

---

**Esopus Riverfront – Access and Connections Study**  
**Riverfront Project Committee Meeting #4**  
**August 28, 2019**  
**Summary Meeting Notes – FINAL**

**Attendance:**

*Riverfront Project Committee (RPC):* Mercedes Ross, RPC Chairwoman; Alex Dean, Community Outreach Coordinator; Carol Tomassetti; Diane Dintruff; Margaret Phelan; Marion Zimmer; Eli Schloss; and Heather Blaikie, Scenic Hudson;

*Town Board:* Jared Geuss and Kathy Quick

*Planning Consultant:* Matthew Rogers, Laberge Group.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Ross at 5:05 PM.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Committee Meeting #3 Meeting Notes were reviewed and approved with one minor adjustment: Clarification at the bottom of page 4 under *Canoe/Kayak Storage Shed* that the storage racks in the new boat storage building “should be” rather than “will need to be” modified to accommodate canoes/kayaks. This clarification was made as the current racks can accommodate these boats and modification of the racks is not necessary for the building to function properly.

**Meeting Discussion:**

- 1) **July Design Workshop** – Matthew reviewed the input received during and after the July Design Workshop:
  - a) Over 30 individuals attended the workshop.
  - b) The majority of comments were positive with overall support for the proposed improvements.
  - c) Some questions/statements about the lack of improvements at Sleightsburgh Park were raised during the Design Workshop. The Committee had a brief conversation regarding this and generally agreed that the level of proposed improvements are appropriate due to the limited space at the Park and the fact that future sea level rise may significantly impact Park access and amenities.
  - d) Matthew stated that the concept and comment boards were left at Town Hall and posted on the Town website to allow for continued input along with numerous Facebook postings. However, additional input was minimal. An issue with the Town’s “Current Projects” webpage was discussed – sometimes access to the webpage was not visible. It appears that issue has since been fixed. The Town will send out one or two more Facebook messages encouraging the public to review and provide comments on the concepts. The concepts will remain at Town Hall until the revised concept plans are provided to the Committee in mid-September.

- 2) **ADA Stakeholder Site Visits** – Matthew provided a summary of the ADA Stakeholder site visits that took place earlier in the day between 1pm and 4:30pm.
  - a) Kathy Hochman and Anthony Mignone from the Resource Center for Accessible Living (RCAL) along with a few Committee members conducted site visits to Sleightsburgh, Freer and Lighthouse Parks along with Esopus Meadows and Black Creek Preserves.
  - b) Kathy and Anthony provided helpful information related to ADA accessibility regarding both existing amenities and proposed improvements.
  - c) A summary of the ADA Stakeholder site visits is provided in the site visit notes prepared by Laberge Group and provided to Kathy and Anthony on August 30, 2019 for their review. The draft notes, subject to revisions, are attached to this document for reference.
- 3) **Review of Current Park Recommendations** – Matthew reviewed the revised recommendations along with revisions that have been proposed since the Design Workshop, including ADA-related recommendations:
  - a) **Sleightsburgh Park:**
    - i) A temporary car-top parking area was identified to the left of the boat launch. There appears to be sufficient room to designate this as a temporary parking area. A sign could be placed in this location designating the space.
    - ii) Angled trailer parking will be designated for the western side of the parking lot and approximately 4 spaces perpendicular to the center planted island/park memorial. The kiosk is still proposed to be relocated which will provide additional room. The existing curb stops at the center island could be moved to south 1-2 feet for additional room.
    - iii) These parking areas will be marked with appropriate signage. The surface of the parking lot will be marked with either paint (which will require regular maintenance), anchored chains or similar markings. Wheel stops are also proposed for each parking space to further delineate their locations.
    - iv) Summary of ADA visit (see ADA Stakeholder Site Visit Notes for detailed information):
      - (1) ADA parking is required at Sleightsburgh Park and a location near the fishing platform was proposed. Two ADA spaces are proposed with at least one being an ADA compliant van parking space. These spaces will be properly delineated in accordance with ADA requirements.
      - (2) Improvements to the concrete walk leading to the gangway and dock are needed if ADA compliance is desired. The gangway and dock also need improvements to be ADA compliant.
        - (a) A ramp is needed to provide access to the concrete walk – there is currently a 2-3 inch lip which precludes ADA compliance. The ramp could be accommodated through asphalt and there appears to be sufficient room to meet the slope requirements of 1:12. The concrete walk also requires toe guards.
        - (b) The gangway as observed at 1pm on August 28 exceeded the maximum 1:12 slope, it lacked railings and toe guards. The dock also lacked toe guards.
          - (i) Follow-Up: RCAL clarified that gangways can exceed the maximum slope of 1:12 if the gangway is at least 30 feet in length. The existing gangway is approximately 20 feet in length.
      - (3) An ADA compliant porta-potty would be provided next year.
      - (4) A discussion occurred during the ADA site visits regarding the practicality and legal requirements for bringing existing amenities into compliance. Generally, a community will need to bring a park into compliance if amenities are altered. RCAL clarified that providing ADA accessible amenities at one park does not preclude the Town from bringing other parks into compliance if alternations are proposed.
        - (a) The need to bring amenities into ADA compliance will be evaluated and detailed in the Report.

- (5) It would be beneficial to provide ADA accessibility to motor boat users at Sleightsburgh Park, requiring improvements to the concrete walk, gangway and dock as described above.
- v) Coordination with Central Hudson Gas and Electric is recommended to clarify what improvements, if any are allowed on their right-of-way. A boardwalk to access the Park's southern shoreline is proposed and would be reachable via the ROW. Vegetation management and correcting any drainage problems along the ROW should be part of the Town's overall improvements and ongoing maintenance of the Park's trails if allowed by Central Hudson.
- vi) Regarding the limited sight distance on the access road – a practical solution is to formally establish a small pull-off area on the south side of the road, just past the Central Hudson natural gas equipment. There appears to be sufficient room in this area to avoid impacts on nearby wetlands. In addition, limited trimming of the reeds on the north side would significantly increase visibility. Both options will be discussed with NYSDEC for their input on approvability.
- vii) Access to Sleightsburgh Park requires vehicles to navigate through the hamlet and residential neighborhoods.
  - (1) The speed of vehicles on the narrow residential streets was raised during the comprehensive planning process.
  - (2) Matthew has visited the park on numerous occasions and observed areas where vegetation is obstructing sightlines, especially when attempting to turn left onto N. Broadway from 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. It appears that this vegetation is on private property. It is recommended that vegetation at key intersections in Sleightsburgh, especially along roads leading to the Park be maintained for safety. Coordination with residents may be required.
  - (3) The southern portion of N. Broadway (the first 1,300 feet from US Rt. 9W) appears wider than necessary (ranging between 35 and 40 feet between pavement edges) and does not include a center line, marked shoulders or sidewalks and has limited street trees.
    - (a) This condition tends to encourage higher vehicle speeds.
    - (b) The road quickly narrows to between 20 and 24 feet just before Third Avenue.
    - (c) Residents park their car along N. Broadway. While on-street parking is desired as it helps calm vehicle speed, it does add obstacles for through traffic. It may be helpful to designate where on-street parking should be permitted on N. Broadway as part of an overall strategy to improve safety along this road.
    - (d) It is recommended that the Town look into options for calming traffic leading into and out of Sleightsburgh. Potential options include a center line and marking the shoulders and adding street trees to help create a narrowing affect for drivers that tends to calm traffic speeds. Additional and appropriate signage alerting drivers of the narrowing street and speed limit are also recommended.
- viii) Park Entrance:
  - (1) The entrance to Sleightsburgh Park was discussed – there are concerns with the existing utility pole located adjacent to the northern exit driveway. This pole can inhibit boat trailers from making the required left turn onto Everson Street.
  - (2) The Town should coordinate with Central Hudson to see if the pole can be relocated out of the driveway island to increase the turning radius.

**b) Freer Park:**

- i) Summary of ADA visit (see ADA Stakeholder Site Visit Notes for detailed information):
  - (1) The small bathrooms structure in parking lot is not ADA compliant – proposed to be removed.
  - (2) The larger bathroom connected to the pavilion kitchen is not ADA compliant – a small asphalt ramp could be constructed to bring the bathroom into compliance.

- (3) The short path between the parking lot and pavilion is not ADA compliant – too narrow and may exceed 1:12 slope.
- (4) There are no ADA parking spaces – 1 ADA compliant space is required for every 25 regular spaces – ADA parking spaces will be provided.
- (5) There are no ADA compliant picnic tables – one ADA picnic table for every 20 other tables is required. Accessible picnic tables are proposed as part of the improvements.
- (6) ADA compliant playground equipment was recommended including a swing. Accessible playground surface was also recommended – the current loose wood chips are not compliant.

ii) Location of the designated car top launch site:

- (1) Based on discussions during the ADA Stakeholder site visit and additional evaluations, the ability to construct a driveway and parking lot at the northern point/near the new boat storage building may not be feasible. This is due to several factors including increasing impervious surfaces and ground disturbance near the River, construction within the 100 year floodplain, potential impacts on adjacent wetlands, limited overall parking options due to available space, and increased potential for user conflicts (fishing/boating/Chester launching and refueling), as well as cost.
- (2) It was noted that wind surfers prefer the northern point for accessing the River.
- (3) The proposed ADA accessible car top launch is now proposed for the southern portion of the park. The northern point will remain a soft launch. The existing informal parking lot to the north will be improved and expanded as feasible and a stone dust or similar surfaced path would be constructed down to the shoreline.
- (4) One or more docks connected to the bulkhead via a gangway is proposed at the southern location. The existing soft launch would remain and be enhanced. The ongoing erosion at the southern end of the bulkhead would be corrected. The length of the gangway and number and types of docks will be determined during the design process and will be dependent upon different factors, including, but not limited to the overall water depth, impacts of tides, permitting requirements and cost.

iii) Park Entrance:

- (1) There were recommendations to improve the overall entrance to the Park.
  - (a) Enlarge the entrance/gate – Currently, the access drive is not much wider than a single lane and should be enlarged.
  - (b) The guardrail should be pushed back to enlarge entrance.
  - (c) Signage should be consolidated.
  - (d) With the designated car top boat launch site proposed for the southern area of the park, a short-term parking area should be provided near the shoreline. The existing driveway could be improved by creating a semi-circle or miniature roundabout with a small planted median/island. Temporary parking spaces along the circle/roundabout would be designated for loading/unloading area for small water craft. The center median/island would improve the aesthetics of the Park entrance and breakup the large expanse of asphalt.
- (2) Pump Station:
  - (a) Plantings around the front of the pump station (facing the River) was recommended.
  - (b) Designate Town-only parking spaces on the southeast side of the building.
  - (c) Designate trailer parking to the north of the pump station.
- (3) The Committee recommended that all buildings be painted the same color as the new boat storage building (earth tone brown). Currently, the pump station, storage building at southern end of the park and the small bathroom in the parking lot are painted a rust/red-color. The small former

- lifeguard building in the southern portion of the park is an earth tone green but the building is proposed to be removed. The large bathroom/kitchen building has a stone façade and will not be painted. The pavilion support beams and gable walls are painted an earth tone green.
- (4) There is agreement that a new bathroom should be provided before the existing one in the parking lot is removed. It should be located near/adjacent to the existing bathroom associated with the kitchen and pavilion.
  - (5) The existing basketball hoop backboards need to be replaced and lines painted on the court.
  - (6) There was a request to improve the location of the existing picnic grills. Opportunities for one or more ADA accessible grills is also encouraged.
  - (7) The need to replace the trees that recently came down near the pavilion was highlighted. The Committee has previously recommended a long-term replanting program for the Park. The recent loss of trees has increased the need to address this issue sooner.

**c) Lighthouse Park:**

- i) Summary of ADA visit (see ADA Stakeholder Site Visit Notes for detailed information):
    - (1) Request to position the proposed gazebo closer to the parking lot and river and connected via an ADA compliant path.
    - (2) There are exposed roots leading up to the existing pedestrian bridge connecting to Esopus Meadows. They will have to be addressed when constructing an ADA accessible path from the parking lot.
  - ii) The need for a gazebo at Lighthouse Park was discussed. Because there is an existing large pavilion at Esopus Meadows, it was determined that a gazebo should not be a priority for Lighthouse Park at this stage.
  - iii) The open lawn area/abandoned raised leach field – the Committee would like to utilize this unused space. Additional picnic tables were recommended. If improvements over the leach field are not proposed, there is no need to remove it as previously considered.
  - iv) The raised leach may still need to be removed to accommodate the desired expansion of the parking lot.
  - v) Adding a second access point to the Park is not feasible due to limited sight distance on River Road. The existing access point will be widened instead.
- d) Esopus Meadows Preserve:
- i) No improvements are proposed for Esopus Meadows Preserve.
  - ii) Based on the ADA Stakeholder site visits, minor maintenance to the stone dust path and permeable ADA parking spaces are needed.
- e) Black Creek Preserve:
- i) Refer to the ADA Stakeholder Site Visit Notes for detailed information.
  - ii) No additional improvements at Black Creek Preserve were discussed beyond what has already been discussed and proposed.
  - iii) The access point along US Rt. 9W was discussed and there was agreement that Scenic Hudson should look into removing the center island at the entrance which creates a confusing ingress/egress pattern.

**4) The following next steps were discussed:**

- a) September 19: Draft Plan and Concept Sketches to Committee
- b) September 25: 7pm Committee Meeting #5 to Review the Draft Plan/Concept Sketches
- c) October 24: Revised Plan and Draft Schematic Designs/Perspectives and Cost Estimates to Committee
- d) October 30: Committee Meeting #6 to review revised material
- e) Early November: Laberge Group meeting NYSDEC Permitting
- f) Early November: Tentative Public Meeting to Review Draft Plan and Concepts
- g) Mid November: Committee Meeting #7 to Review Public and DEC Input
- h) Early/Mid December: Final Report with Final Schematics/Perspective and Cost Estimates

***Meeting Adjourned at 7:05pm***

Meeting Notes Submitted by Laberge Group September 4, 2019