

**TOWN BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING
Tuesday April 7, 2020**

A Town Board Workshop Meeting was held on April 7, 2020 in the Town Hall, located at 1 Town Hall Way, Ulster Park, NY with the following persons in attendance:

**Supervisor Shannon Harris
Councilperson Evelyn Clarke
Councilperson Jared Geuss
Councilperson Kathie Quick
Councilperson Chris Farrell**

Administrative Recorder: Holly A. Netter, Town Clerk, RMC

*** Due to the COVID -19 emergency, Governor Cuomo's Executive Orders temporarily suspended and modified laws relating to the Article 7 of the Public Officers Law through April 11, 2020. This meeting was held without permitting public in-person access to the meeting. PUBLIC PARTICIPANT DIAL IN NUMBER.*

THIS MEETING WAS TELEVISED LIVE ON CHANNEL 23 PUBLIC ACCESS and LIVE-STREAMED ON "TOWN OF ESOPUS" FACEBOOK PAGE - PUBLIC COMMENT WAS ACCEPTE VIA EMAIL TO outreach@esopus.com OR BY CALLING (845) 328-0483.

SUPERVISOR HARRIS MOTIONED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 7 PM AND WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON KATHIE QUICK. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

***All members present were distanced 6 ft apart to abide by the social distancing rule.*

PLEDGE

PUBLIC COMMENT -

Diane Dintruff emailed and asked if it was possible that the launch at Freer Park be part of the routine maintenance as well as the area where Tilden Street meets Freer Park.

Due to the lack of staff caused by the mandatory workforce reduction, Freer Park has not been maintained as it has in the past. Dan Vedder, Buildings and Grounds, is also unable to hire a seasonal employee who would have assisted in getting the parks ready for rental. Supervisor Harris asked Highway Superintendent Mike Cafaldo to provide manpower from the Highway Department to support Buildings and Grounds. Mike will provide 2 men with the understanding that Dan needs to stay with them. The men will get their regular rate of pay.

A repair is needed on Park Lane; blacktop around a gas cap, Supervisor Harris asked Mike if that was something Highway was responsible for. Mike said Central Hudson needs to make that repair and he would place a call to them.

PROJECT RESILIENCE – ESOPUS NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

The County Project Resilience program which provides meals for those individuals who are in need for various reasons due to the COVID -19 pandemic has been successful. Local restaurants such as Mario’s, Port Ewen Diner, LaRoma, Frozen Rainbow and now Antonio’s Pizza have signed up to participate. The local distribution is led by Stephanie Lettieri with volunteers who distribute the meals Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Since the program started on March 19th, a total of 1,088 meals have been provided to 372 households. The community has been grateful for this program. This program is funded by donations which the County received and the local restaurants are grateful for the revenue for their business.

PRIORITIZED COVID-19 EXPENSES

SUPERVISOR HARRIS MADE A MOTION TO PURSUE DEPARTMENTS TECHNICAL NEEDS INCLUDING THE TOWN BOARD FOR SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE IN LIGHT OF THE COVID 19 HARDSHIP AND NEED TO COMMUNICATE DIGITALLY. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON QUICK. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

NEW TIMESHEETS & STAFF CALLS

The staff has been provided new automated time sheets which will help track the loss of or additional hours being worked due to COVID-19. It also documents the duties the employees are performing. Timecards need to be back dated until March 13th when staffing requirements changed.

Weekly staff conference calls are being held. Councilperson Quick said it is good to hear what the departments are working on. Councilperson Clarke said it helps to bring the departments together to keep a cohesive unit. Supervisor Harris said she feels more connected than before. The exterior drop box arrived and the concrete pad has been poured. Once the concrete has cured, the box will be installed and we can start utilizing it.

Walk up window info was included in packet for the Board to review. The intent is to construct a walk-up window outside of Town Hall in order to continue routine residential services through the Tax Collectors office.

HIGHWAY CHIPS PROGRAM FOR 2020

Unlike other Funding the CHIPS money is available, approximately \$200,236; it is a “use it or lose it” scenario.

Highway Superintendent, Mike Cafaldo, reviewed the roads he intended to replace/ sections to be repaired.

Churchill Rd		\$28,880	Blacktop
Bowen St.	300 ft	\$ 8,000	Blacktop
Lindorf St.	2165 ft	\$60,000	Blacktop
William White Rd.	1478 ft	\$28,400	Blacktop
Hermance Dr	2165 ft	\$12,412	Cold Mix
Valhank Rd	1162 ft	\$9,600	Cold Mix

He needs to rent a screen for a week to get the material ready; he needs 500 tons. Councilperson Geuss asked if the 50% manpower would be enough. Mike said he would run one of the loaders and felt they could do it.

Mike also needs to purchase some cold patch in the amount of \$1,100 for minor repairs because Blacktop will not be available until the end of the month. He will check with the union to make sure there is no issue with providing the two workers to assist at the parks.

Superintendent Cafaldo said he would hold off purchasing the equipment that was in his budget until the end of the year and if need be he would wait until next year. This is a potential savings of \$85,000. He did mention to the Board that they found metal in the oil pan for one of the trucks that were scheduled to be replaced.

He is expecting revenue from the sale of an old loader and compressor in the amount of \$8,400 which will be booked toward the amount on his 2020 revenue line.

To deal with the sweeping on Broadway, Mike will look into a broom for the bob cat and offered to go up and down 9W to clear the sidewalks.

BUDGET REVIEW

The Board was given a letter from Brian Pickard, CPA who estimates a \$212,000 loss in revenue. Mortgage tax revenue is expected to be reduced by 50% (\$70,000) along with sales tax reduction of 50% (\$80,000). Bookkeeper Deb Kain compiled a list of cost savings of expenses

from the 2020 allocations which included employee salary & benefits savings from the hiring freeze and no overtime mandate, the discontinuing of the Recreation Summer Youth program and Senior Trips for 2020. The total reduction which was estimated at \$305,751, includes the \$85,000 from postponement of the highway truck and excavator purchases.

Department reports and potential budget reallocations were shared with the Board for their review.

Transfer Station is the one area of revenue that does not seem to be impacted by the pandemic. They are operating normal business hours and Lenny is pleased with the level of patrons and revenue.

PROPOSED MEDIA POLICY

Supervisor Harris asked if there was a motion to approve the Media Policy. Councilperson Geuss said he did not have enough time to read through the policy and asked if it had come up before today. Supervisor Harris said it is the same that was discussed in a prior meeting (in executive session). Evelyn Clarke said she thought Chris wanted to make sure we were within our purview as a Town Board. Chris Farrell said, "My issue was limiting the ability for elected officials to speak up on behalf of town business; I don't believe that it is in our purview and I don't see where it tells us that it is". Supervisor Harris said, "there is no limiting of any public official reaching or communicating with their constituents, it is just with media". Supervisor Harris said they could take their time to read through it. Councilperson Farrell added he has no objection to limit employees on social media. However he gave an example; if someone came to Mike (Cafaldo) and said "Can you talk to us about your road maintenance plan for the summer, he should be able to talk about that plan freely without the Boards' permission". Supervisor Harris replied, "He can talk about his department's responsibilities and post his departments activities on social media. But he can't say the Town is going to do this or that and can't speak on behalf of the Board. Supervisor Harris continued to give an example; "Hey Mike what's in your schedule to pave the roads this year. Well I have x amount budgeted and we're working hard but the Town Board doesn't feel I need to pave x y & z or general is taking money from my budget. Or the Town Board doesn't believe in doing blacktop anymore. He can talk about his policy, he can't talk about what general opinion of the entire town or matters that fall under the fiscal responsibility of the Town Board".

Councilperson Farrell said what if the Board did tell him that he was not to do the paving. Chris said he was not in agreement of that portion of the policy. If Mike is saying the road isn't in good condition and I believe the town needs to invest more money in the road. Supervisor Harris said, "he can come tell the Board that but he can't run to the media with that". Chris responded, "If the Board has told him he can't have money for the road, and if he is advocating,

why can't he use the press as his tool?" Supervisor Harris said, "I don't know where it would fall in the policy, not sure. He can say he's not in agreement or talk about his plan freely". She suggested if the Board has questions and scenarios to direct the questions to her or directly to attorney. Councilperson Jared Geuss said he wants a little more time; the attorney's notes came today. Supervisor Harris said as a Town we should have one voice and no one department should be representing our Town. She asked the Board to review the policy to make sure everyone is comfortable with it.

Councilperson Chris Farrell asked, "Have the department heads been made privy to this; it would be interesting to have their feedback". Supervisor Harris said, "No, I don't know why you would do that". Councilperson Chris Farrell said to see if they see any conflict. They represent the Town in certain parts of the Town example: planning, tax, clerks, is there anything that would conflict with their job.

Town Clerk Holly Netter was concerned and explained she is often asked what did the Board decide on or say about a specific topic which was discussed at an open meeting? If that information would be included in the meeting minutes, would that be allowed? Supervisor Harris replied, "the policy does not prevent you from talking to the constituents but if the media talks to you about something that is not Clerk Department related, it should be forwarded to the Board. I don't know if you have your minutes done the next day and your minutes are your minutes and do not have to be approved but the Board should review the minutes first before giving them to the media." The point was if the information was public and it was going in the minutes why couldn't the information be available to anyone who asked; such as the Board made a motion to Councilperson Farrell said we should get department head feedback and they may have ideas to even improve it; maybe more information should be added because the policy doesn't go far enough. Councilperson Geuss said department heads could be a victim of it as well through a social media blast.

Supervisor Harris said she will discuss it on the weekly call and send all employees a copy.

A copy of the proposed media policy was given to the Board based on their executive session from the prior meeting. As the policy is proposed, it only allows the Supervisor, Town Board and Town Justice to engage in social media or interact with traditional media. Department heads, including the following elected officials: Tax Collector, Highway Superintendent and Town Clerk are prohibited from engaging without prior authorization by the Town Board.

Sleightsburgh Spit

Public comment was read by Alex Dean, Outreach Coordinator.

Voicemail **Susan Van Vliet**: neighbors concerned speeding cars all night long, if open town needs to manage it. Last weekend was crazy we are asking for your help.

Anonymous: Boat launch should be closed at night, no social distancing, it is a public park but need to be monitored.

Ann Bloom- Resident Across from Sleightsburgh Spit: Not locked in evenings, used to have hooligans after hours, I don't know why it is unlocked, it is unsafe. There is more density and needs to be monitored a lot more. A lot speeding of cars go by the house, needs to be patrolled better, shocked that it is open without monitoring.

A lot of comments to get Holly a microphone and one for public when they return (COVID expense)

Trish M - Trucks and cars going very fast on North Broadway concerned for safety of children and pets.

Steven Lewis: wonderful asset needs to be monitored and during fishing season it should be supervised.

Shannon Jones: criminal actives including traffic violations, drug trafficking and general reckless behavior. She said she was told by the Sheriff's office that they are not going to be able enforcing as much because it is too much of a strain. She recommends that someone who works for the parks department already or a new employee be hired to monitor the park from 6 am – 9 pm every day.

Alex says other comments are similar requesting having someone at the park to supervise.

Councilperson Kathie Quick said last year they tried to figure out how much it would cost to have someone sit there, and it would cost a lot. Councilperson Quick went down on Friday night, dismayed at 7:30 pm it was still light out and there were 7-8 trucks, one boat was out 7-8 people on platform where they fish. She returned at 8:30 pm and there were 3 pickup trucks, they had a light and were on the concrete pier. She witnessed a car parked in the road on corner of 3rd St. and North Broadway. She said she was concerned, in the past when they did the annual clean ups at the spit there were evidence of things and did not hear complaints about it. She said in neighboring towns they have someone at their launch on weekends but not on rainy days. There has to be a way of making sure there aren't people hanging around after dusk. She said she didn't think people should be there at night. She said she has heard

concerns about Dirt Bikes and 4 wheelers tearing up the trails and increased taxi cabs coming to the area, but didn't have a lot of information about that.

Weekends and warm nights present the biggest challenges. Unfortunately with this COVID situation everyday is a weekend. Supervisor Harris said there is an uptick in crime and domestics in the County.

Councilperson Quick said she was in favor of giving access to Sportsmen from dawn to dusk: it's after dark there are complaints.

Supervisor Harris said no one has an issue with the early morning, it's the after dark. Chris Farrell said he went down last year several times when there were complaints about the evenings and there was nothing happening.

Councilperson Geuss said he went to the Spit on April 1st, opening day of striper season, at 5 am. There were 3 people set up and it was quiet. He said he spoke to Liberty Security who explained Central Hudson had put up a new pole and had taken down all of his equipment and had to be reset. In addition the contact he was using at Time Warner/Spectrum had been off due to the cut in workforce. They were hoping to see progress by Wednesday. Geuss said he was hearing speeding cars, drug activities and some covid-19 concerns; we can't govern what people do. We can't tell if they are a family and are closer together. Dirt Bike/ ATV riding are illegal activities. Councilperson Geuss added 4 wheelers and dirt bikes none of this has to do with whether the gate is locked or not locked.

Councilperson Geuss said I know Jared from Liberty Security was harassed by people down there asking what he is doing and he had a key to the gate. A fisherman told Councilperson Geuss the neighbors were on his car. Councilperson Geuss continued to say "If it such a dangerous place, as a person of the community why are they going toward the danger? If they think there is a danger of a truck approaching the gate, why would you approach them? If they had a key and are opening it, someone had to issue the key". He also went down a few other times Sat around 5:30 pm. There was 1 boat trailer and the fisherman had marked the railing with ribbon 6 ft apart. If there is crime police have to respond. If they see drug use call the police. Councilperson Quick said, "does anyone actually see the drugs being sold or do they just see cars parked and someone goes inside a house for 15 minutes and comes out".

Councilperson Geuss asked, "How do the drug deals on the streets in Sleightsburgh have to do with the park? If there are issues we want all of it out of the town" Councilperson Quick said she wished to have no access after dark and hunters and fishers should only have early morning hours. Town Clerk Netter added that some fisherman have expressed they go fishing from 12am-7am, others start wee hours of the morning; depends on tides and when they can go.

Supervisor Harris says she doesn't know anywhere else where they have a park open with a gate open at dark. Supervisor Harris suggested getting an independent evaluation of this topic and put it in the hands of the attorney to look at liability exposure and looking at standards of other parks and draft a memo looking at it from a liability prospective. She said it is our job to protect town residents, fiscal risk and liability. She said she has talked to lawyers in passing and they think it's a disaster waiting to happen. Every park is getting overrun and we need to take a step back and look out for the Towns' interest. Express to them what our concerns are and from a legal and planning perspective; even can get a second opinion. She said she would wait to see results before the signs are re done. She suggested possibly posting as a precaution hunting going on certain times of the year. Supervisor Harris said someone could be hit by Quads or dirt bikes and people could drown after dark putting their boat in or out. There is water, there are potholes, possibility for drowning and have all groups converging in one place. Councilperson Jared Geuss said we keep hearing 4 wheelers, that is illegal anyway there is nothing we can do even if the gate is locked, they get in other ways. Supervisor Harris said signs matter. Councilperson Chris Farrell asked if the sign should say no illegal activities. Supervisor Harris said it matters what we say and policy that is set. It matters if the police are putting together a case and jurors making a decision.

Councilperson Farrell said he didn't think we need an independent study. Are there any other parks in the State that have access like we do with boat launch, access to river or ponds, any open 24/7? If the answer is no, there must be a reason why and it may be for reason previously stated of liability. He suggested pooling towns along the Hudson with launches. He recommended the outreach coordinator make calls. Supervisor Harris said Alex can help put together the information but doesn't think that goes far enough. Councilperson Chris Farrell said if the answer is *none have a gate open 24/7* than that's our answer to our question and go back to locked gates with access to sportsman by key and go back to a locked gate dawn to dusk. Shaupeneak Ridge is open, no gate, with pond, hunting permits, kayak launch.

Councilperson Clarke asked if there was a limit of the number of keys? Town Clerk Holly Netter said approx 20 keys were issued at any given time but not all are used at the same time. Councilperson Chris Farrell was asked if there had been problems like this before? She said no the hunters and fisherman got their keys and there were no complaints. We learned that the Spit is the safe location to launch for duck hunters which makes it attractive. For the past 12 years there have been no issues like these; only in the past 12 -18 months. The Sportsmen went in and out without incident or complaint. Whether or not the Spit has become more popular and attracting more people, can't be said. Councilperson Kathie Quick said, no one likes to hear disturbance.

The question of whether we have a Town Policy for all of our other parks was asked; all open dawn to dusk.

Councilperson Farrell said Freer Park is just as much of a liability because it has access to water.

Supervisor Harris said its different it's not in the middle of a community where the road winds through and Sleightsburgh Park is not lit. Freer Park is open, lit, fewer homes in direct proximity. People walk their dogs and it has the Riverview Condo homeowners to watch it; no boat launch and no duck hunters at Freer Park. Supervisor Harris said Alex is extremely busy and does not have the time to make the calls. Councilperson Geuss offered to get info from places like John Burroughs and the Reservoir, Scenic Hudson and waterfront parks.

Councilperson Farrell will call Towns from Green/Columbia to Albany.

Supervisor Harris asked what kind of signage we should post. Should it identify all the groups and when they are using the park. She said "we need to be more focused on what hunting can be done, Canadian Snow Geese season goes through the whole year and we need to be more focused on what kind of hunting is done there, we can't open it up for the whole season".

Councilperson Clarke said that would open a can of worms if we start telling certain people they can't hunt there. She said that wasn't what she was saying it's about informing people when the seasons are; need to establish rules. Shannon stated she thinks it should be reviewed to have a legal opinion.

Councilperson Jared Geuss said if it gets locked we have to go back to paying someone to open and close the gate. With the decrease in staff and hiring freeze how are we going to do that?

Supervisor Harris said we have added resources, 2 full time resources from highway, Dave Greenberg who used to be seasonal and is now the custodian for Town Hall, he can help Dan & Ed. Supervisor Harris said, "I don't buy that we don't have the resources. Councilperson Farrell and Geuss were concerned with the decreased man power and already borrowing 2 guys from highway; if their shifts get split to cover the work will not be able to be done. Supervisor Harris said," other Towns get their people to open and close the gate; you just have to tell them to do it, they are employees. This is what they are paid to do". Ideas on how to manage the times were discussed no final decision was made. When the policy is made it will dictate the hours and give law enforcement the ability to ticket those who are not in compliance. Further discussion will be had. The Board was thoughtful and willing to work on the policy to ensure hikers, boaters, kayakers, sportsmen, are residents' concerns are considered while being mindful of liability concerns. Supervisor Harris asked for research to be returned to her by April 14th.

Town Clerk Holly Netter suggested if the gate was locked perhaps the key holders could be asked to sign a liability waiver holding us harmless. Councilperson Chris Farrell added that they also agree to call the police if they saw illegal activity going on.

ZONING TASKFORCE UPDATE.

Laberge Group resubmitted their contact addendum; they put in additional hours and want to be compensated for that. Councilperson Jared Geuss said he spoke to Matt who explained there was extra work put in and they cannot move forward without the Town Board coming current with payment. One of the additions was the Schedule of Permitted Use Table that was request by the Planning Board to make it easier. The SIC codes had to be reviewed line by line, no one was versed in the language other than the Planning Board. Laberge communicated directly with the Planning Board to get that piece done because no one else on the Taskforce was versed in the language. Councilperson Geuss added it would have dragged out meetings and nothing else would have been able to get done at that point. They have created an internal review committee which was briefed and the information was rolled out to the other committee members. Those calls were all additional from the beginning. During open meetings there were a lot of public comments.

Laberge sent out the full Section 123 and is going to planning for review. There is a need for more meetings and phone calls; a schedule was given through July. Councilperson Geuss said they condensed as many meetings as possible and the expense should be over by summer. Laberge is looking for approval just to continue with conference calls at \$500, \$1250 task meeting schedules of permitted use. There were still some questions about what was being charged, Supervisor Harris said if they come down from \$5,000 to \$2500 than that's fine but she was not ok if they are attaching new costs.

Councilperson Farrell said shouldn't they have stated this was not within the scope of the work. They forwarded the draft to Zoning and Planning. They are not anticipating many edits to the plan. They are waiting on a go ahead. Councilperson Jared Geuss with talk to Matt again and get further clarity.

Councilperson Farrell requested a copy of the original contract to be forwarded to the Board. The Bookkeeper will also be asked to confirm numbers that were budgeted for this project and what has been spent to date.

POST OFFICE UPDATE

The Post Office is in need of running water during this COVID crisis. The keys to the bathrooms at Ross Park have been given to them so they have access during this time of need. The temporary trailer has no running water. The Post Office is very grateful. They are scaling back hours and closing during lunch hour. The budget has been put through and approved for the postalizing of the new building, formerly known as Aprils' Hair Salon on Broadway. There has not been a specific timeline shared with the Supervisor.

KAYAK SHED

SUPERVISOR HARRIS MADE A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN CLERK TO ACCEPT PAYMENT FOR RENTAL OF THE KAYAK SHED AT FREER PARK AT \$10 PER MONTH WITH A MINIMUM OF 6 MONTHS. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON CHRIS FARRELL. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A MOTION WAS MADE BY SUPERVISOR HARRIS AT 9:15 PM TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING PERSONNEL ISSUES IN THE HIGHWAY, RECREATION AND WATER/SEWER DEPARTMENT AND TO DISCUSS AN ONGOING INVESTIGATION. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON KATHIE QUICK. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILPERSON EVELYN CLARKE TO COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 9:36 PM. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON JARED GEUSS. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

ACTION : NONE

KEY DATE: Fri, 4/10: Good Friday – Town Hall closed.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:38 PM. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON JARED GEUSS. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectively submitted,

Holly Netter
Town Clerk, RMC