

Draft

**TOWN OF RED HOOK**  
**CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Minutes of meeting

June 13, 2012

Members present: Chairwoman Laurie Husted, Mike Zelic, Susan Ellis, Sarah Imboden, Denis Collet

Absent: Dr. Jane Ferguson, Karen Schneller-McDonald, Anne Rubin, Zoie Riel

Guests: Councilwoman Brenda Cagle, Ericka Maher and Pat Courtney Strong of CourtneyStongInc, contractors for the Mid-Hudson Energy Smart Communities program of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)

**CALL TO ORDER/QUORUM:** Chairwoman Laurie Husted called the meeting to order at 7:15 P.M. A quorum was present.

**MINUTES OF THE MAY 9, 2012 MEETING:** The minutes of the May 9 meeting were accepted with a motion made by Sarah Imboden and seconded by Mike Zelic. Laurie Husted noted that a reporter from the Poughkeepsie Journal used information from the CAC February 2012 minutes for an article on the “My Thermostat Program.”

**PLANNING BOARD MINUTES REVIEW:** Laurie Husted asked Mike Zelic to report on his review of the Planning Board minutes for the May meetings. Mike reported that the Planning Board continued discussion of Norman Greig’s request for an “airstrip”/“airport” special permit, noting that the Planning Board requires a signed letter of agreement between Norman Greig and the owners of Sky Park as it was accepted by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). At the Public Hearing, residents expressed concerns about conditions to the special permit, including the number of planes allowed to use the site, the hours of use, possible expansion of use and liability.

The Planning Board held a Public Hearing on the special permit and site plan approval request from Bard College for a baseball field. The representatives for the College and engineers addressed questions about lighting, drainage, parking, accessibility, traffic and archaeology.

Mike reported that the Planning Board made a site visit to Teviot to look at the clearing of trees and undergrowth. The Planning Board found that the amount cleared exceeded the original site plan approval. The applicants claimed that they had planted trees and dogwoods as restoration. Mike was asked if the issue arose because the applicants were asking for another permit for clearing trees. He answered that the same applicant has requested approval for tree removal and replacement of an existing house on an adjoining parcel on Woods Road. That seems to be under control. Mike added that they will get special permits for removal of trees and did get a special permit to change the configuration of the house going on the site.

Laurie Husted asked if there is a Town tree law requiring permission before a resident cuts trees. Brenda Cagle and Mike noted that in this case there is a special requirement for approval of any natural disturbance in the 1000 foot buffer from the Hudson River; also there is an easement on the property under discussion. Susan Ellis asked if there were any other sanctions discussed, such as fines, for not following permitting requirements. Mike replied that there was discussion of mitigation in terms of restoring understory vegetation that would provide protection from erosion. Laurie asked if there were Tree Commission regulations. Brenda replied that there is no timber harvesting ordinance.

**WATERSHED AWARENESS MONTH:** Laurie Husted announced that July is Watershed Awareness Month and that thanks to Brenda there would be a rain barrel construction workshop in Red Hook. Brenda said that Cooperative Extension was sponsoring the workshop, but she told them that the Red Hook CAC would be involved. Laurie added that the CAC role would be to spread the word about the event and provide a couple of volunteers for the July 29, 2012 date.

**APPLE BLOSSOM DAY, MAY 12, 2012:** Laurie Husted spoke of the electronics recycled on that day and asked Secretary Susan Ellis if she could attach that information to the minutes so that it would become part of the record. Susan said that it certainly should be possible. Denis Collet asked how CAC records are currently archived. Susan explained some of the State requirements for records retention, and noted that websites and electronic media are a new consideration. Minutes are a permanent record, as are press releases and program documents. Some financial records, agendas, etc. have specific time limits.

Laurie reported that the scavenger hunt was completed by 3 participants, though she thought that many more read it. Sarah Imboden said that now the CAC has a draft and can build on it another year.

7:35 P.M.

**DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (ECAP):** Laurie Husted introduced Erika Maher and Patrice Courtney Strong from Courtney Strong Inc. Erika is working to complete the Town's Environmental Climate Action Plan and brought an updated version of the outline. She proceeded to describe changes that she has made to the outline draft, and comments that she added to answer questions.

*Executive Summary:* One of the first comments was about the Executive Summary and the reason for two sections about "why." Erika explained that the first why is a summary statement of the reason for creation of the report; she chose to add the second section of a "why" breakdown further on to avoid overloading the first description. Erika continued that the second comment on the Executive Summary was about the "Saving Money" section and including cost breakdowns. She thought that the cost breakdown should be included in Chapter 5.

*Introduction:* In the Introduction section, Erika changed some of the wording. There was a comment that the word "anthropogenic" was not reader friendly. Denis Collet noted that he thought using the word anthropogenic was appropriate, because our goal is to raise public consciousness, and it will

explain a word that will become used in news discussions of climate change. Erika also added an “impacts of climate change” bullet to the section.

*Chapter 1- Background:* Erika had been asked to include demographic information about the Town and the Villages of Red Hook and Tivoli. She noted that she had included the number of homes built over 73 years ago, because she considered that information important to addressing energy efficiency in the residential sector. She added that she intended to go back to look at what homes were built within the last 10 or 15 years to see the difference, and include that information. Brenda Cagle submitted a comment requesting inclusion of a community map, which Erika said would go into the appendix. Brenda said that the map that she had submitted has updates, that she was putting it into Excel format and would forward it to Erika.

*Chapter 2- Major Emissions Sources:* Erika changed the wording on the three major emissions sources. For Energy, she wanted to include all usage of electric and heating energy for buildings and infrastructure. She kept the Town Planning and Mobility (Transportation), because while the largest topic within the section is transportation, it is directly affected by Town Planning. She will refer back to the description in Chapter 5, where recommended actions to take will be discussed. Denis Collet asked about what descriptions would follow the headings in the outline format; for instance, would there be discussion of how Town Planning would affect emissions and what would be positive actions. He wanted to understand what narrative would go in this section to be detailed in Chapter 5. Erika replied that Chapter 2 would not be the data breakdown, but the narrative that characterizes what energy consumption in Red Hook is, why it is important and what impact it has on Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GGE). Then moving to the objectives will be what this ECAP will suggest as far as actions to mitigate impacts.

Erika noted a request to consider other forms of transportation, such as air travel. She will mention it as an external source or air emissions, but said that there would be no data back-up. She agreed that even if the report can't quantify the emissions of air travel from local actions, it could build awareness of the impacts of that travel and perhaps lead to further research.

The Solid Waste section no longer includes consumption, as it is too difficult to obtain data. Land Use now includes Food and Agriculture, Forestry Management and Residential Town Yard Maintenance. A section on Community Engagement has been moved to Chapter 7, and Climate Change Preparation has become Chapter 8.

Additional suggestions for the Red Hook Local Sector Breakdown were to include Devereaux as an institutional usage and Agriculture as its own sector. Erika noted that could be done, but that in the six weeks time allotted for her work, she would not have time to research all the data; she suggested that it be included as an action needed to be accomplished.

*Chapter 3 – Emissions Breakdown and analysis:* There were no changes to Chapter 3.

*Chapter 4 – Local Sector Emissions Breakdown and Analysis:* Erika noted that she added Energy Transportation and Waste to the categories of the Table. There was a suggestion of combining tables,

but Erika thought that it would be useful to see baseline table by itself and then combined with the reduction goal levels.

*Chapter 5 – Opportunities for Emissions Reductions:* To answer a question of how methods would be defined, Erika said that they would be synonymous with actions.

Erika asked for alternatives to categorizing methods as short term, midterm and long term, as she considered it overly burdensome. CAC members discussed the issue, but reached no conclusion. Denis Collet suggested division into tactical (short term) and strategic (sustainable long term) actions. Erika liked the breakdown, but thought that it would require blending this chapter with recommended actions.

Laurie Husted said that the CAC needs to keep an eye on what programs Central Hudson offers. Laurie also asked about taking the recommendations from the Climate Action Plan Planning Assistant (CAPPA) from ICLEI. Erika said that she planned to survey CAP's from various cities and identify items that might most be most appropriate for Red Hook. She added that a lot of the local actions will come from identifying who is who in the community and what community resources are here.

*Solar Leasing:* Erika was asked about doing a case study for a resident interested in using solar energy through a lease arrangement and whether this contract could make a recommendation. She answered that as a Mid Hudson Energy Smart Communities Coordinator she could only make a recommendation on how the resident could purchase the system, as NYSERDA does not have any programs for residential leasing at this time. She would advise that the resident take the information on leasing from Hudson Valley Clean Energy, ask for an estimate for the purchase of a solar system from another installer and compare the two, with consideration of the rebates available for the purchase. She felt that a completed project would make a better case study for the ECAP.

Pat Courtney Strong said that what questions about solar leasing could kick off are some community events. She added that she believes that solar leasing is the future; it only began in the last six months and will take hold. She and Erika did a commercial solar lease and would like to do a residential one. There just needs to be education. Denis Collet asked if that meant that solar leasing is proposed to be an option in the ECAP. Erika replied that it would be addressed in the beginning of Chapter 5 as an opportunity for emissions reduction. Denis asked about the resources that would be included – Hudson Solar (formerly Hudson Valley Clean Energy) and had they looked at Astrum? Pat replied that local resources should be acknowledged, but reference should go through the government as an impartial party. Pat continued that it is important to recognize that the industry is in a real flux; there was one model in the ten years that she has been working with energy programs, and now it is all open. She felt that that acknowledgement should be included in the ECAP.

*Chapters 6 and 7- Opportunities to Address Other Environmental Issues and Community Engagement:* Erika had no further comment on these chapters.

*Chapter 8 – Preparation for Climate Change (Adaptation):* Erika noted that addition of this chapter. She did include plans to discuss water issues in this section.

Erika concluded her presentation with a reminder that a lot of the parts of the plan are contingent upon whether or not the data is there, as she did not have time to do further research. Laurie Husted asked if there were any final questions or comments. Denis Collet asked from a standpoint of division of labor and how Erika will proceed, what expectations Erika might have for help from the CAC. Erika replied that she needs a breakdown of everyone who is on the Committee and if there are already subcommittees formed and whom to ask about various questions. Laurie replied that CAC members are listed on the website, and there had been some stakeholders who had been identified, but there has been no action, as the project has had no assignments yet. Denis added that as the ECAP is finalized, it should be possible to gather interest for subcommittees to execute recommended actions. Erika said that then what she would do a general discussion on the CAC and subcommittee roles. What she would appreciate is information on the particular interest or expertise of any CAC member who could answer questions for her. Brenda Cagle noted that in the past, she, Denis and Laurie had been doing the bulk of the work on the project. Denis suggested that if she directed questions to Laurie, Laurie could contact the members who could help.

Erika said that with the CAC's permission she would like to draft a letter of intent for community organizations or businesses to agree to support the ECAP. The CAC thanked Erika and Pat for their work and advice on an ambitious ECAP.

**RECYCLING:** Laurie Husted thanked Sarah Imboden for completing the updated Recycling Brochure.

Brenda Cagle reported that the Town Board has received two bids for garbage pick-up and roll-off hauling at the Recycling Center. They are from Waste Management and Royal/Welsh. Laurie asked about e-waste, and Brenda replied that Royal/Welsh is certified for collection, but she is not sure that Waste Management would do it.

**HYDROFRACKING:** Laurie Husted reported that the CAC is on the Town Board agenda for June 27, 2012 to discuss the issue. Laurie listed three items discussed by the CAC that she wants to ask for legal approval for:

- banning the use of hydrofracking brine (Karen Schneller-McDonald expects to have a proposal done by Monday)
- a moratorium on extraction and support services – the hydrofracking process itself (Laurie shared a copy of the Town of Germantown moratorium)
- a Road Preservation Law requiring bonding for damage to roads by use of large tractor trailers for equipment and materials. The Town of Sharon Springs has passed a law, and is sending a copy to Laurie.

Denis said that he needed to leave. Laurie noted then that the CAC would need to do an e-mail vote regarding the hydrofracking. Denis replied that his vote is for an outright ban, not a moratorium, and asked if there was language for that.

*Denis Collet left at 8:45 P.M.*

Brenda Cagle said that the Town was concerned that an outright ban would be expensive, but Town Attorney Chris Chale has worked with the Towns of Dryden and Middlefield, which have had bans upheld in court. Chris has said that she has language to use and the cost might not be so much. Laurie then noted that Brenda wants the CAC to give its recommendations. The CAC's initial focus was on the ban, but Laurie added that the brine and road damage issues are separate. Brenda said that the discussion of these issues has raised an awareness; Highway Superintendent Theresa Burke investigated the Magic Salt that the Town uses for road deicing and learned that it does not contain any hydrofracking material.

Susan Ellis asked if the CAC was at the point of voting on hydrofracking. Laurie replied that she would gather the pending information and e-mail for voting before June 27. Susan asked about any regulations regarding e-mail voting or the appropriate manner to record e-mail voting, even though the vote is only for recommendations.

**DONATION PROPOSAL FOR FORMER CONSOLIDATED EDISON LAND:** Brenda Cagle reported that the Town has been offered a donation of 5.25 acres of land by Davis Island Corp., the real estate company handling Consolidated Edison lands. It is all DEC and Federal wetlands on Route 9. It is the only parcel left of holdings previously purchased for a proposed power plant. If the Town accepts, the parcel goes off the tax rolls; it currently pays \$1,500/year. Possibly Winnakee Land Trust would be interested. The CAC did not have a quorum to vote, but members did not find any benefits to Town ownership, as it would not work as a park or refuge, and especially if the parcel cannot be developed. Sarah Imboden said that she did not like having it left as a loose end if it could be abandoned.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Laurie Husted announced that there is a county position for a Bike Instructor Task Force, which meets in Poughkeepsie 6-12 times a year. She asked if CAC members knew someone who would be interested.

Brenda Cagle reported that Zoie Riel agreed to become a member of the Regional Sustainability Work Study Group, for a 6 or 7 County Regional Sustainability Plan produced with an \$800,000 grant. The work study groups break down by topic, which coordinate with the ECAP. If anyone else is interested, they meet 3 – 4 times a year in Newburgh or Beacon, and follow up on a website. Each study group has co-chairs. Brenda was still trying to get a farmer.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 P.M.

**NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday, July 11, 2012 at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary