

**TOWN OF RED HOOK
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Minutes of meeting
August 11, 2010

Members present: Chairwoman Brenda Cagle, Susan Ellis, Molly Williams, Anne Rubin, Denis Collet, Dr. Jane Ferguson

Guests: Councilwoman Micki Strawinski; Gretchen Stevens, Director of the Biodiversity Resources Center of Hudsonia; Andrew Meyer, Hudsonia Biodiversity Educator; Planning Board member Charlie Laing, Tree Commission member Linda Keeling, Tree Commission Chairwoman Nancy Guski and Hudsonia Board member Ann Gabler, all representing the Biodiversity Assessment Training Group.

BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENT TRAINING GROUP REPORT: Chairwoman Brenda Cagle opened the discussion of the evaluation of the Biodiversity Assessment Training Group report at 6 P.M. with introductions of the group members and Gretchen Stevens, the Director from Hudsonia. CAC members Brenda and Anne Rubin also served as members of the Group. Gretchen commented on the extensive work and detail of the report for the Group. She gave notes and suggestions for refining the organization to make the report more “user friendly” to readers unfamiliar with biodiversity work.

Gretchen noted that the mapping should show calcareous wet meadows, and the Group should refer to field notes. Andrew Meyer, Biodiversity Educator who worked with the Group gave comments that it was a good idea to identify buttonbush pools and to consider a Conservation Zone Overlay for Blanding’s turtle habitat. Gretchen suggested that for the idea of overlay zones, one map would be too busy, and that the Group should consider digitally creating a special map for them. Andrew noted that Charlie Laing did separate maps for fragmented forests and buttonbush pools.

Linda Keeling asked how long it would be before the maps/report should be updated and revised. Gretchen replied that undisturbed habitats change very slowly, but that updates should be done for development that impacts them. Charlie Laing noted that he foresaw planning for a 5 year review if the Biodiversity Study covered all the areas of the Town. Brenda Cagle asked if the report could be put on the County Geographic Information System (GIS), and Gretchen replied “Why not.” Charlie Laing noted that the Town is approving the Biodiversity Study as a reference tool. Gretchen cautioned that it should be incorporated in planning procedures to raise questions, but not for jurisdictional procedures. Anne Rubin noted that there is a need to address connectivity of habitats, as engineers will only study a specific site. Linda Keeling asked if the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is integrating biodiversity work into any regulatory program. Gretchen said that it is not, but that Laura Heady of the Hudson River Estuarine Program is taking maps (currently 116,000 acres done by volunteers) that have been finalized and putting them into a corridor data base.

The Group discussed what format to use for comments and corrections for the report. Gretchen Stevens noted that she could send an excel file with all the main questions. She stressed being concise, putting more information in appendices, and making a bulleted list of recommendations at the end of each section, with explanations. Linda Keeling noted that an executive summary of one page or less would be beneficial. Molly Williams offered to edit the report if each study member would forward to her their comments on their section.

Andrew Meyers suggested that the final report be put in the Town Hall, the Town Library and displayed at Hardscrabble Day to demonstrate the usefulness of the project. He also said that the Group should increase visibility of the project by sending thanks to the owners whose land was studied and sending information about the results to those who denied access. Brenda Cagle noted that the Group needs a deadline to get together and asked Andrew if he would send the map quadrants. Brenda set a date of Tuesday, August 24 at 6 P.M. Molly Williams will contact the members with the edited report. Brenda thanked the guests who discussed the Biodiversity Project.

REGULAR CAC MEETING/MINUTES: Brenda Cagle called the CAC meeting to order at 7:45 P.M. There was no July meeting; the minutes of the June meeting were approved with a motion made by Jane Ferguson and seconded by Molly Williams.

CONSERVATION EASEMENT APPLICATION: Peter and Sarah Sweeny have submitted an application to the Town Conservation Easement Program for their property with 20.92 acres of eligible land. CAC members reviewed the criteria for open space values of the property. Based on the determination of the open space values, Jane Ferguson made a motion to recommend that the parcel be included in the Conservation Easement Program. Molly Williams seconded the motion and the CAC approved. Secretary Susan Ellis will write a letter of recommendation based on the CAC findings and forward it to the Town Clerk, Planning Board, Town Attorney, Town Assessor and the applicant. The Planning Board will be reviewing the application on Monday, August 16.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Brenda Cagle announced that the CAC has received thank you notes from Bennet Brooks, the DEC Summer Camp scholarship recipient and Lauren Laibach, the Ruth Oja Scholarship recipient. Brenda reported that the Ruth Oja Scholarship fund has \$1660.02 remaining.

Brenda announced for CAC information that the application to the Planning Board for a helipad has been withdrawn.

10/10/10 – 10% CHALLENGE: Molly Williams reported that the Town Board has passed a resolution to accept a voluntary commitment to reduce greenhouse gasses by 10%. Brenda Cagle noted that Americorps interns will get training at Bard College about the project, and will canvas the Town. They will hand out compact fluorescent light bulbs from Central Hudson and reusable bags. Brenda added that she and the students will speak at the Red Hook Chamber of Commerce breakfast on Thursday, August 19. They have worked with Todd Baright and the IGA to have them do energy audits before the meeting. Also, Doug Strawinski, Harry Colgan and John Kuhn will give students 3 weatherization projects to do on August 20. Molly Williams asked that the interns take good notes.

HARDSCRABBLE DAY: The CAC will have a table with “goody bags.” The CAC received a Clean Air Cool Planet grant for \$1900 for compact fluorescent light bulbs and bumper stickers. There will be a 10/10/10 work party with Bill McKibben of the 350 Organization. Anne Rubin will work on organizing a kids walk for 10/10/10, and the Tree Commission will plant trees.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 P.M.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, September 8, 2010 at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary