

**TOWN OF RED HOOK
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Minutes of meeting
March 9, 2011

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

Guests: Councilwoman Micki Strawinski, Town Energy Manager Anne Marie Hirschberger, Zywia Wojnar and James VanNorstrand from the Pace Energy and Climate Center, Sarah Imboden, Ben Hoen and Samala Rubin

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS: Chairwoman Brenda Cagle called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. She introduced Zywia Wojnar and James VanNorstrand from the Pace University Energy and Climate Center, and Anne Marie Hirschberger, newly hired Town Energy Manager under a New York State Energy Research and Development (NYSERDA) grant.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Brenda noted that Anne Marie is scheduled for a meeting with the Village of Tivoli Board on March 16 at 3 P.M., and at 1:30 P.M. on March 16, Laurie Husted will take Anne Marie to meet the School Facilities Director at Red Hook Central School.

Brenda announced that the Village of Red Hook is planning a “Lunch and Learn” event. Those attending will be encouraged to do energy plans using myenergyplan.net. Also suggested will be organizing house parties to try to expand the core group of workers on the 10% Challenge. There are plans for a “Spring Fling” in the Village on March 26, 2011.

10% CHALLENGE: Laurie Husted reported that there have been successes with the program; many village businesses have had energy audits and are working on lighting reduction. Brenda Cagle noted that the Town Highway Superintendent is interested in working on energy efficiency measures.

The 10% Challenge Committee has had no success with response from the fuel oil companies. Laurie also noted that Central Hudson has not broken down electric usage data; James VanNorstrand added that it is a matter of customer privacy. Denis Collet asked if there would be any Public Service Commission (PSC) requirement that Central Hudson make available the information that the CAC needs, which is energy use by rate class, which should avoid the privacy issue. Laurie said that might be another avenue. Anne Rubin asked if there would be an existing model where another area has compiled this information. Community based social pressure could be helpful; Central Hudson has interest in working through Sustainable Hudson Valley. Brenda Cagle noted that at the CAC Roundtable at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Environmental and Energy Program, there was a discussion of energy events and using Northern Dutchess Alliance as a coordinator.

SMART ENERGY TOWNS: Denis Collet reported that Red Hook had applied for a team grant from the Department of Energy, similar to one awarded to the Town of Bedford, but on a smaller scale. There were 3 parts, to create an energy district whereby the Town could bond funding for individual solar installations, a weatherization program and a composting program. Working with

Hudson Valley Clean Energy, the energy group developed an innovative approach to photovoltaic installation where each system would be the same configuration of 6 kW and a fixed cost, in order to simplify the process for NYSERDA approval. The grant was not approved, and Denis was not given feedback to determine what the shortcomings were. Anne Marie Hirschberger asked Denis if he wanted to revisit the grant proposal. Denis said that yes he would, if the Town can find a situation such as partnering. Another piece of the energy puzzle that Denis mentioned is virtual net metering, which needs to be pushed forward so that residents without good solar exposure can buy into solar power from solar farms. He firmly believes that an energy district should be created. John VanNorstrand noted that they have worked on some districts that have been successful.

Brenda Cagle reported that regarding the two NYSERDA grants, the Town Board announced on Tuesday that they had received a signed contract for the solar installation on the Firehouse. Denis noted that he had not calculated an administrative role as part of the grant, considering the installation grant a turn-key operation.

Denis said that the composting project submitted for a NYSERDA grant had good potential, but was not approved. A farmer was interested in having the project on his property and it would have accomplished waste reduction. If the CAC gets a study from Shabazz Jackson, who has done a significant composting project, perhaps it would have enough validity. Zywia Wojnar said that it is necessary to protect proprietary information, but that legally could be done. Denis asked James VanNorstrand if he could advise the CAC how the rankings of the grant bids were scored. James replied that there was an evaluation panel of 3 NYSERDA members and 4 outsiders.

The CAC thanked Anne Marie Hirschberger, Zywia Wojnar and James VanNorstrand for attending to discuss energy and climate change work.

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY MEETING: The minutes of the February 9, 2011 meeting were approved with a motion made by Jane Ferguson and seconded by Zoie Riel.

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES REVIEW: Denis Collet summarized the applications and issues discussed at the one February Planning Board meeting. The application that the CAC considered of relevance was a request by the New Beginnings Assembly of God for a lot line change to increase the size of the building. If the increase required installation of a new septic system, the proposal would require a permit from the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to site the septic system in the wetland buffer. CAC members thought that this application should be followed for comment on the impacts of siting a septic system in a wetland buffer; there was a public hearing at the March 7 Planning Board meeting. (Update: at the March 7 meeting of the Planning Board, the request for the addition was removed, which means that the septic system change is not necessary.)

Susan Ellis will report on the March Planning Board minutes at the next CAC meeting.

RECYCLING: Zoie Riel presented ideas for a revised Recycling Brochure and asked CAC members for other ideas and comments. Additions and changes were suggested. Zoie will make a final draft for comment and then send it to Micki Strawinski for printing. Brenda Cagle will put it on the website.

Police Chief Truitt gave notification that there is no approval yet from the Department of Health for an ongoing collection of pharmaceuticals, but that he plans to do a collection day in April.

Zoie Riel is working on a date for electronic waste collection for the 10% Challenge Program.

AMPHIBIAN BIG NIGHT: Laurie Husted reported that she has about 192 students interested in helping to direct amphibian migrations across roadways safely. She needs CAC members on call to take a group of students for the project. Micki Strawinski said that all participants should have reflective tape for safety on the roadways at night.

EARTH DAY ACTIVITIES: The Town Tree Committee is planning a tree planting on April 30, 2011 from 10 A.M. – 2 P.M. The 10% Challenge Committee will sell compost bins. There will be a Town roadside clean-up. The CAC will work on a recycling promotion.

MEMBERSHIP: Councilman Micki Strawinski reported that new committee members would be appointed at the Town Board meeting on next Wednesday. Sarah Imboden has submitted a letter of interest in becoming a member of the CAC.

CENTERS AND GREENSPACES: The Town Board has been holding public hearings/workshops on the proposed Centers and Greenspaces Plan. Planning Consultant Michele Greig has addressed water resource issues. Sarah Imboden noted that the CAC water related energies seem to be divided, and that members need to choose an issue to focus on.

CAC ROUNDTABLE: Brenda Cagle represented the CAC at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Environmental and Energy Program. Other CAC's were impressed with the energy work being done in Red Hook. Brenda reported that Rhinebeck has purchased its own Geographical Information Software (GIS); she has asked a representative of the Rhinebeck CAC to attend the next Red Hook CAC meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 P.M.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, April 13, 2011 at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary