

Draft

TOWN OF RED HOOK

CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting

November 9, 2011

Members present: Chairwoman Brenda Cagle, Sarah Imboden, Laurie Husted, Denis Collet, Dr. Jane Ferguson, Karen Schneller-McDonald, Susan Ellis Absent: Anne Rubin, Zoie Riel

Guests: Denise Barton, Jeremy Taylor

CALL TO ORDER/QUORUM: Chairwoman Brenda Cagle called the meeting to order at 7:28 P.M. A quorum was present.

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 14, 2011 AND OCTOBER 12, 2011 MEETINGS: Brenda Cagle noted that under the CLIMATE ACTION PLAN REVISITED section on page 3 of the October 12 minutes, the decision was made to include all plastics for recycling, except plastic bags and styrofoam. The September 14 and October 12 meetings were approved with the addition, by a motion made by Jane Ferguson and seconded by Sarah Imboden.

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN UPDATE (CAP): CAC members discussed comments received at the Community Forums held on the CAP. Laurie Husted noted that not all CAC members attended all of the Community Forum events. She asked if the CAC is to consider including all or only some of the comments made at the events. Brenda Cagle and Denis Collet agreed that discussion should be about what comments to include, and what comments not to include.

Karen Schneller-McDonald said that she wanted to make a general comment that the CAP needs to include information about when a resident purchases an energy star product, what will the savings be - which ones will save more money. Applying that to vehicles, she asked for information about how much gas could be saved. She felt that more specifics would engage more residents in the process.

Challenges and Competitions: Brenda Cagle noted that Energy Manager Anne Marie Hirschberger asked specifically if the CAC would come up with ideas for challenges and competitions. Laurie Husted noted that at the High School level there was a Green Team Challenge this year. With the college students, the whole month of October featured different energy challenges each day, with prizes. CAC members discussed how to use such activities to motivate the schools and students to engage in energy saving programs. Sarah Imboden suggested that the CAC think of ways to reward challenges for turning things off. Karen Schneller-McDonald asked what actually is being saved on the energy bill by turning off lights. Sarah Imboden noted that the kill-a-watt meter could tell something about what would be saved, though perhaps not electrical use for lighting. Laurie suggested that the CAC could research some successful programs that a classroom could do. Karen

suggested that CAC could research how much energy the current lighting systems in the classroom use and calculate how much could be saved.

Task Forces: Sarah Imboden said that she reread the Town of Bedford Climate Action Plan (CAP), and noticed that the Town included about ten Task Forces for implementation. She wondered if the CAC would recommend Task Forces and how many to plan. Karen Schneller-McDonald asked if there were job descriptions for volunteers that would work on Task Forces, and how long volunteers would be expected to serve. Laurie Husted replied that the job descriptions should be a part of the CAP and pulled out from there. Brenda Cagle added that Energy Manager Anne Marie Hirschberger has paragraphs under categories such as energy, transportation, waste and sustainability which would be the descriptions to make the action items happen. Sarah Imboden continued that in the Bedford CAP, there are bullet points with general goals, and listing of whether they are short term, medium term or long term goals. Can the CAC set a general goal of the number of Task Forces and take a couple more months to gather the people for them? Brenda replied that some of the areas would have obvious candidates; for example, the obvious candidates for the Transportation category would be the Highway Superintendent, someone from the Trails Committee, and a representative of the School Transportation Fleet.

Brenda Cagle asked for suggestions about how to structure a Task Force; should the CAC start in January 2012 and let the Task Force determine how to structure its work? Laurie Husted suggested that the CAC ask Anne Marie to recommend that the Town start creating a Task Force in January.

EMISSIONS REDUCTION GOAL: Brenda Cagle reiterated that Anne Marie had suggested a goal for emissions reduction of 15% by 2020. CAC members discussed 15% by 2020 or 20% by 2020. Denis supports 20% by 2020. Sarah Imboden said that economics may hold people back. Denis answered that when costs of energy become too high, people will be forced to make decisions to save. Jane Ferguson asked what the CAC would commit the Town to- extra expenses or something unachievable? Denis noted that the CAC does not have the ability to change policy, but its job is to educate people to make the right choices. Denis stressed that he has spoken of the need for baseline information to use for determining results achieved.

Denis Collet, Susan Ellis, Sarah Imboden and Laurie Husted supported the CAC recommending an emissions reduction goal of 20% by 2020. Brenda Cagle and Jane Ferguson disagreed, and Karen Schneller-McDonald said that she was not comfortable with any number. The CAC agreed that Anne Marie would be given the 20% by 2020 emissions reduction goal.

BIODIVERSITY ROUNDTABLE: Karen Schneller-McDonald attended the roundtable and reported that she found it very interesting. She said that the morning session was a presentation/workshop by Eric Eckol on “Water words that work.” The presenter’s company looks at how to compel people to take action on issues by what words you use. The focus was on words that have to do with water. Eric looks at demographics and behavior of segments of the population. Based on that, he looks at how to try to reach people by the words that you use. He said that biodiversity is a word that doesn’t work, as there are many people not familiar with it. First he recommends that you ask people to take a very specific action, then you explain why. In a report,

you put the recommendation first to get people's attention and then say why you are making it. There were examples from real ads and websites that showed how some were way over the public's heads, and others really caught the attention of the public with action. Karen said that it was a challenge to look at the way we communicate programs to the public and how we decide to target an audience. Karen thought that there was a lot of relevance to the CAC's Climate Action Plan work. Website – <http://waterwordsthatwork.com/the-method/words/>

The afternoon session included a showing of the film “Liquidity: the Value of Wetlands,” and a presentation by Dan Shapley on web based journalism and print journalism.

NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION COUNCILS (NYSACC)

ENVIRONMENTAL CONFERENCE: Brenda Cagle reported that she and Susan Ellis attended the NYSACC Conference in Rensselaerville on October 22, 2011. She gave highlights of the various workshops presented:

1. Capitol District Transportation Council: Anne Benware of the CDTC discussed the New Visions Plan which integrates land use and transportation planning with urban policy initiatives to create higher density areas that can be served by transit. They are also working to set up a van pool system. Though the plan applies to an urban setting, Brenda saw similarities to the Town's Centers and Greenspaces Initiative.
2. Climate Action in the City of Kingston: Julie Noble reported on Rich Schiafo's work. Kingston has focused on “green jobs” in their pledge, calling it the “Climate Smart and Green Jobs Community Pledge.” Kingston has created a “Stand Alone Adaptation Plan” as part of the Climate Action Plan, working with the Disaster Preparedness Committee. ** Julie Noble noted that the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is working to make it easier to get data from utilities, as it is a problem for all communities.
3. Michael Gerrard, Director of Climate Change at Columbia Law School provided information on the history of carbon dioxide levels, impacts of current energy proposals, such as the Keystone Pipeline, the status of Carbon Capture Sequestration, and levels of extinction related to climate change and development.
4. Carol Ash, Advisor to the Alliance for New York State Parks spoke of the “Pennies for Parks Program,” which proposes a fee for plastic bags and divides the \$.03 fee per bag among the NYS Parks, local government and industry.
5. Mark Lowery, Climate Policy Analyst for the Office of Climate Change at DEC spoke about the science of Climate Change and joined a panel with Michael Gerrard and Mary Kadlecek of DEC to discuss preparing for climate change and what municipal governments can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. They gave examples of municipal projects and ordinances.
6. Kristen Marcell of DEC's Hudson River Estuary Program spoke of actions that a community could take at low cost, mentioning the City of New Rochelle's Tree Protection Program, promoting green infrastructure such as Vassar College's rain gardens, joining the “Trees for Tributaries Program,” and enacting regulations such as

Pleasant Valley's for no net loss of run-off in a 10 year storm event.

** Laurie Husted suggested that the Trees for Tribes program could be another challenge.

Susan Ellis added comments on the presentations. She said that though there is still discussion of whether or not there is climate change and justifying the science behind it, it is time to move on and change the focus to taking actions to reduce the impacts on the environment because they are the right thing to do.

1. Other initiatives discussed were Cleaner and Greener Communities and Governor Coumo's \$100 million program for Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiatives, distributed by the Regional Economic Development Council.
2. Regional Sustainability Planning programs to provide the resources for all New York regions to develop comprehensive sustainability were discussed; there is \$9.6 million available for that with one award per region. **Susan noted that the Regional Sustainability Plan Scope goes back to what Denis Collet is speaking about- a baseline assessment of the region. Then Planning will incorporate existing planning work, move to long-term and short-term sustainability, identifying necessary actions, and follow with implementation strategy. A community has to apply as a consortium. Brenda Cagle added that the Town and Village of Red Hook sent their letters of support for the Consortium for the region in which the Town of Greenburgh and Orange County will take the lead.

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES: Brenda Cagle asked if anyone had done the review of the Planning Board minutes. Brenda Cagle said that she had the minutes in the CAC box and noticed that the Anderson Commons project will be coming up again. The engineer for the project sent a letter to the Planning Board stating that the applicants wished to resubmit the project in substantially the same form as when it was conditionally approved in 2006, and substantially amended in 2008. The Village Planning Board sent a letter regarding its intent to reaffirm its negative SEQR declaration. A Town Planning Board response stated that the Town approvals for the project had expired and new submissions for the Town portion of the project must be processed with a new application. The attorney for the Village Planning Board said that the approved site plan for the village portion had not expired. The Village Planning Board tabled its SEQR action until November 9, 2011 and asked the applicant to forward updated SEQR materials. Brenda suggested that the CAC keep track of the project.

FIREHOUSE PHOTOVOLTAIC INSTALLATION: The Red Hook Fire Company received a NYSERDA grant to install solar panels. After an engineer determined that the panels could not be installed on the roof without considerable work on the roof to support them, the Fire Company decided to install 11 poles with mounted panels. The panels will be installed on a portion of Village property that is located within the Town. Planning Consultant Michele Greig suggested that the Fire Company should consult the Town Zoning Enforcement Officer to determine any site plan review requirements. She said that if such a review is needed, the Board has the discretion to waive certain requirements, or determine that the project is limited in scope and that an abbreviated review would be sufficient.

NEW CAC CHAIRMAN: Brenda Cagle has been elected to the Town Board and CAC members congratulated her on her new position. She will leave the Chairmanship of the CAC in January. She said that there has been one person who expressed interest in co-chairmanship and asked members to consider the position.

SCOUT PROJECT: The CAC asked Jeremy Barton what his new scout project would be. He replied that he did not know yet, but was hoping to help rebuild a shed at the Rhinebeck Aerodrome. He was asked if he was trying to work for an environmental badge, and replied that there is not a specific badge for environmental work.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, December 14, 2011 at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary