerry had asked about tulip bulbs for the site. Silvestro said that Laura Petit had gotten tulip bulbs for the Town. Silvestro said she and Ray Rice had already planted 400 bulbs in Rifton, and at the welcome signs entering Town. She said that Saturday at 9:30 anyone interested should meet at the Town Hall to plant bulbs, and on Sunday at the Klyne Esopus Museum.

Chairman Bicking discussed the recycling grant. He said that there wouldn't be any matching funds this year. Higgins asked if the Board had been approached about the funding. She felt that the Environmental Committee should approach the Board, and the grant application should not be put off. Bicking agreed that it was important but with the reduction in projected mortgage fees for the Town, it was not a good time to ask for additional funding. Higgins felt that recycling would help save the Town money because it would reduce disposal fees. She said if a small Town like Rosendale could have a great Environmental Commission, then Esopus could too. It's a small amount of money for a greater cause. The Board needed to take on some stronger initiatives. Ferrante said it was a wonderful place to live but Port Ewen seemed to be behind in community development. When was the community going to begin improving itself? Silvestro noted that there would be a \$615,000 short fall in the 2009 budget, and the Town was asking for

departments to cut back. Shapely thought that more volunteerism would move programs forward without costing the Town. Chairman Bicking felt that the Environmental Board was more active than it has been in many years, and that it was still in the process of building its credibility.

WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT

Holland reported on the website. She said she would be working more aggressively on it. Chairman Bicking thanked her for all of the work she had done to date.

2009 MEMBERSHIP

Chairman Bicking said some of the terms would be expiring, and there were two residents interested in taking seats. Ferrante said she would like to withdraw as a member due to family obligations. Silvestro said that Corrine Brown, Emilie Pereira, Michelle Higgins, Andy Bicking, and Cathy Quick's terms were expiring. She also reported that Quick was acting as Chair of the Waterfront Advisory Board. Chairman Bicking said he was not sure if he would continue on the Board due to family obligations too. He would not leave if there wasn't other interest in taking the Chair. He said it looked like there would be three vacancies at this time. Silvestro said anyone resigning should send an official resignation to the Town Clerk.

Higgins felt they should discuss a new Chair. Silvestro asked Pereira if she would be interested in chairing since she had covered for Bicking in his absence. Silvestro thanked the Board for all of their contributions and commended their progress.

Chairman Bicking suggested that he could co-chair if Pereira thought it was too much for her to handle.

NEW BUSINESS

Ferrante remarked that Lakeshore Villas was repainting, and had cut all of the long grass as part of the preparation. She said the debris floating in the lake was terrible, and asked if someone had a boat so they could pick up the garbage. Murray asked if the lake was privately owned. Silvestro thought it was owned by Ken Silver. Chairman Bicking suggested she draft a letter which could come from the Environmental Board.

Chairman Bicking said there is a newsletter available from the Department of Environmental Conservation if anyone was interested, and a notice to save the date for a

conference on “Preserving Your Land” Saturday, November 8th. He said the Hudson River Environmental Society was running a conference on saving small wetlands on October 28th.

Murray mentioned that he was going to contact the Highway and Water/Sewer Department heads regarding development of some best practices for saving energy. He had collected some information from NYSERDA, but had not heard back from either department yet. Silvestro offered to call Don Kiernan, Water Department. There was discussion on the water treatment plant issues and use of the City of Kingston sewer plant.

Silvestro discussed the Town plans for walking trails and green infrastructure projects. Chairman Bicking asked if it would help if there was a community preservation tax to provide funds for green projects. Silvestro thought it might be a hard sell since the Town wasn't even willing to collect a franchise fee for cable usage. It is an interesting concept though. Shapely remarked that in the current economy, many of these projects are probably on hold.

Silvestro discussed stormwater issues and pending mitigation on properties with run off problems. Chairman Bicking asked if some of the planning for MS4 could be incorporated into the LWRP which would create uniformity in any future development of the waterfront property.

ADJOURN

MOTION to adjourn was made by David Murray and seconded by Emilie Pereira. All present in favor.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:15m

Prepared by Laura Petit