

Draft

TOWN OF RED HOOK
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting

February 13, 2013

Members present: Chairwoman Laurie Husted, Dr. Jane Ferguson, Mike Zelig, Susan Ellis, Anne Rubin, Sarah Imboden, Karen Schneller-McDonald, Ross Gould (7:18 P.M.)

Absent: Denis Collet

CALL TO ORDER/QUORUM: Chairwoman Laurie Husted called the meeting to order at 7:04 P.M. A quorum was present.

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 9, 2013 MEETING: Laurie Husted made a correction under Planning Board Minutes Review on page 1, that the solar array proposal for Bard College is for 300 kilowatts, not megawatts. Ross Gould e-mailed a correction that at the time of the January meeting, he was no longer employed at Environmental Advocates of NY. Sarah Imboden noted that under Planning Board Minutes review, she had not attended the meeting but was reporting information from "The Red Hook Observer." Jane Ferguson made a motion, seconded by Mike Zelig, to approve the January minutes as amended.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Laurie Husted made the following announcements:

Dutchess County Environmental Management Council (EMC) will hold the annual Environmental Roundtable for CAC's on Wednesday, February 27 at 7 P.M. Laurie felt that it would be important to have CAC representation, but added that the following meeting on the same date is also important for CAC members to attend.

Red Hook Town Board meeting at Tivoli Village Hall will be held on Wednesday, February 27 at 7:30 P.M. At 8:30 P.M., County Legislator Ben Traudt will give a presentation on the Dutchess County Solid Waste Management Plan. Laurie asked CAC members to consider which meeting they might attend.

New York State Association of Conservation Councils (NYSACC) membership is \$75.00, which Laurie will send in, leaving \$175.00 in the CAC budget.

Appointments: The Town Board made official Committee appointments on Tuesday, February 12. Zoie Riel had sent a letter of resignation from the CAC; Ross Gould was appointed new CAC member in her place. Other CAC members had their 2 year terms renewed. Laurie noted that the Town Board did consider attendance records and she explained to them that there were other meetings and work done outside the monthly meeting. Susan Ellis noted that she had given credit for

attendance at other special meetings, and asked Laurie if she wanted to add Subcommittee meeting attendance. Laurie said that it would be appropriate for Subcommittees to keep track of their meetings so that they could be added at the end of the year.

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES REVIEW: Mike Zelig reported that he attended the February 4 meeting of the Planning Board. He noted that the Planning Board seems favorable toward the Bard College solar array proposal.

The Anderson Commons proposal for 51 units partly in the Town and partly in the Village has been brought back before the Planning Board and generated a lot of discussion. The applicants are requesting higher density than the Town allows, and asking the Town to accept the Village density standards. However, that is not allowed, because there needs to be a joint agreement that is hard to get. Planning Consultant Michele Greig suggested that they look at multifamily density calculations, and rearranging some of the premium lots. Mike noted that the issues were mostly about density and not water. The project will be on Village water, but have a common septic system.

The Hoffman Residential Development on Old Farm Road presented a preliminary site plan. The proposal is a mix of cottages and multifamily residences totaling 96 units on 50 acres. Mike said that it seemed to be well thought out with pedestrian walkways and a large green area. There is also a community sewage disposal. Laurie Husted questioned if it would be too early to ask about transportation issues, how people would get out onto the road. She is thinking about the next part of Red Hook's transportation plan recommendations, which will be about pedestrian and bicycling accommodations. Mike asked if the CAC would get a copy of the proposed plan. Laurie replied that the CAC does not generally receive plan copies unless it has been asked to review one.

Ross Gould joined the meeting and was welcomed as a new member of the CAC.

Jane Ferguson noted that the density seemed to fit the Master Plan designation for the area. Anne Rubin asked Mike whether or not there was any mention of making the roads narrower to follow conservation subdivision design and low impact development to reduce impervious surfaces, and thereby reduce run off. Mike said that there was something about lot coverage. Karen Schneller-McDonald said that is not conservation subdivision design, which is a whole process of evaluating a site plan and subdivision where what is on the land is considered first and then what is going to be changed is assessed.

Laurie suggested asking the Planning Board about what they are considering, to determine what comments the CAC would prepare. Karen said the problem is that the CAC needs the plans to evaluate considerations. Laurie said that she would ask for a copy of the plans. Ross Gould noted that the CAC could look at anything that is filed publicly in the Town Hall. Laurie felt that the CAC needs to get a start on determining any environmental issues before the plan is set. Karen said that she would have a lot of questions about the water and wetlands. She noted that State Wetlands Maps are generally incomplete, as are U.S. Fish and Wildlife Wetlands Maps. She would feel that a wetlands delineation requirement should be part of the plan. Laurie asked if at the end of the meeting the CAC could put together questions about these issues, and asked Karen to write a letter for her to

submit to the Planning Board detailing the issues that the CAC would like to see addressed. Karen said that she would include wetlands, soils, impervious surfaces and conservation subdivision design; Anne Rubin suggested adding biodiversity. There was added discussion about appropriate ways for the CAC to determine issues of environmental concern on these larger subdivision proposals, to see that input could be made early in the planning process to assure that the best environmental outcome could be achieved.

TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE: Laurie Husted reported that at the last meeting of the Transportation Subcommittee, they talked about 3 priority areas to plan pedestrian and bicycle connections. Karen Scheller-McDonald asked if the Trails Plan created years ago would be of use. Susan Ellis added that the plan done for the Trails Committee included 5 different routes through the Town having a priority based on potential use and feasibility. She noted that there were issues of getting landowner right-of-way permission and liability, as well as funding. Laurie thought that the County Transportation Committee should know about it, and she would find the map and send it to them.

Laurie said that presently there are no other members on the Transportation Subcommittee. Sarah Imboden offered that her husband would be a member, but not a chair of the Subcommittee.

Laurie said that she would like to send around to CAC members for comment the County Bicycle/Pedestrian document. CAC members discussed bicycle/pedestrian issues in the Town and Laurie noted that the CAC needs to make suggestions to the County about how to address the issues. She will send it first to Ross Gould and asked that it be passed from member to member.

WATER SUBCOMMITTEE: Karen Schneller-McDonald reported that several funding opportunities were looked at, but some didn't seem to fit, and the only one remaining is a GREENWAY grant. She considered that it is backwards to wait for a grant to apply for; she proposed that the Subcommittee agree on a project and then seek funding. She and Anne Rubin met and discussed as a first project to produce a brochure about water resources in the Town and how to take care of drainage and water resources in your own backyard. She showed some examples from other areas. Karen spoke with Sheila Buff of Milan who has been trying to put together a Northern Dutchess County watershed group for awhile; Sheila suggested that the Subcommittee put on a map all of the public access points to water resources in the Town. Karen added that combining a short video would be another project that might require some funding, but possibly could use local students and resources.

Anne Rubin noted that having worked on water resources proposals, she had found that she met the same stumbling blocks – lack of community involvement, lack of community support, lack of interest and lack of funding. She wants to find a new approach. She proposed a Water Resources Protection and Environmental Marketing program through the Red Hook Central School District. The project would involve the school community in an awareness raising campaign about water resources protection. Anne and Karen thought that it would be most appropriate for fifth and sixth grade students at the school. Those who participate would be asked to create an original poem, song or

drawing that expresses what water means to them. Anne wants to bring out the emotional connection to the resource. Karen said that she had seen the project as something that would be good on the website, and perhaps a page in the brochure.

Laurie Husted said that the discussion is a big shift to outreach from former proposals of public policy. Anne replied that last summer she and Councilwoman Brenda Cagle had worked to get a grant done for the Village of Red Hook and the Town to prepare an Intermunicipal Aquifer Protection Overlay, but the Town did not move forward with it. Karen said that she would like to see the Water Subcommittee have several projects prepared for water resources protection, so that when funding opportunities come up they are ready to go. Laurie asked if there was an Aquifer Ordinance prepared. Anne said that one was discussed in 2008 with Brenda Cagle and Hydrologist Russell Urban-Mead. Russell was prepared to adapt one that he did for the Town of Amenia to Red Hook. Russell would have prepared a proposal, but there was no funding and no further action.

Anne said that there really needs to be a way to engage the community in the process of water resources protection. Karen suggested that to be able to do that would take something similar to the grant that the Town of Gardiner is using for 5 public outreach meetings to get information and build support for a Water Resources Ordinance. Jane Ferguson said it seems that the ultimate goal is to get a Water Resources Protection Overlay, but there has to be groundwork to get people interested. Karen agreed, and added that at the last Gardiner meeting, there were people opposed to water resources regulation, and that was important because the issues need to be talked about to address the reasons. Laurie said that she saw the value of both awareness and regulatory approaches, and asked what other members thought. Karen said that the proposals need to be written down, with a determination of the purpose of each.

Susan Ellis agreed with the need to engage the community in the process of watershed protection, and suggested that the brochure address questions about whether or not a resident has problems with flooding, or a failing septic system in the neighborhood. If the answers are yes, then consider why it is important to protect water resources, and what you could do in your own backyard to avoid negative impacts. This could open a dialogue with homeowners. Karen agreed, but said that public outreach and regulations have to be worked on progressively. Karen added that she would use this input to write up some proposals. Susan continued that developing a positive response from the community would make it easier to propose watershed protection programs. Anne Rubin agreed, saying that she really wants to provide information in an attractive and easy to understand format, so that the community will respond, which is what marketing does. Mike Zelig said that then the outreach should emphasize the values of protecting the resources of the water, which is going to be the intent of any proposed action. Sarah Imboden noted that there are several parts to the proposed approaches and suggested that starting a document as a campaign that outlines several main goals and defines ways to achieve them. In that way the Water Subcommittee will be prepared for grant opportunities.

Laurie Husted and Karen Schneller-McDonald had to leave the meeting at 8:02 P.M.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Sarah Imboden announced that the Town Board is asking the CAC to send a representative to the Intermunicipal Task Force, which meets on Friday mornings. Anne Rubin offered to be the CAC member.

WASTE SUBCOMMITTEE – RED HOOK RECYCLES: Sarah Imboden reported on activity of Red Hook Recycles. She encouraged CAC members to attend the February 27, 2013 Town Board meeting in Tivoli announced by Laurie Husted. The presentation of the Dutchess County Solid Waste Management Plan will be at 8:30 P.M. by County Legislator Ben Traudt who will give a short presentation and answer questions from the public. Sarah suggested that members could come just for that part of the meeting. Sarah noted that the document is very long, and though she has gone through it, did not feel that she could condense it without more time. Sarah said that in the next week she would try to make a short summary or red flag items that the CAC might have questions about. Sarah also expects the Subcommittee members to attend. Ross Gould asked if they were talking about any waste to energy facilities; Sarah said that she didn't know. Anne Rubin added that she had some items that should be addressed – the proper disposal of small batteries such as for cameras, compact fluorescent bulbs and lighting, and pharmaceuticals. Sarah noted that there is a 60 day comment period on the Plan ending on the 15th of March.

C2B Technologies: Sarah reported that there is a biotechnology group called C2B Technologies that was formed by a biochemist, farmer and engineer. Their main target is large commercial operations like supermarkets, and what they do is consult with them to make a plan for how they can handle waste foods in a way that can produce energy rather than just landfill. They are designing something for Bard College and are interested in working out an intermunicipal collaboration between the Village of Tivoli and the Town. C2B Technologies is making a proposal to do a study, and if the Town and Villages will agree to fund the study, they will look at all aspects of recycling, composting, handling brush piles and develop a plan to show how each might be handled for the best environmental benefit. She said that it is in a very preliminary stage but has potential for innovative solutions.

Sarah announced that Laurie Husted had asked the Waste Subcommittee to address a gap in the Greenhouse Gas Inventory for agriculture. The Subcommittee will partner with a professor at Bard College who teaches a class on how to measure Greenhouse Gas emissions. Sarah will go to the class and have students work on the information for the Town.

Susan Ellis asked for the list of members of Red Hook Recycles, and noted that record should be kept of meeting times, so that Subcommittee work receives credit. Sarah replied that she is working with Kathy O'Connor, Jeff Urbin and Zoie Riel.

ENVIRONMENTAL ROUNDTABLE FOR CAC'S: Susan Ellis noted that Laurie had asked CAC members to also consider who might go the Environmental Roundtable for CAC's that she announced will also be on February 27, 2013. Sarah asked how it would benefit Red Hook if we had no regular representative to the Environmental Management Council. Susan explained that Roundtables are really for CAC's to get together and do workshops to discuss their projects, what has

worked and not worked, so that CAC's get the benefit of networking. She said that she used to attend as representative, and would consider going if another member could.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 P.M.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, March 13, 2013 at 7 P.M. at Town Hall

Respectfully Submitted

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary