

**TOWN OF ESOPUS
TOWN BOARD MEETING
February 16, 2023 7:00 PM**

A regularly scheduled Town Board Meeting was held on February 16, 2023 in person at 1 Town Hall Way, Ulster Park. Meeting was also available on TV 23, and Live Streamed on the Town of Esopus Facebook page. The following persons in attendance:

**Councilman Laura Robinson
Councilman Evelyn Clarke
Councilman Kathie Quick
Councilman Jared Guess
Supervisor Danielle Freer – Absent***

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

4 WAYS TO GIVE PUBLIC COMMENT:

- 1.) **In-Person – Attend the Workshop**
- 2.) Phone in: Leave voicemail on 845 331 0676 prior to the meeting
- 3.) **EMAIL – lreynolds@esopus.com with the subject line “Public Comment”**
- 4.) **MAIL – mail written comments to:**
*Town of Esopus, P.O. Box 700
Port Ewen, NY 12466*

*Deputy Supervisor Jared Geuss called the meeting to order at 7 pm. Supervisor Freer was attending a very important Hudson 7 meeting in Poughkeepsie and was detained. The meeting had been going on for over 2 hours and it was important the voice of Esopus was heard for the CHPE program.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

PUBLIC COMMENT

Diane Dintruff Minturn St. discussed the following:

- 1) What is the date when parks open and chains removed from access roads?
- 2) Highway Department: A couple people have expressed confusion regarding the J Street’s new signs “Private Road, no thru traffic”...wondering whether it is OK to go on the “J” Street “ to access the parking lot behind the sheds at the north end of Freer Park. I’ve been telling them it’s OK as far as I know. A sign letting drivers know it’s OK to go to the north parking lot would be helpful since some drivers feel it’s not acceptable to use a private road.

3) Water and Sewer Department: Has there been an increase in sewage dumping into the Creek/River, possibly due to increase population in Kingston, rain, or geese? I'm planning on asking Dan Shapley whether he would test water off Freer if I collect samples.

4) Parks, Recreation and Grounds: Hopefully rain will remove some of the goose droppings from Freer Park before the Easter Egg Hunt. Without snow to assist in removal, the geese have created an extremely unhealthy mess this year, and very few swans and dogs have been around to chase them away, and someone in a black SUV feeds them regularly. Signs in other municipality's' parks offering fines as high as \$1000 for feeding geese on park land.

5) For EAB, WAB and Laura Petit: Is anyone in Esopus (board, foundation, school, scouts, vets) interested in coordinating an effort to obtain FREE heavy plastic benches? I circulated information shared in an AgeWell meeting about how another local group obtains a few FREE benches each year. Drop off points and a place to store the plastic is needed. Nextrex is a company that provides a free bench for every 500lbs. of plastic recycled. Information was emailed to Lori.

6) State Sojourner Truth Park: there is a meeting the day after the walk on Sunday February 19, 2023, at noon, Zen Den 507 Broadway Kingston.

7) HRVG new grants platform and summaries, May 5 is the next deadline. Information was emailed to Lori.

8) HRVG & ARPA Kingston and along river encouraging events Information was emailed to Lori.

Roger Burgold, 676 Old Post Rd. Concerned about the noise in the town. He is concerned with people not being considerate of one another. There is a Noise Ordinance that was written and paid for. He implored the Board to reopen, revisit and pass the law for the good of all the citizens of Esopus.

Dusty Nason and Kristine Fabbie were interested in the update on the pickleball court progress at Ross Park and wanted a date for when the paving was taking place. Marbletown had their Highway Department install the pickleball courts at their location and suggested that a visit to the site and or having a conversation with their Highway Superintendent which may be helpful with the planning. The Board reiterated that they appreciated the information, and they will involve them. Dusty gave Councilman Laura Robinson a folder of contact information which will be very helpful. Deputy Supervisor Jared Geuss said he would suggest Dan take a ride to Marbletown to get a visual of the pickleball courts.

Stephen Cerini, Mountainview Ave. Read the following statement.

Freer Park Willow Trees.

Loving nature does not mean never cutting trees down. Even well-known naturalist John Burroughs cut trees down. Here's an article titled "John Borroughs Slabsides and his violence towards porcupines",

which outlines his building of Slabsides, a log home and describes how Burroughs did all the carpentry himself, sniffing out rare woods in the surrounding forest for boards and intricate inlays.

John Burroughs himself cut down many trees for reasons he considered valid and it's certainly ok for municipalities to cut trees down for valid reasons, particularly public safety. Loving nature and respecting nature should also mean accepting nature's design. Willows have short natural lifespans. An article titled "Weeping Willow in serious decline" which explains they live an average of 30 years, and a "50-year-old willow would be quite an ancient specimen. Yours is probably dying, which is what nature intended", says the article. We are not talking about cutting young, viable trees in their prime and the town has valid reasons to cut down these willow trees. These trees at Freer Park are at the end of their natural lifespans and show evidence of rot, pest infestation and fungus. **The issue of removing these trees did not arise out of some nefarious plan. It arose out of a paramount concern for public safety. Municipalities regularly face the issue of having to remove trees, often Willows, and often against public outcries.

This is not a controversial issue and should not be made into one. Freer Park is not a botanical garden or a bird sanctuary or a nature conservancy or a wildlife preserve. Freer Park is a recreational park and should be viewed and maintained as such. Willow trees are not suited to be over children's playgrounds, or over pavilions, or over picnic areas, or over areas where recreational activities are being conducted under the trees. We would never design a new park nowadays with Willow trees in these locations. While I understand there are some not in favor of cutting down these trees because of their magnificent beauty, the fact is that they are beautiful does not outweigh the risks to public safety.

Now is the time for this action while the park is closed so that when it reopens to the public there would be no further safety risks or interruption to events and activities. I'm asking the town to make the decision and do what needs to be done to put this issue to rest.

DEPUTY SUPERVISOR JARED GEUSS MADE A MOTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC COMMENT. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN LAURA ROBINSON. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

ULSTER COUNTY MUNICIPAL SEWER & WATER GRANT OPPORTUNITY

The Water/Sewer Department is looking into an Ulster County grant opportunity for the Port Ewen Water Infrastructure Main Control Panel project. This project was identified in the Master Plan update. Deputy Supervisor Jared Geuss said there would have to be a motion tonight to secure \$77,000 of the water capital funds for the replacement project. The cost of the project is \$115,000 and grant funding is available for 33% of the total project. It falls in place with the water sewer improvements already going on. We have all the documentation

and engineering, so Deputy Supervisor Jared Geuss said he felt we had a good chance on receiving the grant.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DEPUTY SUPERVISOR JARED GEUSS TO SECURE \$77,000 OUT OF THE CAPITAL ACCOUNT FOR THE MUNICIPAL SEWER & WATER GRANT FROM ULSTER COUNTY FOR OUR WATER CONTROL PANEL AND TO AUTHORIZE SUPERVISOR DANIELLE FREER TO SIGN THE MUNICIPAL SEWER & WATER GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN EVELYN CLARKE. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

LIAISON LIGHTNING ROUND

Deputy Supervisor Jared Geuss:

Water/Sewer: Deputy Supervisor Jared Geuss responded to Diane Dintruff's comment from the Public Comment earlier this evening. He said on our end we are not having any discharge issue since we did the repairs on the one line coming from Port Ewen into Connelly. As far as he knows our town has not had any issue.

Nick Butler has advertised the RFQ in the Daily Freeman. Water/Sewer is moving forward on the water tank project looking for an update from Brinnier & Larios

Planning Board: Few developments still before them. Stream Side Farms (old Burg property) continues to interact with Planning Board for next steps.

The Cooney project on Clay Road has been downsized, their development to 71 units continues to move forward.

Waiting for edited version of the local law update on the MFZ new hamlet from attorneys. The Board will start the local law process once it is received.

COUNCILMAN QUICK:

Waterfront Advisory Board: The Waterfront Advisory Board had the second public meeting where the updated Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) was presented on February 1 from 5-7:30 PM. David Gilmore from LaBerge Group was the presenter. The meeting was well attended.

Zoning Board of Appeals: The Zoning Board of Appeals has not had a meeting for the past few months because there were not any referrals from the Planning Board for them to review. There will be a meeting on February 21 with the Building Inspector and Code Enforcement Officer, Mark Jaffee, will be there to explain some information regarding the new code regulations.

Assessor's Office: The Assessor's Office has been busy processing many applications for exemptions that not only include exemptions for some seniors but for volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance workers with more than 2 years' experience.

Esopus Seniors: The Town of Esopus Seniors had a meeting on February 6 when the first trip to Proctor's Theater in Schenectady on April 13 to see a live production of "Tootsie" sold out 52 seats on the bus and there's a waiting list of 8 people.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE:

EDC – Did not meet in February. Supervisor Freer is looking to keep it alive and restructuring the group.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT- She did not get to speak with Mark Jaffee but would like to talk to him about the storage containers in Dollar General's parking lot.

ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD – Earth Day Event will be held April 23rd at the Esopus Community Center. Repair Café will be March 25th at the Ascension Church. The Environmental Board continues to work on the climate smart task force; assigning various tasks to accomplish their goals.

COUNCILMAN ROBINSON:

PARKS & REC PARKS, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

There will be a crew going out before the Egg Hunt to clean up the park. John Catrone will have a group picking up sticks, Dan Vedder and crew will also be cleaning up the area. The Egg Hunt is April 8th. There is no rain date, they will just hold it under the pavilion. The event is for children 12 years old and under.

Sojourner Truth Park was cleaned up and new mulch was installed. Councilman Robinson thanked John Catrone and the Bruderhof for their contribution. They are looking at planning 4 movie nights this year with the possibility of moving the movie night to different parks, adding food trucks and having more advertising; last years' events were not well attended. They are working on the pickleball courts for the spring and they will get Dusty, Kristine and Bridget's input.

TAX COLLECTOR – Collection is going well.

TOWN CLERK – Park Calendars open March 1st for Town Residents, April 3rd for non- residents. New application packets and pricing are available at www.esopus.com.

NO BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS FOR FEBRUARY 2023

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF BILLS FEBRUARY 2023

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Town Board of the Town of Esopus, County of Ulster as follows:

WHEREAS the Town of Esopus has been presented with vouchers for payment and these vouchers have been examined and approved by the Town Board,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the following vouchers be approved for payment:

GENERAL FUND	231018 – 231074	\$178,104.52
HIGHWAY FUND	232002 – 232025	\$40,642.01
STREETLIGHTS		
PORT EWEN SEWER FUND	233002-233034	\$ 58,809.23
PORT EWEN WATER	234001 – 234019	\$38,985.61
Capital Water	235000 – 235001	\$14,408.00
ARPA		
Visa		
		\$330,949.37

OFFERED BY: DEPUTY SUPERVISOR GEUSS
SECONDED BY: COUNCILMAN LAURA ROBINSON

COUNCILMAN LAURA ROBINSON	AYE
COUNCILMAN EVELYN CLARKE	AYE
COUNCILMAN KATHIE QUICK	AYE
COUNCILMAN JARED GEUSS	AYE
SUPERVISOR DANIELLE FREER	ABSENT

Resolution duly adopted.

KEY DATES – CHECK WEBSITE FOR DETAILS:

ONGOING CALL FOR TUGBOAT TRAIL ARTISTS There will be a Tug Boat Festival this year on Labor Day Interested artists should contact Bernice McNierney or Lois DeKoskie for more details visit www.esopus.com.

2.18 4TH ANNUAL SOJOURNER TRUTH LIFE WALK

3.1 PARK RENTALS BEGIN FOR RESIDENTS

3.2 NEXT TOWN BOARD WORKSHOP

4.3 PARK RENTALS BEGIN FOR NON-RESIDENTS

4.8 ESOPUS EASTER EGG HUNT HOSTED BY PARKS & REC COMMISSION

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING WAS MADE BY DEPUTY SUPERVISOR GEUSS AT 7:45 PM. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN QUICK. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectively Submitted,

*Holly A. Netter
Town Clerk, RMC*