

**TOWN OF RED HOOK
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Minutes of meeting
February 9, 2011

Members present: Chairwoman Brenda Cagle, Laurie Husted, Anne Rubin, Dr. Jane Ferguson, Susan Ellis, Zoie Riel, Denis Collet

Guests: Councilwoman Micki Strawinski, Molly Williams, Sarah Imboden, Karen Schneller-McDonald

Chairwoman Brenda Cagle called the meeting to order at 7:10 P.M. *There was no meeting in January 2011 due to weather conditions.* The minutes of the December 8, 2010 meeting were approved with a motion made by Jane Ferguson and seconded by Laurie Husted.

MEMBERSHIP: Brenda Cagle asked those members whose terms expired for 2011 if they wished to be reappointed, and Zoie, Jane, Susan and Anne all agreed. Brenda introduced Sarah Imboden and Karen Schneller-McDonald as guests interested in a membership position. There are two vacancies on the CAC, and both were advised to submit a letter of interest to the Town Board detailing their background and activities of environmental interest. Sarah Imboden has a Masters degree in Public Policy and does free lance writing and web design. Karen Schneller-McDonald has done extensive work on wetlands, participated in the Biodiversity Study Group, and helped with the Vernal Pool Survey. Both can add valuable expertise to the CAC.

Anne Rubin asked if Sarah would be willing to help review and compare the Connecticut Stormwater Design Manual with New York State's Stormwater Regulations, and the parking lot ordinance developed by NEMO in Connecticut. Sarah said that she could help with that.

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES REVIEW: Brenda Cagle outlined a schedule, and asked if CAC members would follow a rotation of reading Planning Board minutes and summarizing any issues or activity of relevance to the CAC. It would require that the member scheduled for the month download and review the Planning Board minutes for the two meetings scheduled for that month and report at the next CAC meeting. Denis Collet will begin for the March meeting.

RADIO FREQUENCY EMISSIONS: In January, the Planning Board reviewed an application for installation of an additional radio transmission antenna on the Town water tower. Clearwire is the 5th company to apply for addition of an antenna. Neighbors are concerned about the potential health effects of the accumulated radio frequency emissions from the tower. The Planning Board hired a radio frequency engineer to comment on the potential impacts of the additional emissions; the engineer concluded that if all the antennae operated at maximum allowance of emissions, the total would still be 1/100 of the emissions allowed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The engineer also did not feel that it is necessary to measure the level of existing emissions. The Planning Board voted to allow Clearwire to send a request to the Town Board to determine if the other companies using the water tower site are complying with FCC regulations. Brenda Cagle reported that she put in a request on the Cornell Cooperative Extension Environmental Program listserv for any information from other Towns that have dealt with the radio frequency emissions issue.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION (DEC) SUMMER CAMP

SCHOLARSHIPS: Brenda Cagle reported that out of five applications, those of Alex Gonella and Eleanor Zelek received the most votes to be awarded the scholarships to the DEC Summer Camp. Brenda noted that Linda Keeling expressed concern that students with disabilities may not feel that they can apply for the scholarships. The CAC agreed that all students should be encouraged to apply, and Brenda will speak to Mary Pat Budd, middle school science teacher, to ask that she be a contact if any student needs assistance with the application. Anne Rubin suggested that a way to do the applications on line be established, so that all are equal.

The VFW has expressed interest in being listed as sponsoring organization for the camp scholarship program. The VFW will now send the checks directly to the DEC camp. Commander Bill Moore will come to the March Town Board meeting to congratulate the scholarship winners. Mothers of applicants suggested that the campers give a presentation about their experience after the camp session.

10% CHALLENGE: Laurie Husted reported that at Bard College, she held a “day of engagement.” She and 12 students went to the senior housing complex to do a light bulb swap to replace incandescents with compact fluorescents. They switched about 10 bulbs per apartment for a total of 309; the bulbs were purchased by Bard College.

Laurie is still waiting for Central Hudson to share data for the 10% Challenge project. Sarah Imboden asked if perhaps a local Central Hudson employee might be willing to volunteer to help with data evaluation. Laurie noted that there is an update for the Green Energy, Green Jobs program, and free energy audits are still available. There are 250 working e-mail names on the e-mail master for red hook challenge.org.

Laurie reported that in May there will be a National Bike to Work Day and she hopes to work on an alternative transportation event. Micki Strawinski noted that there is a “Tour de Red Hook” planned for May 15. The Greenway and Trails Committees are working on the Safe Routes to School Initiative. The CAC congratulated Laurie for all of her work on the 10% Challenge project.

BIODIVERSITY HABITAT MAPPING: Molly Williams divided the information from the Biodiversity Study Group into habitat sections. The Biodiversity Group will meet on Saturday February 12 to edit the report; they will use a standard template for each habitat.

VERNAL POOL STUDY: Neil Curri from Cornell Cooperative Extension Environmental Program GIS Lab gave Brenda Cagle a draft report on the study. She handed it to Charlie Laing of the Planning Board, who also worked on the study. Brenda noted that Michael Klemens, director of the study at Cary Arboretum, needs to verify the data.

Brenda reported that every spring, the Department of Environmental Conservation has an amphibian migration event, which ties into the need to keep the amphibians off the roadways, where many are killed. Laura Heady will send information on the date and details of the event.

ENERGY CONSULTANT THROUGH NEW YORK STATE ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT GRANT (NYSERDA): Denis Collet, Town Board members and CAC members held a series of interviews for the applicants for the position of Energy Manager funded under one of the NYSERDA grants. Duties for the position will be completing inventory on energy use in the

Town, getting data from Central Hudson, working on goals to reduce the Town's carbon footprint, outreach with other CAC's, and development of a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program.

TREE COMMISSION GRANT: Town Tree Commission Chairwoman Nancy Guski asked for a letter or support from the CAC to assist the Commission in qualifying for a grant. The CAC will gladly help.

CENTERS AND GREENSPACES PLAN PROPOSAL: Written comments on the proposal will be accepted until February 18, 2011. Brenda will start a draft of comments and circulate for approval of CAC members. The Town Board is still reviewing the comments from the public hearings, and Planning Consultant Michele Greig will write a response.

CONSERVATION BOARD APPLICATION: The CAC discussed the merits of applying to become a Conservation Board. Denis Collet asked what support the CAC would get for the extra work, i.e. in budget funding and materials. Brenda Cagle will ask the other town CAC's that have become Boards, particularly Pawling, which was the first in Dutchess County. Molly Williams thought that the CAC might have to refocus, and Anne Rubin asked if one of the other Towns could come to speak to the CAC. Brenda Cagle would like to invite one of the Co-chairs of the Rhinebeck CAC to attend the March 9 meeting, and do a conference call with the Pawling CAB Chair.

Karen Schneller-McDonald noted that the level of biological resources that the CAC would cover is not what the Planning Board would get into. For example, planners would look at the basic issues of the stormwater manual, but not necessarily the ecological relationships affected.

WEBSITE: The CAC agreed to discuss revisions after the reorganization of Committees is completed.

RECYCLING: Anne Rubin noted that Consumer Reports has compiled a list of "How to Get Rid of Almost Anything." Micki Strawinski said that more recycling information should be added to the CAC website, and reported that the roadside clean-up will be held on April 30, 2011. Zoie Riel thought that an e-waste collection should be coordinated with the roadside clean-up, and that the CAC should not need budget money to handle it. Zoie added that New York State has passed another law about plastic bags, which includes recycling of many composites. The CAC should consider a new cork board to advertise items to be given away.

Brenda Cagle reported that there is disposal of pharmaceuticals by drop-off in the Red Hook Village water bill box, thanks to efforts of Police Chief Truitt.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 P.M.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, March 9, 2011 at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall

*Agenda includes: Introduction of newly hired Energy Manager Annemarie Hirschberger
Report on Planning Board issues by Denis Collet
Discussion of work to become a Conservation Advisory Board with Guest Lisa Camp, co-chair of Rhinebeck CAC

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary