

Unfair and Rash Move to Seize Boat Club Land via Eminent Domain

Background: The Red Hook Boat Club

- Since the 1950s, the Red Hook Boat Club has owned and rehabilitated 2.3 acres with 492 feet of Hudson River shoreline.
- The property includes docks, a playground, picnic areas, and modest facilities for meetings and events.
- The Club is:
 - A longstanding, taxpaying community steward.
 - Limited to 100 members to minimize environmental and shoreline impact.

Critical Context: Land Ownership & Access

- The Town of Red Hook does **not own** any waterfront land in Barrytown.
 - The Boat Club has been in **undisputed, private ownership for decades**.
 - The Town has **never expressed a legal or practical interest** in this land—until now.
-

Zoning Changes: A Bait-and-Switch

- In late 2024, the Town proposed zoning changes **ostensibly about cannabis siting**, but:
 - **Banned all Marinas** town-wide.
 - Imposed **new restrictions** on Boat Clubs.
 - Reserved the right for the **Town to operate its own marina/club**, exempt from these restrictions.
- The public process was **deeply flawed**:
 - Constantly shifting drafts.
 - **Minimal notice** to the public—often one business day or less.
- These changes **directly contradict** Red Hook's obligations under the State's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program.
- No mention of eminent domain **at any stage** during this process.

The Takeover Vote: Reckless and Unjust

- On **April 28, 2025**, the Town Board **formally voted** to seize the Boat Club by eminent domain—**while the lawsuit is still pending**.
- The Town set a **public comment deadline of May 16, 2025**—giving residents and the Boat Club **less than three weeks** to respond.
- This is:
 - A **clear act of retaliation** against a private landowner for defending its rights.
 - A **ruined and unfair** land grab with no prior notice or community justification.
 - A dangerous precedent: private clubs and landowners are now **targets for political expediency**.

Pretext for Devaluation: A Serious Due Process Violation

- The ban on Marinas now appears to be a **pretext** to artificially **limit the Boat Club's lawful and highest-value use** of its waterfront land.
- This tactic would **depress the property's appraised value** during the eminent domain process.
- **Manipulating zoning to engineer a lower valuation** for a planned government taking is a **grave due process concern** and a potential abuse of power.
- Doing so may **expose** the Town and the individual Board members to **federal civil rights liability**.

Call to Action

We urge all elected officials to:

- Demand an **immediate pause** on the eminent domain process.
- Insist on **transparency, accountability, and public input**.
- Defend community institutions from **retaliatory land seizures**.
- Say NO to government overreach—and YES to fairness.