



Clean Air Coalition
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local residents harassed by Carver Companies.

*Environmentalists and vocal critics of Carver Companies' business in town
falsely accused of trespassing while identifying plants on a public road.*

Coeymans NY – In June of 2023, Barbara Heinzen, a renown local geographer, and Sara Pruiksmas, a local artist and mother of two, were falsely accused of trespassing onto Carver Companies' property on Bronk Road, Town of Coeymans, NY. Heinzen and Pruiksmas are also members of the Clean Air Coalition, and both have been vocal about Carver's businesses in Coeymans.

Earlier this year, Carver Companies, owned by Carver Laraway, cleared 25 acres of mature forest in this area of Bronk Road which is zoned for residences and agriculture. Residents throughout the town were shocked and alarmed, while neighboring homeowners were never warned the site would be cleared or told why it was needed.

Since 2006, Carver Companies, including the Port of Coeymans and allied businesses, have tripled their footprint along the Hudson River from the original 122-acre Port to over 665 acres, often converting agricultural/residential land to industrial use. Carver Laraway continues to buy Coeymans land and residences near the Hudson River.

The charges against Pruiksmas and Heinzen were based on an unsworn statement by a Carver employee. Another employee took a picture of Heinzen and Pruiksmas allegedly trespassing onto the property while they were identifying plants on the side of a public road. The picture was circulated on the internet after Pruiksmas was served with the charge of trespass, a violation. The picture clearly shows that Pruiksmas and Heinzen never entered Carver's property, but that they were instead walking alongside the public road.

Pruiksmas and Heinzen both share a love of the Hudson River watershed's native plants and set out to document the native species that remain as a hedgerow along Bronk Rd. Within minutes of walking across the street and onto the side of the road, the two women were stopped by a large white Carver Companies truck. The driver, a safety and compliance manager for Carver Companies, immediately took a cell phone picture of the women and warned them they were trespassing. When Heinzen denied that they were on Carver's property, a cordial conversation ensued. The driver agreed that the two women were not trespassing and drove away.

The next morning, Pruikisma received a call from the Coeymans Police stating that she was being summoned for trespassing on the property. “I was in utter disbelief. I actually asked if it was a joke,” said Pruikisma. “The Sargent was aggressive on the phone. I felt attacked and bullied.” Heinzen was later given a similar summons based on a complaint from Carver Companies. “I never would have imagined that a walk along a public road in broad daylight would turn into this,” Pruikisma said.

Police officers will not ordinarily charge someone with a violation, unless the officer personally observed the violation, or the officer has a sworn statement from a witness. The facts alleged to support the charges against Heinzen and Pruikisma were not personally observed by the police officer who signed the charge nor was the charge supported by a sworn statement from any witness. Both women were instructed to appear at the Coeymans Court on July 20. The prosecutor agreed to dismiss the charges against both Heinzen and Pruikisma, which were dismissed on August 3rd.

Heinzen and Pruikisma see the trespassing charges, and release on social media of the photo taken by the Carver Companies employee, as a continuation of intimidation tactics used against residents who have campaigned on local issues, especially during elections for the Coeymans Town Board.

Both women can imagine a future in Coeymans where clean business and a diverse natural world co-exist, but this future cannot even be discussed in a climate of intimidation and fear. As Heinzen said: “Local people will not engage with the issues or speak out if they are afraid of what might happen to them.”

For more information:

- **Carver Companies Bully Neighbors: Two Women Speak Out**
See video: https://youtu.be/R_weevV2Msg
- **Clean Air Coalition website:** <https://cleanairalbanycounty.org/>
- **Petition:** [Wind at the Port of Coeymans: More Harm than Good?](#)
- **Petition:** [NY State: Stop Treating Hudson River Communities like Garbage](#)



Photograph of Sara Pruikisma and Barbara Heinzen on Bronk Rd taken by Carver Companies employee and posted on Facebook. The land clearcut by Carver Companies is behind them.