



WATERFRONT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Town of Germantown, NY

GermantownWaterfrontCommittee@gmail.com

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GERMANTOWN—Members of Germantown’s waterfront advisory committee are organizing a riverfront rally scheduled for April 22 as part of an organized response to Amtrak’s proposal to install gates and fencing which may restrict access to various stretches of the Hudson River shoreline between the existing crossings.

The Earth Day rally is scheduled for Noon to 2 p.m. on Sunday, April 22, at Ernest R. Lasher Memorial Park in Germantown.

Amtrak’s proposal for the waterfront owned by CSX, under review until May 1 by the New York State Department of State, does not appear to attempt closing existing vehicular crossings. But it does appear to restrict access to all sections of the riverside access road north and south of the town’s existing crossings at Lasher Park (formerly known as the Anchorage) and Cheviot Park. Amtrak’s proposal can be viewed at: <http://on.ny.gov/2FUOEdG>

Those stretches have for many years been active with fishing enthusiasts, bird-watchers, dog-walkers, joggers and walkers. Also, a 700-foot fence parallel to the tracks and along the terminus of Germantown’s Lower Main Street would seek to block river access at an unofficial crossing to an area of shore that has been busy with recreational activity dating back at least 105 years.

New gates and fencing are also proposed in Stuyvesant, Stockport, Tivoli, Rhinebeck, and Rhinecliff. Locked gates already prohibit access to Castleton-on-Hudson’s public riverfront park.

The town’s waterfront advisory committee was appointed by the town board in 2016 and concluded an 18-month study this month of the town’s waterfront resources, the options for revitalization and potential sustainable solutions for access along the town’s shores—based on three well-attended public visioning sessions. The committee’s study, funded by a grant from the New York State Department of State, can be viewed on germantownny.org

The committee is proposing that representatives from Amtrak or CSX reach out to committee members at germantownwaterfrontcommittee@gmail.com to explore a more sustainable solution that would achieve safe and continued river access. The committee has proposed an exploration of whether the town could acquire excess lands to create a linear path along shore between Cheviot and Lasher parks, with a possible pedestrian bridge to ensure safe access at Lower Main Street.



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The committee is also continuing a rigorous letter-writing campaign. The public comment period for Amtrak's proposal began March 14th and was initially scheduled to continue for two weeks. Thanks to many comment letters and strong support from local leaders, the comment period has been extended to May 1, 2018. People looking for additional information relating to the proposal, the rally and more, should visit gatesgate.org

The committee plans to release a comment letter as well as a series of "white-papers," documents which will cite the committee's extensive research over the past 18 months and which will explore the potential impacts of Amtrak's proposal.

People looking to comment to the department of state regarding Amtrak's proposal can email cr@dos.ny.gov using the subject line "F-2018-0060" and are encouraged to c.c. gates@gstel.net on the comment email, so Germantown has a record of your comments.

Comments by postal mail can be sent to "New York State Department of State, CR F-2018-0060, Office of Planning, Development & Community Infrastructure, One Commerce Plaza, 99 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York 12231." So the town has a record, please mail a duplicate of comments to "Amtrak Gates Comments, Town Hall, 50 Palatine Park Road, Germantown, New York 12526."

Anyone interested in volunteering or coordinating for the Lasher Park rally may contact Martin Overington by emailing germantownwaterfrontcommittee@gmail.com. The committee is encouraging other affected and non-affected communities to hold parallel Earth Day rallies. The Village of Castleton-on-Hudson is coordinating with the Germantown committee to hold a rally at the locked gates to their park on the same day.

The Germantown waterfront advisory committee believes the waterfront is a vital link to the town's colonial past and a gateway to its future. It defines our identity as a Hudson River community: a desirable place to live, work, and visit. Amtrak has indicated the purpose of the proposal is to increase safety. Our committee also believes that if it's not broken, it doesn't need to be fixed—based on interviews with local law enforcement and first responders, there have been zero injuries and zero fatalities in recent memory that could have been prevented by the proposed access restrictions in Germantown.

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