

Draft

**TOWN OF RED HOOK
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Minutes of meeting
August 14, 2013

Members present: Chairwoman Laurie Husted, Susan Ellis, Mike Zelig, Anne Rubin; Dr. Jane Ferguson, Sarah Imboden Absent: Karen Schneller-McDonald, Denis Collet, Ross Gould (at a Trails Grant training session)

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

MINUTES OF THE CAC JULY 10, 2013 MEETING: The minutes July 10 were approved with a motion made by Sarah Imboden and seconded by Jane Ferguson.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Laurie Husted announced that there are two upcoming events for the CAC to consider. The first is Hardscrabble Day, to be held on September 21, 2013. She noted that she will return to it later in the meeting for the CAC to decide what activities it might participate in.

The second event is a notice from the Dutchess County Environmental Management Council that there will be a Managing Woodlands Workshop presented on October 12, 2103, from 8:30 A.M. To 2 P.M. She thought that CAC members might have an interest. Anne Rubin asked if the Tree Commission or Trails Committee are aware of it. Laurie said that she would forward the information.

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES REVIEW: Mike Zelig reported that on July 15, 2013 most of the meeting was about fences and Certificates of Appropriateness required under Hamlet District zoning. There was also discussion of a minor subdivision application for the Brook Meadow / Steiner Farm. The application is for a 4 acre lot to be subdivided from a 90 acre parcel. The discussion concerned a vegetative buffer plan; Mike noted that owner did not want to restrict the view of the agricultural land. The August 5, 2013 meeting continued the discussion.

Plumbing Supply store application for the former NAPA store owned by Lewis Ruge. The proposal for the plumbing supply store was discussed under the Traditional Neighborhood Development – Commercial Center (TND-CC) zoning regulations. The sketch plan was submitted. Discussion involved issues of parking under the TND-CC,

which encourages buildings to be located close to the highway, with parking behind or along side. Currently there is a large parking area in front.

Laurie Husted noted that at the time of a change of use proposal, it would be appropriate to request consideration of comments on paving and other best practices for treatment of run-off. Anne Rubin added consideration of Low Impact Development (LID). Mike said that the goal of the TND-CC requirements is to get the businesses closer to the road, and the parking away from the road. Sarah Imboden said that the building is already far off the road and it could be impractical to tear down the building and jackhammer the pavement. Anne Rubin added that there is parking behind, nearly as much as in front. Sarah continued that then it would be feasible to remove the pavement in front; Anne agreed and that LID landscaping could be added. Laurie thanked Mike for the report and asked if he would like to pass on the review responsibility to another CAC member; Mike said that he is willing to continue.

TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE:

TEPS Grant: Laurie Husted reported that Ross Gould was absent to attend a training session for a TEPS Grant with Councilwoman Brenda Cagle. They will be working on a grant for trails and sidewalks. Laurie said that she thought that the grant proposal would be for the sidewalk to connect the Town Hall to Hannaford's Supermarket. Anne Rubin said that she understood that there were actually two separate grant proposals, one would be connecting all of Linden Avenue from the Village to Mill Road School, and the other the sidewalk grant. Anne described the Linden Avenue proposal as a means to allow students to bike to Mill Road School, and would be accomplished by widening the pavement for a bikeway / walkway. Laurie added that what put aside that proposal was a problem with the bridge crossing the Sawkill Creek, so that focus was redirected to other grant proposals. Laurie continued that the Transportation Subcommittee has asked the Department of Transportation (DOT) to plan for accommodating bicycle / pedestrian traffic when the bridge upgrade is done. Sarah Imboden suggested that the various committees working on the grants filter everything with trails through the Transportation Subcommittee, as there needs to be one central place for storing the grant information. Laurie agreed, though it filtered out okay this period to plan to work on the sidewalk grant.

Village to Village Trail: Laurie added that Rich Schiafo has been working on the Village to Village Trail for the last few weeks under the auspices of the Town Trails and GREENWAY Committee. She has been more involved with it, as Bard College is contributing to the section through the College to Tivoli with a modest grant. It includes grading and surfacing with item 4 gravel. "Share the Road" stencils were not included in this grant, but they should be reconsidered. There was discussion of safety concerns, especially having children ride in the roads, even if it is supposed to be shared. Sarah

added a suggestion of putting together an educational packet explaining the “share the road” concept and the rights and responsibilities of drivers, bikers and pedestrians. Laurie noted that she would like the CAC to consider helping with that, rather than putting the responsibility on the Transportation Subcommittee or the Trails Committee. If the grants that are proposed are awarded, there might be some money that can be put towards education.

Crosswalks: Laurie continued that along with the trails and bicycling projects, she would like the CAC to have a conversation about other transportation issues, such as stopping for pedestrian crosswalks, which is State law now, but not well understood by drivers. Anne said that in personal experience, there is lack of observation of the crosswalks. Laurie suggested that it would be an idea for public outreach at Hardscrabble Day. Anne asked if it might make sense to contact other CAC's to make it a larger effort and build more momentum.

Laurie noted that a nice opportunity for regional or national action on transportation would be in May, which is “Bike to Work Month.” The CAC could keep that in mind and make plans for Apple Blossom Festival, Tour de Red Hook and local activities in May. Anne asked if any meeting of all the CAC's is upcoming; Susan Ellis said that the Dutchess County EMC holds a CAC Roundtable, usually in February. Anne suggested if the idea was presented then, there would be time to be prepared for May events. Laurie said that she will look for a CAC member to help with this, and that other transportation events might help. She noted that the Dutchess County Bicycle / Pedestrian Task Force meets monthly to make plans for the County, which is another chance to put something in a plan.

Anne Rubin would like to see more encouragement and connection for students to bike to Mill Road School. Sarah Imboden expressed concern for the safety of younger students; Anne offered the suggestion that a program be considered to organize groups of the older elementary students, perhaps with an accompanying parent. Mike Zelig noted that it would be nice if a way could be found to connect through the Recreational Park to Mill Road.

WATER RESOURCES PROTECTION: Laurie Husted brought up a question of what Karen Schneller-McDonald's specific recommendations were at the last CAC meeting. She and Anne had hoped that Karen would be present to clarify them. Anne noted that she had a discussion with Karen, and Karen had said that she just presented questions to the group that she wanted the CAC to answer to determine the direction of actions on Water Resources Protection. Laurie would like a member of the Water Subcommittee to present specific proposals.

Sarah Imboden said that CAC members are interested in working on an Aquifer Protection Ordinance, but asked what specific steps are needed to put one before the Town Board, or is it a matter of funding? Anne noted that it really requires a coordination between the Village and Town, which hasn't happened. Sarah suggested that the CAC should speak with Brenda Cagle to find out what the Town Board would want from the CAC to propose the Ordinance, noting that it is coming to budget season, and perhaps it could be built into the budget.

Anne explained what Russell Urban-Mead had proposed for preparation of an Aquifer Overlay Ordinance. Susan Ellis noted that the CAC had a lengthy discussion of the Code and Ordinance Worksheet and asked if there would be a point to completing it to give impetus to proposing the ordinance. Anne replied that Karen and she felt that the Worksheet was not quite framed to generate the necessary answers. Anne added that Karen seemed clear that the Planning and legal point of view would not necessarily be the Water Resources Protection view, but Anne did not want to speak for Karen. Anne said that Russell Urban-Mead has clearly stated in his report that what is in the Town Code now is so inadequate that it is urgent that the Town at least get an Aquifer Overlay Ordinance, because the Town Centers and Greenspaces Plan will bring much new development that will be concentrated right over the aquifer, which already has compromised recharge abilities due to impervious surface cover.

Laurie Husted asked Anne to find out when the next cycle of grant deadlines would be. Sarah suggested that then the CAC could put together a proposal and ask the Town Board if we could apply for the grant. Susan Ellis added that the money is not only the issue; there is an understandable resistance to ever increasing regulations. Laurie asked that since the Village is the epicenter of the aquifer, why aren't they just going forward with aquifer protection and leading the grant applications? Anne replied that they wanted to partner with the Town and share the expense, and also the maps of the aquifer that Russell Urban-Mead produced and his report encompass the Town well fields. Laurie then asked if the request should come from the Village. Jane Ferguson said that the Town Board would need revisit the proposal one way or the other. Sarah suggested that the CAC ask what concerns the Town Board would have about the regulations, i.e. having a whole other layer to the planning process, or needing to call in a professional planner more often. Anne replied that part of her presentation in 2008 showed how the Town of Amenia Aquifer Protection Ordinance works. Sarah added that going to the Village is a good option, and there may be other grant opportunities if the CAC had someone who would work on them. Anne noted that Jenny Stokum, a grant writer working at Camp Ramapo was willing to help the CAC for free.

(from the end of the meeting) Anne also found a phone number for Joe Shaw, Grants Manager in Albany. Laurie asked her to find out when the next grant cycle is. Sarah

said that then the CAC has to find out who to contact, the Village or the Town Board. Anne asked what support the CAC could give to it. Sarah said that if the grant project seems feasible, then the CAC should focus in it. Anne Rubin said that it would be really important to work on community support. Sarah added that then the CAC needs a fact sheet with talking points and verifiable information. Sarah asked if for the next meeting Anne could bring a fact sheet with what you need to know about water protection and what are the best practices. Laurie said that the suggestions give the CAC some focus to move forward with.

SEPTIC MAINTENANCE: Mike Zelig informed Laurie that he had acquired another septic maintenance folder. Laurie noted that there are some Towns which have a package to give to new homeowners that notes the last date of septic clean out and when it would be due for one. Mike added that there is still a synopsis of how the system works and how to keep it functioning properly. Anne said that she too has a small trifold of information that she has put out. Laurie suggested having that available for Hardscrabble Day.

WASTE SUBCOMMITTEE: Sarah Imboden reported that the Bard College graduate class working on Greenhouse Gas Emissions finally sent their report on their project to determine the calculations for agricultural emissions in Red Hook. The project was to help fill a gap in the information in the Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory done for the CAC by intern Lindsay Chapman. The students in the graduate program of Bard College's Climate and Environmental Policy Program only had until May to complete the project. Sarah noted that the report is incomplete, as it turned out to become very difficult to get the information from Cornell Cooperative Extension. Sarah felt that she needed a more thorough review to see if the report recommended where to go from it and if they addressed what weaknesses might be in the data. There were good references and an appendix, so it is a start. She could e-mail the complete package to any interested member and the CAC could look at it for future use.

Love 'em and Leave 'em: Sarah reported that the Waste Subcommittee met in July. They discussed trying to do a “Love 'em and Leave 'em” campaign this Fall to encourage residents to compost on site or mulch their leaves. The reaction of Subcommittee members was mixed. Currently Red Hook Village and Tivoli residents have free leaf and brush pick up; the leaves are sent to a farm for composting, and the Village pays very little. Laurie Husted asked if any of the Subcommittee had come to the meeting with information about what other communities are doing with this idea; Sarah said no. Laurie and Anne Rubin noted their difficulties with large amounts of leaves, and the senselessness of bagging them. Sarah added that since the Subcommittee reaction was negative, she did not pursue it, but she has found information on the Village of Irvington which has a program and a large amount of information on their website. She will look

at it again. Anne asked about how to use the leaves; Sarah said that she thinks that the farmer receiving them grinds them up and mixes them with more composting materials. There was discussion of methods of composting. Sarah further discussed the issue of what to do in the Town, where there is no pick-up, and no place for residents to take them. Subcommittee members questioned whether it would be a worth while project if residents already pay for them to be taken away, or they already compost them. Susan Ellis said that she would be curious to know how many residents actually pay to have them taken away, as she has often noticed them putting leaves on vacant property and often in wetlands or drainage areas. Sarah said that she will investigate more on the possibility of developing a strategy to encourage composting and mulching. Anne Rubin asked if it would be possible to have information on that for Hardscrabble Day.

Recycling Center: Sarah said that the Waste Subcommittee continues to talk about the Recycling Center. She noted that David Russo is dropping the proposal for residential e-waste collection, as he is finding it complicated to put together enough volunteers. He is also investigating options for non-profit or for profit options for collecting items such as computers, which he could repair. Zoie Riel was going to find out from Terry Laibach of DEC about what regulations there are for Towns in setting up e-waste collections. Laurie Husted reported that she had been contacted by Barbara Eichin, who is interested in starting a “Repair Cafe” locally.

Extra recycling bins: Laurie reported that Bard College is going to “single stream” recycling and has about 100 extra recycling bins. She is looking for a way to have them used in the community, perhaps with a project at Hardscrabble day. Anne Rubin suggested offering them to places like Dunkin' Donuts. Susan Ellis noted that she had asked about recycling options at Stewarts, but they said that they are not set up to rinse and store them, so the CAC would really have to do a campaign to encourage it. Anne suggested that if the CAC not only offered the bins to businesses, but included a fact sheet explaining that it need not be hard to do, it might help. CAC members discussed whether or not the bins should be used as a Hardscrabble Day project or a separate project.

Laurie suggested using them in a Green Business Certification Program, so that use of them by a business would give points towards a certification. The Environmental and Energy Climate Action Plan adopted for Red Hook had recommended such a program, which has not been implemented as yet. Laurie noted that she would review it, and Sarah said that it needs to include the Villages. Sarah also felt that the Economic Development Committee (EDC) in the Town should be doing some of this. Anne also suggested asking the Red Hook Chamber of Commerce for help, that the businesses might be more responsive to the Chamber and EDC. Green Business Certification requires points for actions in 4 categories; CAC members decided that they would be

reductions of usage in transportation, energy, purchasing and water. Sarah said that the effort should really be in other committees, and Anne suggested that the CAC partner with the Chamber and EDC.

Jane Ferguson left at 8:27 P.M.

There was discussion of what to focus on in the water category. Suggestions included keeping septic pumps, minimizing use of and care in storage of hazardous chemicals, not putting hazardous chemicals down drains, and using LID and best management practices. Sarah noted that many of the building/ property practices would be controlled by landlords, whereas business practices would be handled by business owners.

HARDSCRABBLE DAY – SEPTEMBER 21, 2013: Laurie Husted emphasized that she really wants to move out the bins and proposed working on a sign-up for a Green Business program to get a free bin. CAC members had differences of opinion on other options – scavenger hunt, circulating with CAC information, or location in a better space. Anne Rubin suggested a person who is a professional clown who could ride a bicycle in costume to circulate; he could take a theme, such as septic disposal is not fun when it doesn't work. Anne will find out what the clown would charge. Laurie said to ask how he would approach it. Susan Ellis said that if it is truly educational and makes a point, that fits with the CAC mission.

Laurie asked for any other ideas and Sarah said that she could find out if David Russo could set up something with the “repair cafe” idea. Susan Ellis said that she could see that working better at the Recycling Center, where people are bringing nonworking appliances, but Sarah said that if they are bringing them to the Center, they have likely already replaced them and don't want to repair. Laurie said that of the possibilities the CAC just needs to do something, at least line dry display and how to get a “green” bin.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 P.M., but reopened for further discussion of grants and Aquifer Ordinance work (reported under Water Subcommittee, page 4)

The meeting was re-adjourned at 8:55 P.M.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, September 11 at 7 P.M. At the Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary

