

**TOWN OF ESOPUS WORKSHOP MEETING  
FEBRUARY 19, 2013**

A regularly scheduled Workshop Meeting of the Town Board was held on Tuesday, February 19<sup>th</sup> at Town Hall 284 Broadway in Port Ewen, N. Y. with the following persons in attendance:

**Supervisor John Coutant  
Councilperson Gloria VanVliet  
Councilperson Wayne Freer  
Councilperson Donna McAuley  
Councilperson Kyle Barnett**

**Administrative Recorder: Diane L. McCord, Town Clerk**

Supervisor Coutant called the meeting to order at 7:26 PM.

**A Motion to postpone Public Comment at this time was made by Councilperson Wayne Freer and seconded by Councilperson Kyle Barnett. All Town Board Members voted in favor. Motion Carried.**

**1. Possible Interviews – Executive Session**

**A Motion to enter into Executive Session to interview candidates for the maintenance position at the Town Hall was made by Councilperson Gloria VanVliet and seconded by Supervisor John Coutant at 7:27 PM. All Town Board Members voted in favor. Motion Carried.**

**A Motion to adjourn from Executive Session was made by Councilperson Wayne Freer and seconded by Supervisor Coutant at 7:58 PM. All Town Board Members voted in favor. Motion Carried.**

Supervisor Coutant will call both candidates tomorrow.

**Public Comment: None**

**2. Get Your Guts in Gear – Use of Lighthouse Park**

We have had another request from the “Get Your Guts in Gear” Group (Crone’s Disease) to use Lighthouse Park as a resting place for their bike-a-thon. They have used the park in the past and we are in favor of their request.

**3. Zoning Board of Appeals Resignation – Linda Smythe**

We have a verbal resignation from Linda Smythe saying she has a health issue and will not be able to fulfill her appointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals (appointment made in Jan. of 2013 – five year appointment). Linda has served several years on the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals. A Certificate of Appreciation will be given for all her years of service. Holly Netter, Deputy Clerk, will create the certificate for according to the Supervisor she does a great job.

#### **4. Town of Ulster and Town of Warwarsing Dog Contracts Signed**

The Supervisors' in the Town of Ulster and the Town of Warwarsing have signed contracts with the Town of Esopus for use of our dog kennel for 2013. We already have a signed contract with the Town of Lloyd.

#### **5. Mystery Inquiry**

The following email has been addressed to the Town Board:

"It is my understanding that Scenic Hudson has again purchased a large lot of 217 acres in the Town of Esopus between Floyd Ackert and Swartekill Roads, and has AGAIN succeeded to remove further property from our tax rolls.

I am unable to attend your meetings as I have prior engagements that meet on Thursdays, but would like to voice my opinion on this matter. Is there a way the Town Board can pen legislation that any property purchased in the excess of say 50 acres is subject to property taxes?

Scenic Hudson has continued to gobble u large lots of land in our township. Where and how exactly is that revenue to be made up? I can no longer afford increases in my property and school taxes. I am barely living paycheck to paycheck, and I should not be forced to carry an extra burden of an increase in taxes because more property is subject to a tax-free statue!!

As a community the Town of Esopus needs to be more pro-active in not continually allowing this to happen! I am sure as a small community, word of this will spread quickly, and perhaps the newspaper should become involved as well. I have also emailed Senator Schumer for advice on this matter.

Thank you for listening and hopefully something concrete can be worked out to not allow this to continue happening."

The Town Board has discussed this problem in the past with non-for-profit organizations taking more and more land off the tax rolls. Scenic Hudson has two entities. Scenic Hudson and Scenic Hudson Land and Trust Corporation. Scenic Hudson Land and Trust Corporation bought 582 acres behind the Winery property on Burroughs Drive for over a million dollars and then sold that property to New York State. They cannot make a profit on the sale. It is our understanding this is the money that was used to purchase Ken Silver's property. The question was asked which part of Scenic Hudson has the property on River Road. Scenic Hudson owns this property. Bob Richter's property was bought by Scenic Hudson Land and Trust Corporation. With just Scenic Hudson itself, if they default, the property goes back to the original property owner. The corporation gives them the power to transfer land. Scenic Hudson Land and Trust can purchase land and sell it to others but they cannot make a profit on it. They tend to "horse trade". Supervisor Coutant said Scenic Hudson does not have a second access to the Silver property. Silver still owns the property at the base of the hill on River Road. When this property was purchased Ralph bought a right of way to access to the Hudson River. By the way, Readers Digest, a parent company to Scenic Hudson just declared bankruptcy. Councilperson Freer suggested we look at the Real Property Tax Law.

The Town of Esopus is getting to the point now that several entities are taking land off the tax rolls in large quantities. An example is Omega Institute and they are a non for profit organization. It was recommended a PILOT be done with this organization. It was the suggestion of Councilperson VanVliet that we do a Memorializing Resolution and send it to New York State.

#### **6. Meeting with Scenic Hudson, Marion Zimmer & Diane Dindruff**

The Supervisor attended a two and one half hour meeting with Diane Dindruff, Marion Zimmer and people from Scenic Hudson. There is a grant opportunity available to have brochures of our area showing all the walking trails such as Black Creek Preserve, Shaupeneak Ridge, Burroughs Trail, Esopus Meadows Lighthouse Preserve and Esopus Lakes property etc. and once you have walked these trails a patch would be given a patch in recognition of the accomplishment.

Councilperson Freer acknowledged the use of many people using Shaupeneak Ridge Trail. Twice a week the local ranger bikes the trail. They have color coded trails and all the trails will be tied together. The patches could be given out by local businesses. We could update all the kiosk with the information about the trails and some kind of proof they completed the trail. Supervisor Coutant asked if any trails had cross country skiing available?

There are five weeks left to complete the grant. The startup cost is \$1,500.

#### **7. Estimate Ross Park Softball Field**

An estimate to improve Ross Park Softball Field was given by Ausanio Const. in the amount of \$13,800. This would include the installation of new clay infield (7,300 ft. of clay). Councilperson Gloria VanVliet would like more than one bid. She suggested contacting Woodstock Landscaping. Supervisor Coutant said this may be a project where we could ask the Bruderhof to help.

#### **8a. Moore Property Subdivision for Ross Park Parking Lot**

Councilperson Kyle Barnett has made two calls to Attorney Carl Chu about the Goldie Moore property but the calls have not been returned. He will see Attorney Chu tomorrow. The Supervisor suggested a letter be written giving a ten day deadline for the filing of a new deed. (Goldie Moore is the listed owner, however, she is deceased). A lot line adjustment should be done because the Moore garage is only two feet from the Church parking lot property line. There is another driveway the Moore's used which is completely on the Churches property. The town is willing to have a lot line adjustment giving the driveway to the Moore property. It was decided not to send this letter and have Councilperson Barnett contact Attorney Chu.

#### **8b. Channel 23**

The Supervisor has purchased a camera from his funds for use by Channel 23. We are working on a remote microphone. The microphone system installed in the court is now operational. Arace Electronics is sending a gentleman over to look at the system. This will be an asset for the Planning Board meetings are not able to be heard. The Town Board Meetings will continue to be filmed and Kevin Rentfrow can place them on a DVD.

**9, Miscellaneous Items Discussed****Councilperson Gloria VanVliet asked about Steve Aaron**

Supervisor Coutant spoke with Water/Sewer Superintendent Don Kiernan about the sewer pump station on the Birches property which has not been turned over to the town because of the grease buildup situation. Don Kiernan has been in contact with the Ulster County Health Dept. Fines can be imposed for not being in compliance. This will be a major cleanup on Steve Aaron's part to fix the problem. Supt. Kiernan has given Steve Aaron the additive to control the grease problem. The question was asked will we be forced at some point to take over this pump station? Councilperson Freer does not think this should ever happen.

Several vouchers were in question. One for a fuse which was purchased from Joe Sauers. Why wasn't this fuse fixed internally? A second voucher was questioned for dog food. The Town Clerk will look into this voucher and get back to the Town Board.

**A Motion to adjourn was made by Councilperson Kyle Barnett and seconded by Councilperson Wayne Freer at 9 PM. All Town Board Members voted in favor. Motion Carried.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Diane L. McCord  
Town Clerk, CMC, RMC**