TOWN OF STANFORD TOWN BOARD  
TOWN BOARD MINUTES

JANUARY 9th, 2025

The Town of Stanford Town Board met for their monthly meeting on Thursday, January 9th, 2025, at the Town Hall at 7:00 PM. Supervisor Wendy Burton called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance led by County Legislator Chris Drago.

This meeting was dedicated to the memory of President Jimmy Carter and Supervisor Burton asked for a moment of silence to his memory.

Roll call: Wendy Burton – present

Julia Descoteaux – present

Eric Haims - absent

Nathan Lavertue – absent

Theodore Secor - present

Also in attendance was Town Attorney Robert Butts.

MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA: Supervisor Burton made a motion to accept the Agenda, seconded by Teddy Secor. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

REPORT FROM COUNTY LEGISLATOR CHRIS DRAGO: Legislator Drago covered several topics from the County: The budget was done in November and $2 million was set aside for supplemental EMS services to assist local areas; the lack of mental health services in Northern Dutchess he stated was unacceptable so in the ’25 County Budget they will be bringing services to Rhinebeck and are currently looking for a site, perhaps the former Pet County building; The Cornell Cooperative Extension has a new director but their past budgets were in the red and had been ignored by the County for many years, so now they will get approximately $300,000 from the County; The County did not apply for State funding for ADUs as they had other housing priorities but since one more round of funding will soon be available, the Hudson River Housing authority will apply but require a letter of support from Stanford and three other area towns. With no other matters to inform the residents and Board on, Mr. Drago thanked everyone and said he was always available to them.

LIAISON REPORTS:

Councilman Theodore Secor said that the Climate Smart Task Force will be meeting on Jan. 15th at 6PM but from now on will be meeting the first Wednesday of every month at 6:15 PM. The Haunted Fortress Committee met last night and discussed grants for repairs of wiring, flooring and lighting, and to generally improve the existing infrastructure. The ZBA had also met and the Stop Work Order issued for Rathjen’s Landscaping was on the agenda and will be voted on at their February meeting. Two other variance applications were received, and the ZBA thanked Ben Rathjen for his service to the ZBA.

Councilwoman Julia Descoteaux reported that the CAC had not met but reported for Councilman Eric Haims in his absence: the Planning Board held a Public Hearing on a minor subdivision for Blue Sky Farm on Hunns Lake Road with no comments heard; the Planning Board then issued a negative declaration for Blue Sky Farm and the resolution passed; a pre-application conference was held for changing a building envelope on Joe Monaco’s Shelley Hill 2007 subdivision and that the owner will need to go to the CAC to discuss environmental concerns; and another pre-application conference for a minor subdivision on Route 82 as Karin Roebke is looking to build a house on a friend’s property that the owner would subdivide for her. The next Planning Board meeting will be on Wed. Jan, 22nd.

Supervisor Burton stated that closing out the 2024 budget showed that they will meet or exceed revenues for the year and will not go over on any expenses. But there could still be budget adjustments made for ’24. The Supervisor added that the Board will not speak during the ADU public hearing and will vote on the law in February but that she had added some “FAQs” in her newsletter today that might answer anyone’s questions. However, #5 was corrected by Curtis DeVito from the CAC, adding that CEAs were not specifically protected, with Attorney Butts adding that this was more of a SEQRA issue.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Kathy Zeyher, 158 Shelley Hill Road – wanted to correct Councilman Secor’s ZBA report, that the “stop work order” was a judge’s decision and that the “notice of violation” was a ZBA issue.

Town Board Minutes  
1/9/25, page 2

PRESENTATION ON “JUST CAUSE EVICTION”: Teddy Secor introduced Naomi Dann from the group “Housing, Justice for All.” Ms. Dann explained that they were legal advocates for building new affordable housing and explained the “good cause eviction” and spoke about laws that had been passed to help those with rent hikes and evictions and to help tenants defend themselves in court.

PUBLIC HEARING: Local Law #1 of 2025

A LOCAL LAW ALLOWING ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

IN ALL ZONING DISTRICTS

A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Julia Descoteaux, to open the Public Hearing on proposed the proposed Local Law on Accessory Dwelling Units, know to be known as Local Law #1 of 2025:  
 Patrick Hancock, 10 Hoag Drive – felt that this law was shortsighted for two reasons: 1) many septic systems are close to bodies of water in our Town, the Wappingers Creek, Hunns Lake and Upton Lake and that any ADUs that are built should be avoided in these areas; 2) the Upton Lake subdivisions has deed restrictions that would not allow any other types of buildings.

Kathy Zeyher, 158 Shelley Hill Road – stated that she felt that it was premature to pass this law without the guidance of either a zoning consultant or and zoning law attorney. She added 3 other concerns: 1) a statement needs to be removed that says that variances should not be granted regarding size, each variance is decided on its own merits; 2) another section needs to be removed that regarding the subdivision of property that might have an ADU on it; 3) putting an ADU in the use regulations as “Permitted” allows two principal uses on one property, which cannot be allowed and this needs to be removed.  
 Anna Price, 8 Old 82 Lane – asked that if ADU’s are allowed, would they become short-term rentals? Atty. Butts replied that there will be a short-term rental law that is being worked on now.

Conrad Levenson, 669 Hunns Lake Road – This makes ADUs possible but not a mandate. The septic makes it a large cost but the State funding could make them a bit more affordable, which is a requirement with regulated rental costs.  
 Walter Czachorowski, Upton Lake Homeowners Assoc. President – at prior public hearings, several people spoke regarding the damage that ADUs could cause to Upton Lake with increased septic discharge. A prior draft of the ADU law had the language stating that any applicant in the Upton Lake area would have to go through a formal process in order to build an ADU. Now this version of the law has had that part removed. He felt that all of the homeowners in the lake area should be exempt from this proposed ADU law due to 1) deed restrictions; 2) the potential of 45 new septic systems in the lake area, and 3) Upton Lake should be protected due to its deep springs that can act as a reservoir in times of drought.

Regina Connors, 25 Hunns Lake Road – stated that it was important that residents could really read this proposed law along with the Supervisors’ FAQs in her newsletter. She felt that a Special Use Permit should be needed and it’s a good idea to discuss the septic issues at both Hunns Lake and Upton Lake. The Town needs more information to make the decision. Councilwoman Descoteaux replied that the County considered it a matter of local concern and there are minutes from the Zoning Commission meetings.  
 Kate Blemler, 26 Hunns Lake Place – spoke in favor of this law and that it was a good balance between regulations and property owners rights, and there is a shortage of rentals. She liked that a special use permit would not be required but was comfortable with all the other regulations and oversights including the Department of Health requirements.  
 Nate Kimball, 777 Hunns Lalke Road – stated that finding safe attainable housing is a challenge and that this ADU law will help seniors and new families and will not cause unchecked development. Stanford has plenty of private and public land that will always be protected, and NIMBYs should not overrule what is best for others. As part of the Climate Smart Task Force’s risk assessment, our older housing is more vulnerable so allowing more updated housing is definitely needed. Having ADUs as “as of right” makes the process easier and cheaper and opens up state funding to residents and there are always other safeguards with building codes and health department requirements. Maybe building ADUs will require property owners to improve and update older septics that could be causing pollution.

Margaret Fallon, 100 Sisters Hill Road – stated that she was in favor of this law, and that when there were public hearings on the Comprehensive Plan, many said that they desired housing for seniors, mid-income families, etc. Regarding the Board of Health requirements, they are very strict and many might not even be able to be approved. It’s a balance to protect

Town Board Minutes  
1/9/25, page 3

environmental areas. Kids leave and can’t come back, and it’s hard to retire here. A Special Use Permit gives an extra layer of red tape and a bit of a financial barrier, but we need the balance of this ADU law.

With no other comments, a motion to close the Public Hearing was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Theodore Secor. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. LOCAL LAW #1 OF 2025: Will be voted on in February.

2. LETTER IN SUPPORT OF GRANT APPLICATIONS WITH HUDSON RIVER HOUSING AUTHORITY: Councilwoman Descoteaux explained that a letter was being sent to partner with the Hudson River Housing Authority in order to secure grants for residents to have financial assistance to build accessory dwelling units. This partnership with HRH will include the towns of Pine Plains, Northeast, Amenia and Stanford.

3. RE-APPOINT DOREEN BROWN AS DEPUTY TOWN CLERK: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Theodore Secor, to re-appoint Doreen Brown as Deputy Town Clerk, retroactive to January 1st. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

4. RE-APPOINT CHRIS WILSER AS DEPUTY HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Julia Descoteaux, to re-appoint Chris Wilser as Deputy Highway Superintendent, retroactive to January 1st. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

5. ACCEPT RAY STORMS’ RESIGNATION AS TOWN HALL CUSTODIAN: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Theodore Secor, to accept Ray Storms’ resignation as Town Hall Custodian, effective January 30th, 2025. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

6. RESOLUTION #1A OF 2025 – AMBULANCE DISTRICT FUND TRANSFER: The following resolution was offered by Wendy Burton, seconded by Theodore Secor, as follows:

**RESOLUTION #1a of 2025**

**TO TRANSFER FUNDS received for ambulance District**

Whereas the first installment of the anonymous grant for our Ambulance Service was received into the General Fund 3900018, and

Whereas it will earn maximum interest in the NY CLASS Ambulance Fund 01-0010-0013

Now therefore be in resolved that the Supervisor is authorized to transfer $350,000 from the General Fund #390018 into the NY CLASS Ambulance Fund 01-0010-0013.

The foregoing resolution was voted upon with the Board members voting as follows:

Wendy Burton, Supervisor – Yes; Julia Descoteaux, Councilwoman – Yes; Eric Haims, Councilman – Absent; Nathan Lavertue, Councilman -Absent – Yes; Theodore Secor, Councilman -Yes.

Certified this 9th day of January 2025 by the affirmative votes of the Town of Stanford Town Board members present. *Ritamary Bell,* *Town Clerk*

7. RESOLUTION #1B of 2025 – TRANSFER HIGHWAY FUNDS FOR PAYROLL:

The following resolution was read and approved on a motion made by Julia Descoteaux, seconded by Wendy Burton, as follows:

**RESOLUTION #1B of 2025**

**TO TRANSFER FUNDS to general fund**

Whereas the Bank of Millbrook Highway Fund #837720 had insufficient funds to cover the 12/5/24 payroll, and

Whereas General Fund #390018 had sufficient funds to cover Highway Payroll,

Now therefore be it resolved that the Supervisor is authorized to transfer $16,639.74 from the NY CLASS Hwy Fund 01-0010-0011 into the Millbrook General Fund #390018

The foregoing resolution was voted upon with the Board members voting as follows:

Wendy Burton, Supervisor – Yes; Julia Descoteaux, Councilwoman – Yes; Eric Haims, Councilman – Absent; Nathan Lavertue, Councilman -Absent – Yes; Theodore Secor, Councilman -Yes.

Town Board Minutes  
1/9/25, page 4

Certified this 9th day of January 2025 by the affirmative votes of the Town of Stanford Town Board members present. *Ritamary Bell,* *Town Clerk*

8. RESOLUTION #1C FOR 2025 – TRANSFER HIGHWAY FUNDS FOR ABSTRACTS: The following resolution was read and approved on the motion of Wendy Burton, seconded by Theodore Secor, as follows:

**RESOLUTION #1C of 2025**

**TO TRANSFER FUNDS to HIGHWAY fund**

Whereas the combined December and January Highway Abstracts total $37,671.23, and

Whereas Highway Fund #837720 has insufficient funds to cover these two abstracts,

Now therefore be it resolved that the Supervisor is authorized to transfer $37,671.23 from the NY CLASS Hwy Fund 01-0010-0011 into the Bank Millbrook Highway Fund #837720.

The foregoing resolution was voted upon with the Board members voting as follows:

Wendy Burton, Supervisor – Yes; Julia Descoteaux, Councilwoman – Yes; Eric Haims, Councilman – Absent; Nathan Lavertue, Councilman - Absent – Yes; Theodore Secor, Councilman -Yes.

Certified this 9th day of January 2025 by the affirmative votes of the Town of Stanford Town Board members present. *Ritamary Bell,* *Town Clerk*

9. ADVERTISE FOR VACANT POSITIONS ON THE PLANNING BOARD, THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS AND THE CONSERVATION ADVISORY BOARD: The Clerk was instructed to place an ad for the above-named vacancies, and the Supervisor will also mention them in her newsletter.

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The Minutes of the December 12th, 2024 meeting were approved as written on a motion made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Teddy Secor. Motion carried. The Minutes of the December 30th End of Year meeting were approved as written on a motion made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Julia Descoteaux. Motion carried. And the January 2nd, 2025 Re-Organizational Meeting Minutes were approved as written on a motion made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Teddy Secor. Motion carried.

11. APPROVAL OF ABSTRACTS: Abstract #12C for December 2024 was approved on a motion made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Julia Descoteaux, as follows:

General Fund: check #s 8198-8201 in the amount of $ 1,223.28  
 Highway Fund: checks #4694-4698 in the amount of $ 2,812.32  
 Capital Projects Fund: check # 3037 in the amount of $ 1,150.00  
Abstract #1A for January 2025 was approved on the motion of Wendy Burton, seconded by Theodore Secor as follows:  
 General Fund: checks #8197-8214 in the amount of $15,139.27   
 Highway Fund: checks #4699-4700 in the amount of $34,858.91  
 Ambulance Fund: check #8209 in the amount of $62,500.00

Motion carried on both motions.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR: Anthony Sarnicola, 25 Hunns Lake Road – asked question about the housing grant with Councilwoman Descoteaux responding that this was the last round of grants from the State that would be given to individuals for ADUs with Hudson River Housing acting as the conduit or local non-profit advocacy group.

Regina Connors, 25 Hunns Lake Road – asked if the Town’s financial information was on the website. Supervisor Burton responded that bills are still coming in from 2024 and the actuals will not be done for a month or two.

Sandra Bilski, Aberdeen Lane – thanked the Board for the lighting outside on the Town Hall path.

With no other business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Theodore Secor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
  
 Ritamary Bell  
 Town Clerk