

**TOWN BOARD WORKSHOP  
Wednesday November 4, 2020 - 7 PM**

A regularly scheduled Town Board Workshop Meeting was held on **November 4, 2020** in the Town Hall, 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**

THIS MEETING WAS HELD IN THE ESOPUS TOWN HALL. VISITORS WERE WELCOME TO JOIN IN THE AUDIENCE WHILE ADHERING TO SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIREMENTS. THE MEETING WILL BE LIVE-STREAMED ON "TOWN OF ESOPUS" FACEBOOK PAGE AND TELEVISED ON CHANNEL 23 PUBLIC ACCESS. For public comment: Attend in person, call [\(845\) 328-0483](tel:8453280483), or email [outreach@esopus.com](mailto:outreach@esopus.com)

**SUPERVISOR SHANNON HARRIS MADE A MOTION TO OPEN THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING AT 7:09 PM. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON KATHIE QUICK. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT- NONE**

**2021 BUDGET**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY SUPERVISOR HARRIS TO ADOPT THE PRELIMINARY 2021 BUDGET AS THE FINAL BUDGET. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON KATHIE QUICK. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.**

**SOJOURNER TRUTH** – Councilperson Evelyn Clark gave a brief overview of the Proclamation which stemmed from the YMCA youth group working on social justice. The proclamation was written as a way to bring social justice to the forefront in a positive way. November 26th will be a day to celebrate the legacy of Sojourner Truth. This proclamation will also be asking the County Legislator to make the proclamation as well.

**TOWN OF ESOPUS  
PROCLAMATION**

**WHEREAS**, Sojourner Truth is “a daughter of Esopus,” and lived the first 28 years of her life as an enslaved person in what is now known as the Town of Esopus. She was born circa 1797 as property of Col. Johannes Hardenbergh in Swartekill, now Rifton, in Ulster County, New York, to enslaved parents, Bett and James Baumfree. She was given the name Isabella, and would later take the name Sojourner Truth in acknowledgment of her role as an emissary of justice and truth, **and**

**WHEREAS**, this daughter of Esopus, whose exact birth date is unknown because enslaved Africans were not regarded as human beings, lived an extraordinary life of struggle, determination and achievement – a distinctly American tale of perseverance against difficult odds, **and**

**WHEREAS**, Isabella was forced to stand on the auction block upon the death of her owner, Col. Hardenbergh in 1806, and sold for \$100 along with a herd of sheep. She was cruelly separated from her brother and her aged parents, and sold to John Neely, an English shopkeeper on the Rondout Creek, where Isabella endured brutal beatings because she spoke Dutch and could not understand the Neeley’s commands, **and**

**Commented [SH1]:** Spelled Hardenburgh?

**WHEREAS**, Isabella was subsequently purchased for \$105 by Martinus Schryver, owner of the Jug Tavern located on the corner of Broadway and River Road, in what is now known as Port Ewen. As an enslaved young child, she had to walk without shoes in all seasons to the Rondout Creek and take the ferry from Sleightsburgh to Kingston to perform various errands, along with carrying packages of liquor and supplies back to the tavern, **and**

**Commented [SH2]:** I think it was known as Broadway in those days

**WHEREAS**, in 1810, at the age of thirteen, Isabella was sold for \$175 to John Dumont who owned a farm overlooking the Hudson River in what is known as West Park. She remained enslaved until 1826 when Dumont rescinded his promise to free Isabella a year earlier than New York’s decreed emancipation date, **and**

**WHEREAS**, Isabella walked away to freedom across Shaupeneak Ridge in the pre-dawn hours carrying her infant daughter, Sophia, and a few meager belongings. She was forced to leave her other children enslaved. Fortunately, she encountered the Van Wagenen’s in Rifton, who were anti-slavery, and who purchased Isabella and Sophia’s freedom for \$25, **and**

**WHEREAS**, a few months after celebrating New York’s emancipation of slavery on July 4, 1827, Isabella learned that her 5-year old son, Peter, had illegally been sold out of state. In response, she walked barefoot 5 miles each way from the Van Wagenen’s in Rifton to the courthouse in Kingston and brought a successful lawsuit for her child’s return, **and**

**WHEREAS**, following these events, Isabella would adopt the name Sojourner Truth, take her story and journey to the East Coast of the United States preaching peace, justice, persistence

and rights for women and men of all colors. To this day we are inspired by Isabella's remarkable contributions and encouraged to use our voices to support social justice in our time, **and**

**WHEREAS**, in recognition of her efforts and significance to the history of the advancement of women's suffrage, equal rights in regards to race, and the moral character of her nation, the Town of Esopus has erected a statue in Port Ewen, depicting Sojourner as a child, a reminder of the existence of slavery in New York and the global atrocity of the enslavement of children that continues today, **and**

**Therefore, Be It Resolved that, in the spirit of celebrating the lasting contributions and continued relevance of Sojourner Truth's life story, Shannon Harris, Supervisor of the Town of Esopus hereby proclaim November 26, 2020 as Sojourner Truth Day in the Town of Esopus and urge all residents to recognize that this is a day for people of all races, creeds, and backgrounds to join together in celebration of the legacy of Sojourner Truth.**

**OFFERED BY: Supervisor Shannon Harris**  
**SECONDED BY: Councilperson Evelyn Clarke**

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

ALL TOWN BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VOTED IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

#### ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

COUNCILPERSON JARED GEUSS MADE A MOTION TO RETAIN DANIEL T. BAKER, ASSESSOR FOR KINGSTON AND TOWN OF ULSTER, AS A CONSULTANT FOR THE TOWN OF ESOPUS. THIS SCOPE OF WORK INCLUDES A FEE OF \$3,500 FOR HANDS-ON ADMINISTRATION WITH STAFF THROUGH TO DECEMBER 31, 2020, AS WELL AS RESEARCH, ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE TOWN BOARD FOR THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE. ADDITIONALLY, MR. BAKER WILL REPRESENT THE TOWN IN SMALL CLAIM ASSESSMENT REVIEW (SCAR) CHALLENGES AT \$350 PER PARCEL. THE PROPOSAL INCLUDES THE OPTION TO CONTINUE INTO 2021 AT A RATE OF \$1,200 ON A MONTH-TO-MONTH BASIS. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON CHRIS FARRELL. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

**RESOLUTION**

**ADOPTION OF THE TOWN OF ESOPUS RIVERFRONT:  
ACCESS AND CONNECTIONS STUDY**

WHEREAS, the Town of Esopus 2019 Comprehensive Plan recommended the Town identify opportunities to enhance public waterfront access, reinforce connections to water and land-based trails and enhance resiliency to sea-level rise and associated flooding; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Esopus, in partnership with Scenic Hudson applied for and was awarded \$50,000 in funding from the NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program to prepare the Esopus Riverfront: Access and Connections Study (Riverfront Study); and

WHEREAS, the Town Board of the Town of Esopus (Town Board) assigned the task of preparing the Riverfront Study to the existing Waterfront Advisory Board, adding additional members specifically for this project along with representation by Scenic Hudson, together referred to as the Riverfront Project Committee (RPC); and

WHEREAS, the RPC drafted the Riverfront Study with the assistance of planning consultant, Laberge Group, Albany, New York, and has solicited input from the community through two workshops, site visits, stakeholder coordination and Town Board presentations; and

WHEREAS, the RPC released a Draft Riverfront Study on July 6, 2020 and accepted public, stakeholder and agency comments through September, 2020; and

WHEREAS, at the direction of the RPC, Laberge Group presented the Draft Riverfront Study at a July 7, 2020 Town Board meeting; and

WHEREAS, based on the comments provided during the comment period, the RPC directed Laberge Group to make necessary revisions to the Draft Riverfront Study; and

WHEREAS, the RPC reviewed the revisions and forwarded the Final Riverfront Study to the Town Board for consideration on October 20, 2020; and

WHEREAS, on October 20, 2020, the Town Board declared themselves as Lead Agency for the purposes of adopting the Riverfront Study (the "Action") in accordance with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) 6 NYCRR Part 617.4, and classified the Action as an Unlisted Action and;

WHEREAS, as Lead Agency, the Town Board reviewed Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the Full Environmental Assessment Form (FEAF), and discussed and set forth the following:

1. The Riverfront Study is a policy guidance document for the future shoreline access and resiliency recommendations.
2. The adoption of the Riverfront Study will positively assist the Town of Esopus and will not result in adverse impacts.
3. The Riverfront Study recognizes the need to protect natural resources, features and sensitive environmental areas and where applicable, identified recommendations to continue protecting those features will seeking to enhance waterfront access.
4. The Riverfront Study includes an inventory or recreational, natural and environmental resources.

5. The Riverfront Study was developed through extensive public input throughout the process.

WHEREAS, upon due deliberation and taking into consideration the FEAF and all comments received, the Town Board intends to issue a Negative Declaration in accordance with SEQRA and adopt the Town of Esopus Riverfront: Access and Connections Study as presented to the Town Board on October 20, 2020.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS BY THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF ESOPUS, ULSTER COUNTY, NEW YORK:

1. That the Town of Esopus Town Board, acting as Lead Agency, hereby declares that the Esopus Riverfront: Access and Connections Study, will not have any significant adverse environmental impacts, and that an environmental impact statement will not be required; and
2. That the Town Board hereby authorizes filing of a negative declaration (FEAF Part 3, attached hereto) and a notice in the Environmental Notice Bulletin, according to SEQRA 6 NYCRR Part 617.
3. That the Town Board hereby determines that the Town of Esopus Riverfront: Access and Connections Study dated October 2020, is hereby adopted as the Town of Esopus Comprehensive Plan 2019; and
4. That the Town Board shall cause a full copy of the adopted Esopus Riverfront: Access and Connections Study, including the Appendices be placed and remain accessible on the Town website.

**OFFERED BY:** Councilperson Kathie Quick  
**SECONDED BY:** Councilperson Jared Geuss

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

ALL TOWN BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VOTED IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

**UPDATES**

**Next Town Board meeting** – The next meeting will be Tuesday, November 17. Possible agenda items include discussion of Waterfront Advisory recommendations on Sleightsburgh Park, as well as continued public comment on the proposed laws from the public hearings held open since October 20, 2020.

**Esopus Waterfront Revitalization Plan** – NYS DOS joined the WAB for the LWRP kick-off meeting on Wed, 10/28 via zoom. Project includes a total of six public meetings beginning October 28, 2020 and is expected to conclude in the winter of 2021.

**Water infrastructure** – The Town’s application for low-interest rate financing through the EFC has been submitted for the new water storage tank and upgrades to the water system infrastructure in Port Ewen and Ulster Park.

**Water bills due** –Water Bills may be paid with penalties until Friday at 2 pm. Payments received after 2 Pm on Friday, November 6th will be returned and re-levied to 2021 property tax bills.

**Call for volunteers** – Open positions on the Parks and Recreation Commission, Planning Board and Environmental Board. Please volunteer today to make a positive impact in your community.

**Veteran’s Day** – Ceremony will be held at the Veteran’s Memorial outside Esopus Town Hall at 11 am. Masks and social distancing will be required. No reception will be held afterwards.

**CSX** – The Regional Vice President Maurice O’Connell of CSX called in response to the Daily Freeman article regarding blockages caused by stopped trains and committed to operational changes to reduce the inconvenience to residents. Councilperson Chris Farrell said the tracks were blocked today at 12:30 pm. Supervisor Harris asked the Board to let her know if anyone is made aware of issues so she is able to put in an inquiry for the blockage. Dates and times are critical.

**Landfill** – Annual post-closure monitoring & maintenance report from C.T. Male was sent to the NSYDEC. Councilperson Evelyn Clarke questioned the comments pertaining to a well from 2013. Supervisor Harris said she will ask how to rectify that.

**Staff** – Supervisor Harris said as of next week the staff that had been put on work share will resume their normal hours. Operational hours for the Town Hall will remain 10am – 2pm and will continue to be closed to the public until the vestibule is complete and the new procedures are in place.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILPERSON JARED GEUSS TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:40 PM. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILPERSON CHRIS FARRELL. ALL TOWN BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VOTED IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.**

*Respectively Submitted,*

*Holly A. Netter  
Town Clerk, R.MC*