

**Town Board Workshop Meeting  
December 1, 2022**

A regularly scheduled Town Board Workshop meeting was held in person at the Esopus Town Hall, 1 Town Hall Way, Ulster Park, NY on Thursday December 1, 2022, at 7:00 PM with the following persons in attendance:

**Supervisor Danielle Freer  
Councilman Kathie Quick  
Councilman Jared Geuss  
Councilman Evelyn Clarke  
Councilman Laura Robinson**

**Recording Administrator Holly A. Netter, Town Clerk, RMC**

**4 ways to give public comment:**

In person at meeting

Phone – 845 331 0676

Email – [lreynolds@esopus.com](mailto:lreynolds@esopus.com) with subject line “Public Comment” and meeting date

Mail – Town of Esopus PO BOX 700 Port Ewen, NY 12466

**SUPERVISOR FREER CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 7:00 PM**

**PLEDGE TO THE FLAG**

**DISCUSSION REGARDING FITZHUGH PROPERTY**

Supervisor Freer made the following statement: Before we get into public comment tonight, I first want to address a topic that I know has had some people’s attention since we last met – the Fitzhugh property in Sleightsburgh.

As a refresher, this is in regard to a request that came in to us from a resident, Nick Fitzhugh, who purchased property adjacent to the park and had designed a platform for a tent on his property that crossed over on to park property.

In August Nick came to the Town Board explaining the history of this project and asked if the Town Board would be open to conveying the small portion of land to him so he could keep the platform up. I personally walked the property along with Mark Jaffee and Sal Morello from our Building Department and believed this was within reason given it was such a small piece of land (sliver, .06, 25 sq. ft.) and in an area that is not used by the public. After Nick’s discussion with the Town Board, it was decided that we were open to conveying this piece of property to him.

We then worked to adopt the resolution giving him the authority to make the application to our Planning Board for a lot line adjustment. That resolution was subject to a 30-day permissive referendum and was noticed in The Freeman.

While this was just the first step in a multi-step process, given the response from residents and Scenic Hudson (even after the permissive referendum timeframe was up), this is just not something we can continue to spend our time or resources on, so it's my recommendation to withdraw the resolution completely.

**SUPERVISOR FREER MADE A MOTION TO RESCIND THE RESOLUTION PASSED ON 10/6/2022 TO CONVEY A SMALL PORTION OF LAND ON PARSELL ST TO NICK FITZHUGH SUBJECT TO PERMISSIVE REFERENDUM. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN JARED GEUSS ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT –**

Good evening Danielle, and Members of the Town Board,

This is Lydia Gershey Afia, residing at 79 Riverview, in Port Ewen.

I'm here this evening representing the Alliance to SAVE OUR WILLOWS in Freer Park, to follow-up on correspondence that was sent to the Board on 11/23/22, which I will now review and read into the record:

Hi Danielle and Members of the Town Board,

Thank you, Danielle, for your prompt reply and kind holiday wishes. May you, and all Board Members, also have a lovely Thanksgiving and holiday weekend.

In regard to you response to our request for a written statement, assuring that no further action be taken on the Freer Park Willows, by Buildings and Grounds Management, or otherwise, as restated below:

"We are continuing to work through the recommendations and will be sure to update you on any movement" —Danielle Freer, Town Supervisor

As our Alliance begins to undertake fundraising efforts, I would ask that you consider yourself in our position.

That is, how can we act in a legitimate, fundraising capacity, as representatives of the Alliance to SAVE OUR WILLOWS In Freer Park, with the ethical goal of raising thousands of dollars from individuals and businesses, in our effort to augment the Park's budget allocation **specifically** for long overdue care and maintenance of the five remaining park Willows, when **we cannot guarantee our donors that the funds will be used exclusively for this purpose, and that the trees have not already been slated for cutting down and complete removal?**

For this reason, we require specific, detailed information on what you refer to as "the recommendations", together with your written assurance that **our fundraising efforts and donations will be used exclusively for the purpose intended.**

Because this specific information has not been forthcoming from your office, it's difficult to proceed in good faith, and not be suspect of intent, and trust that we are cooperating towards a common goal.

On behalf of our Alliance, we appreciate your continued consideration and attention to this important matter.

Respectfully,

Lydia Gershey Afia  
Alliance to SAVE OUR WILLOWS In Freer Park

Since this email was sent on 11/23/22, because we lack the official assurance of the Town Board, guaranteeing that all fundraising proceeds will be used exclusively to maintain and preserve the Freer Park Willows, our Alliance:

1. Cannot accept in good faith, donations that have already been offered, amounting to an estimated \$2,200.
2. Nor can we plan specific fundraising events that require advance preparation and scheduling.
3. Will lose the opportunity to avail Freer Park of the good will benefits and funding generosity of individuals and businesses that characterizes this holiday season.

Additionally, according to the 2023 Town Budget Expenditures:

1. Line item 331 specifies Replace Willow Trees with a budget of \$2,000  
We ask the Board to clarify if this allocation is to replace the five Willow trees which in 2019-2020, were previously cut down and their stumps ground up?

Or, is this allocation intended for the currently surviving five Willow trees that are still standing, and for which our efforts are attempting to maintain and preserve?  
I might also add, that \$3,000 has been allocated for Mulch, \$1,000 MORE than for Freer Park trees!

Clearly, there isn't any designated allocation in the Town Budget Expenditures for the care and maintenance of the remaining Willow trees.  
How then, are we to interpret Danielle's response to our inquiries for clarification in regard to the fate of the Freer Park Willows, when she writes, quote:  
"We are continuing to work through the recommendations and will be sure to update you on any movement" —Danielle Freer, Town Supervisor

We ask, what exactly are these "recommendations"?

At the 9/22/22 Board meeting that I and members of our Alliance attended in support of preserving the Freer Park Willows, Danielle expressed a personal measure of appreciation for our trees, and assured us that she would take steps to further assess their condition. We trusted that this assessment would be conducted with a professional, ISA certified arborist. We were also assured that our Alliance would be apprised of the results of this assessment. To date we have not received any information whatsoever.

In contrast, our Alliance has obtained an independent evaluation and report on the condition and recommended care and maintenance of the Freer Park Willows, according to professional guidelines and recommendations that we received from ISA certified arborist, Michael Barker.

These findings, that the trees are “worth saving” were corroborated in writing by a second ISA certified arborist, Keith Hughs of Expert Tree Service.

The Alliance TO SAVE OUR WILLOWS, is perfectly prepared and ready to act in accordance with the tree care and maintenance recommendations prepared by Michael Barker, subsidized by fundraising efforts.

We simply ask and require the cooperation of the Town Board in apprising us of their intentions regarding the Willows, and issuing written assurance that **THE REMAINING FIVE MATURE AND MAJESTIC WILLOWS IN FREER PARK WILL BE PRESERVED AND NOT CUT DOWN.**

If, however, “We are continuing to work through the recommendations. . .” is code for, *the Willows are clandestinely scheduled to be cut down*, then I would say the following:

Such a tragic and unfortunate legacy awaits this particular Town Board, under whose term or service, the decimation, tantamount to an “arborcide”, of all ten mature Willow trees, that for decades bestowed Freer Park with a majestic and sublime presence, which made the Park exceptionally scenic, beautiful and compelling to visit, was approved and executed in a period of less than three years.

Additionally, these actions were taken not based on the professional evaluation and recommendations of a certified arborist, but rather on inaccurate and misleading information provided to The Board by Park Grounds Management.

Truly, when considering the fact that our Alliance has ascertained a valid and professional ISA certified arborists confirmation on the worthiness of preserving the Freer Park Willows, together with recommendations for care and maintenance, and that we are prepared to fundraise to finance their preservation, what a travesty of injustice it will be, indeed, for this Board to bear as its legacy.

On behalf of our Alliance, I fervently appeal to the Town Board, cooperate with us, and don't let this be your legacy.

Thank you for you time and continued attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Lydia Gershey Afia  
Alliance TO SAVE OUR WILLOWS In Freer Park

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY SUPERVISOR FREER TO CLOSE PUBLIC COMMENT. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN ROBINSON. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.**

**TRANSFER STATION UPDATES AND DISCUSSION**

Lenny provided a list of Transfer Station fees for the Board to consider and discuss. He included a chart showing the current fees and how they related to other Transfer Stations in the county. Fee's will be subject to change as of January 1, 2023.

**TOWN OF ESOPUS TRANSFER STATION/RECYCLING CENTER**  
**FEE SCHEDULE EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2023**

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>RESIDENTIAL PERMIT</b>  | \$50.              |
| SENIOR & VETERAN PERMIT  | \$25               |
| (over 60, proof required)  |                    |
| LOST PERMIT OR 2ND PERMIT (MUST BE SAME HOUSEHOLD & SHOW REGISTRATION FOR 2ND VEHICLE) | \$7                |
| 1 DAY PASS   | \$25               |
| <br><b>NON RESIDENTIAL PERMIT</b>  | <br>\$60           |
| <br><b>BULK HOUSEHOLD WASTE</b>  | <br>\$ .19 PER Lb. |

\$19  
Minimum

**TRASH BAGS**

|   |      |
|---|------|
| COUPON BOOKLET 10 BAGS (1 30 GALLON BAG OR CAN) | \$45 |
| 45 Gallon Bag                                   | \$7  |
| 30 Gallon Bag                                   | \$5  |
| 10 - 13 Gallon Bag                              | \$3  |

**PROPANE**

|                           |      |
|---------------------------|------|
| PROPANE (SM CAMPING SIZE) | \$1  |
| PROPANE (20 lb tank)      | \$5  |
| PROPANE (30 lb tank)      | \$10 |

**Appliances**

|                                       |           |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Appliance with coolant – Small/ Large | \$15/\$25 |
| Stoves, washers, dryers               | \$15      |

|                    |              |     |      |                |
|--------------------|--------------|-----|------|----------------|
| <b>FLUORESCENT</b> |              |     |      | <b>Ballast</b> |
|                    | <b>BULBS</b> | \$4 | \$12 |                |

**YARD WASTES – BRUSH LESS THAN 4 INCHES IN DIAMETER AND CUT INTO 4 -6 FOOT LENGTHS, GRASS LEAVES AND DEAD PLANTS**

|                            |      |
|----------------------------|------|
| BRUSH (PICK-UP TRUCK LOAD) | \$10 |
| BRUSH (DUMP TRUCK)         | \$20 |

**TBWS 12-01-22**

GRASS AND LEAVES (PICK-UP TRUCK LOAD) \$5  
GRASS AND LEAVES (DUMP TRUCK) \$10

Leaves in Brown Bags or single garbage can No Charge

**TIRES**

Under 20"/Over 20" (24.5" MAXIMUM) \$12/\$20  
Large Tractor tires Call for pricing

**MATTRESS/BOX SPRING**

SINGLE \$18.00 PER PIECE  
FULL/DOUBLE/QUEEN \$22.00 PER PIECE  
KING \$30.00 PER PIECE

**Couches/Sofas**

Couches & Chairs Bulk waste Rate \$.19  
Sleeper Sofa \$32

**ELECTRONICS**

CRT TV'S & COMPUTER SCREENS (UNDER 19") \$0  
CRT TV'S & COMPUTER SCREENS (19" - 24") \$0  
CRT TV'S & COMPUTER SCREENS (25" and above) \$0  
Computer Towers \$0

Recyclables accepted: paper products, Newspaper, magazines, books, office paper, cardboard and junk mail

Container Products- Container Glass, Food & Beverage Cans, Plastic Containers

**Automotive**

Car batteries \$5  
Motor oil (recycled) \$0

**reminder All recycling must be observed** -Only waste generated in Esopus is permitted to be disposed of at the Transfer Station

A MOTION WAS MADE BY SUPERVISOR FREER TO APPROVE THE TRANSFER STATION FEE CHANGES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2023. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN EVELYN CLARKE. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

**E-WASTE REGULATIONS**

As of 1/1/2023 we can no longer charge for the disposal of electronics. The Board discussed the subject and agreed that they would continue to accept the electronics as a service. If this becomes an issue the subject can be revisited.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMAN JARED GEUSS TO STILL COLLECT THE ELECTRONIC WASTE BUT WITH NO FEE BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2023 DUE TO THE NEW LAWS THAT HAVE BEEN PUT IN PLACE FOR 2023. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN EVELYN CLARKE. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

**WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT UPDATES AND DISCUSSION**

Councilman Geuss said last year the Board discussed adding an addendum to the plan Tighe & Bond had prepared to include East Main and East Stout to the list of infrastructure improvements that need to be completed.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY SUPERVISOR FREER TO APPROVE A \$50,000 SPEND FROM ARPA FUNDING FOR TIGHE & BOND TO ADD EAST MAIN AND EAST STOUT TO THE DESIGN PLAN. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN KATHIE QUICK. ALL MEMBERS WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

**WATER TREATMENT PLANT BIDS (HVAC, ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING)**

Tighe and Bond has made their recommendations regarding the bid results. Resolution will be drawn up and the contracts will be awarded at the Town Board meeting in December.

On Wednesday November 9, 2022, the Town of Esopus opened five bids for the Roger Mabie Water Treatment Plant Improvement Project Electrical Construction Contract. The bidders and their respective base bids are as follows:

| <b>Bid Item</b>      | <b>Stilsing Electric, Inc.</b> | <b>Hudson Valley Electrical Construction Management, Inc.</b> | <b>O'Connell Electric Company, Inc.</b> | <b>J &amp; J Sass Electric, Inc.</b> | <b>Gross Electric, Inc.</b> |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Base Bid Cost</b> | <b>\$130,400.00</b>            | <b>\$170,000.00</b>   | <b>\$255,555.00</b>                     | <b>\$128,000.00</b>                  | <b>\$305,669.00</b>         |

**TBWS 12-01-22**

On Wednesday November 9, 2022, the Town of Esopus opened two bids for the Roger Mabie Water Treatment Plant Improvement Project HVAC Construction Contract. The bidders and their respective base bids are as follows:

| <b>Bid Item</b> | <b>WM Schultz Construction, Inc.</b> | <b>Wilkins Mechanical</b> |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Base Bid        | \$30,600.00                          | \$36,000.00               |

On Wednesday November 9, 2022, the Town of Esopus opened two bids for the Roger Mabie Water Treatment Plant Improvement Project Plumbing Construction Contract. The bidders and their respective base bids are as follows:

| <b>Bid Item</b> | <b>WM Schultz Construction, Inc.</b> | <b>Wilkins Mechanical</b> |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Base Bid        | \$42,000.00                          | \$41,000.00               |

**2023 ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING DISCUSSION**

Supervisor Freer and Town Clerk Holly Netter have begun working on the draft for the Organizational Meeting to be held on January 5, 2023. Town Board members were asked to review the document and assist in finding volunteers to fill the vacancies on the various Boards.

Looking for a competitive pool of volunteers to fill Board Vacancies. Councilmen Clarke and Quick said if people are willing to step up and apply with no red flags, they shouldn't be left hanging. Supervisor Freer said we should be very particular who we are bringing on and not just replace with a warm body. A conversation will be had with the Chairmen of the Boards to gain updated information.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**CHAMPLAIN HUDSON POWER EXPRESS (CHPE)**

Councilman Geuss said the Governor announced they were moving forward with the pipeline. He said personally he was torn and there are ups and downs. Our area will see jobs, leases of right of ways and shopping/buying local. However, the overall pipeline will not benefit us in this area. Geuss said it would be smart to put measures in as a town board to protect our drinking water. Councilperson Geuss suggested drafting a resolution to have the company put up a bond to protect our intake at the plant. This would also give us money if we had to activate an emergency system should we need it. TDI (AKA CHPE) would be responsible to activate the National Guard and tie into another water source, provide tanks and bottles of water to residents, etc. We would also want to ensure a future bond for all municipalities (10-year bond) to hold if two years later there is an issue. Maybe the State will set aside but we should have some protection. Waterfront Advisory Board



should weigh in on this. Smart to get it to the County level and push it up the line. Councilman Quick said we need to be protected; makes her nervous. Supervisor Freer is working alongside the Hudson 7 on next steps but is preparing for an Esopus-specific PR approach, if needed.

The Board needs to get information to the lawyer to draft something for us and lead us on how we set up the wording and the wants and needs from the Town. Once we get it drafted it can be circulated to the Hudson 7 and elected official offices. Legislature Laura Petit asked if the Transfer Station had environmental insurance and maybe a rider could be added. Waterfront Chairperson, Margaret Phalen, said she doubts it would cover other people's work.

**JARED GEUSS MADE A MOTION TO CONTACT A LAWYER TO WRITE UP CHPE LEGAL CORRESPONDENCE TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE STATE AND HUDSON 7. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY DANIELLE FREER. MOTION CARRIED.**

**WINTER WONDERLAND PARADE** – Reminder December 3, Rain date Dec 4, 5:30pm. Parade kicks off at North Broadway and continues through town where the tree will be lighted, and Santa will greet children at the gazebo.

**LIAISON LIGHTNING ROUND**

**COUNCILMAN GEUSS:**

**PLANNING BOARD – A WRIGHT PROPERTY BROADWAY:**

Changes were made to the plan, but it didn't increase square footage, no change to the exterior just a layout change: one two bedroom changed to two one bedrooms increased to 18, one or two may be used as short-term rental. Shepstone will review and will get recommendations to the Board.

**COUNCILMAN QUICK:**

**ZONING BOARD**

The Zoning Board hasn't had many referrals this fall, so they haven't had any meetings since August. They still need another member to have a full board.

**WATERFRONT ADVISORY BOARD**

The Waterfront Board has been working on the updates on the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) and are close to finishing. The next open house will be on January 25, 2023 at Town Hall. They are working on a preliminary plan to present to stakeholders and the public hopefully this winter. That has been their main focus, and they haven't had many referrals this fall.

**ASSESSOR'S DEPARTMENT**

The Assessor's Office is busy processing applications for property tax exemptions for agriculture, seniors and other special circumstances. They are also working on assessments based on completed building permits from earlier in the year. They are beginning their busy period.

**SENIORS**

The Esopus Seniors have had a busy year. There have been four trips to Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. There will be a Christmas party on December 12. We have 82 people signed up so far. This party will be catered by Erich Nagali and we will have DJ Brian Rittie who will

make a play list based on what the seniors request by next week. During the month of January we will plan some possible trips for the spring, summer and fall.

**COUNCILMAN CLARKE:**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Had a good meeting on Tuesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>. Discussed business involvement in the townwide parade from floats (ie. Van Loan's, Castaway, Viera Landscape and Construction, etc.) to an afterparty at the Hudson House Distillery. This is the type of integration we should continue to push. Dolly Decker from Hello Dolly Real Estate provided an update on commercial listings available around town and the Committee brainstormed around this. The group is working to update the business list and to figure out best next steps.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING WAS MADE BY SUPERVISOR FREER AT 9:35 PM. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN JARED GEUSS. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.**

*Respectively Submitted,  
Holly A. Netter  
Town Clerk, RMC*