

Draft

**TOWN OF RED HOOK  
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Minutes of meeting  
October 9, 2013

Members present: Chairwoman Laurie Husted, Susan Ellis, Sarah Imboden, Mike Zelig, Dr. Jane Ferguson, Denis Collet (7:15 P.M.), Karen Schneller-McDonald (7:22 P.M.), Anne Rubin (7:23 P.M.) Absent: Ross Gould

Guest: Councilwoman Brenda Cagle

**CALL TO ORDER / QUORUM:** Chairwoman Laurie Husted called the meeting to order at 7:09 P.M. A quorum was present.

**MINUTES OF THE CAC SEPTEMBER 11, 2013 MEETING:** The minutes of the September 11, 2013 meeting were approved with a motion made by Sarah Imboden and seconded by Jane Ferguson.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1. Brenda Cagle announced that there is a vacancy on the Planning Board, in case a CAC member is interested.
2. *Flood plains buy out:* Laurie Husted noted that she had received a copy from Brenda Cagle describing a buy out program for inland flood impacted housing. CAC members discussed the relevance for the Town and felt that there are few instances of more than water damage in basements due to high water tables. Properties along the Hudson River would be covered under Federal programs.
3. *Rotary Citizen of the Year Dinner:* Laurie announced that she had received a notice that the Rotary Club is holding a dinner to honor Ruth Oja as "Citizen of the Year." It will be held on Tuesday, October 22, 2013 at 6:15 P.M. at the Red Hook Firehouse. She gave reservation information for anyone interested.
4. *Bus shelter locations:* Laurie noted that Brenda copied the CAC about a letter to the owners of Dunkin Donuts property soliciting their support for location of a bus shelter on the property at Route 9.

**PLANNING BOARD MINUTES REVIEW:** Mike Zelig said that he didn't get to the meeting on Monday, October 7, but Sarah Imboden said that she did attend, and reported on three items.

*(Denis Collet joined the meeting.)*

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1. *Ground Brewery proposal on Migliorelli farm:* A tenant on the Migliorelli farm has presented a proposal to establish a microbrewery on the farm. It will be a 500 square foot operation in an existing storage barn. The Migliorelli Farm already produces cider on the site. Sarah noted that it would not be a public facility, but for producing and bottling the brewed product to be distributed elsewhere. Brenda Cagle commented that one concern of the Planning Board is the issue of the disposal of waste cleaning water, which might be under State Agriculture and Markets regulation. Sarah said that the proposal plans to use a catchment pond that is already used for the cider production. CAC members discussed what aspects of the waste water disposal would be of concern. Brenda commented that the whole agricultural operation is so much under Ag and Markets regulation. Jane Ferguson and Denis Collet commented on the added leeway that gives farms compared to what is allowed for residential or commercial applications. *(Karen Schneller-McDonald and Anne Rubin joined the meeting.)*

Sarah added that there would be 120 – 300 gallons of waste water per batch, with about 60 batches per year, not a very large amount of waste. Laurie Husted concluded that there did not seem to be a big water quality concern.

2. *Former NAPA Auto Parts store:* A wholesale plumbing, heating and air conditioning business has revised a sketch plan to include construction of a two story building in front of the existing NAPA building, which would house a showroom on the first floor and tenant space on the second floor. The back building would be used for storage. They are willing to work with the Centers and Greenspaces guidelines. They are interested in rain gardens and plan to tear up pavement in the front and place parking on the side and back. Sarah said that as it is still in sketch plan phase the CAC would keep up with the process.

3. *Red Hook Diner application:* Sarah reported that the Planning Board is looking at issues of signage and exterior materials. She noted that it may just be an aesthetic issue, but current zoning requires use of natural materials, and the plan proposes to use an acrylic material that looks like stucco. This may require a variance from the ZBA.

#### **RUTH OJA ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOLARSHIP AND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION SUMMER CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS:**

Laurie Husted noted that she wanted to think ahead about the scholarships for next year, and would like a CAC member to take responsibility for each of them. For the Ruth Oja Scholarship, she said that the work is mostly to promote it, calling the school guidance office to make sure that students are told that it is an option, and looking for other ways to get the word out about it. Anne Rubin volunteered to take on that responsibility. Laurie will give Anne the contacts and details of what should be done.

For the DEC Camp Scholarships, Laurie said that what needs to be done includes asking the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) if they would fund them, getting the check in to DEC for space reservation, getting applications out and promoting the scholarship opportunity, followed by distributing the returned applications to CAC members to vote for recipients. The a presentation of the awards is done by the VFW and CAC at a Town Board meeting. She asked CAC members to think about that. Susan Ellis noted that it would help to have someone who has children in the school system and might have more connections and feedback. Laurie suggested that parts of the application contacts and promotion could be shared, and that she feels that other CAC members need to have familiarity with the process.

**WATER RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT:** Laurie asked Karen Schneller-McDonald and Anne Rubin if they had any updates on water resources protection, and they said that they had not recently met.

**STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW (SEQR):** Anne Rubin reported that she attended a SEQRA Basics training session on the new Environmental Assessment Forms (EAF) held on September 24. The presentation was sponsored by the Dutchess County Planning Federation, and Anne received a lot of information and materials. She added that she thought that it is really important for the CAC to be aware of the SEQR process and understand how it works. At the meeting, presenters gave two different perspectives, one the basic “SEQR Cookbook” giving the step-by-step process, and the other looking at the aspect of underlying issues, including not just the environmental impacts, but economic (fostering small businesses) and quality of life issues. Anne said that it showed the difference between looking at the letter of the law and digging deeper to understand what the issues are in your community and how proposed land uses would impact them. She suggested that the CAC as a committee could make more constructive comments if it did that.

Sarah Imboden agreed and added that it needed to be positive, noting that at the last Town Board meeting when they did all the approvals for purchase of development rights on several farms, she felt that it would have been good if the CAC had representation recognizing it as a great preservation opportunity, whereas she was acting as a reporter. She and Anne agreed that it would be good if the CAC developed more engagement in the process, such as going to hearings, giving recognition when a developer proposes rain gardens or positive environmental enhancements, and asking what incentives or help would assist them.

Anne continued further to say that it brought her to the conclusion that the next logical step would be for the CAC to consider becoming a Conservation Board. She noted that very few in attendance at the SEQR presentation were CAC members; most were

Planning Board members. The presentation really stressed the idea of looking deeper into underlying issues, and if the CAC wants to do that, it should work towards becoming a CAB. Karen Schneller-McDonald asked if water was one of the issues that they suggested looking at. Anne replied not in so many words, but in looking at local community issues, use of resources would be important and water in particular would be a big issue.

Sarah Imboden cautioned that anyone considering becoming a CAB attend a Rhinebeck CAB meeting; she has, and they are dominated by planning issues. A CAB member attends Planning Board, Town Board and ZBA meetings, as well as site plan walks and public hearings. They are involved at a very different level. She asked if the CAC has the interest and time to devote to the process, in addition to all the other projects currently in the works. Anne said that it would be a shift, less about public relations and less about outreach, and more about work in local government to be part of the decision making process.

Karen Schneller-McDonald added that a good in depth review of a project can require extra expertise and expense for a Town, whereas a CAC or CAB can provide low cost or no cost help to the local government. Denis Collet said that the CAC may find that the extra review work required by the CAB role would mean that members would not have time for other projects that the CAC would like to do,. There was further discussion that at least the CAB would be consulted earlier in any planning process, and Laurie Husted thanked Anne for going to the presentation, bringing up the discussion, and making it more than a check list.

Laurie added that she would like to be reminded of the second session, as she would like to attend. Anne has already signed up for the session on October 24, 2013, which will be SEQR: Beyond the Basics, using the new Short EAF form. Brenda Cagle noted that she had thought that before all the new SEQR forms were taking effect it would have been good if a local training session had been arranged for the Town, including the Town Board, Planning, Zoning, CAC members and interested committees. CAC members discussed the idea and thought that perhaps it still could be arranged.

**RECREATION PARK EXTENSION PLAN:** Sarah Imboden asked if the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) had reviewed the plan. Brenda Cagle said that the DEC hadn't been involved because the wetland to be replaced on the site is a Federal Wetland. The permit has not been submitted yet, because the formal map with the mitigation plan needed to be submitted with the permit application to the Army Corps of Engineers. The field biologist Mike Nowicki prepared the mitigation plan for the consulting engineer to prepare the map and submit the plan.

Sarah continued that the CAC needed to know what would have been the proper time to be involved in commenting on a proposal if there is no public hearing. Brenda said that she thought that the CAC had the opportunity to take notice when the Town Board declared itself Lead Agency, as Sarah was there as a reporter. Brenda added that the CAC might want to take a walk to look at the site. Sarah said that the CAC would be interested in commenting on the long term maintenance of the mitigation plan and buffering of the wetlands, and how mowing would be done. Laurie Husted asked if the CAC would plan a date to walk the site. Brenda said that Recreation Park Director John Kuhn would likely take CAC members there and it would be best to see him directly. Sarah said that she could make time to do that.

**WASTE SUBCOMMITTEE:** Laurie asked if there were updates from the Subcommittee. Laurie reported that she had taken outdated recycling bins from Bard College to be stored at the Chamber of Commerce office and distributed. She also gave 20 bins to the Village of Red Hook to give out. Laurie said that there will be more to do with distributing the bins, but they are at a good location at the Chamber office, where Kim Gomez will work on it too. She added that if there is a Green Business Challenge, they could be used.

Sarah Imboden asked if the Green Business Challenge was the conversation that the CAC had about involving the Economic Development Council (EDC) and the Chamber. Brenda Cagle replied that it was, and that the information had been passed on to both of the groups. Laurie said that the CAC had given them something to work with and Brenda suggested that it was time that the CAC give them a plan. Sarah asked what exactly is the Green Business Challenge at this time. Brenda replied that it is a program that Angela Vincent helped write up, that is pretty generic and needs to go to someone who will carry it out. It outlines how a steering committee would begin to set up a Green Business Challenge. Laurie added that it has to have some entity willing to manage it. Laurie and Sarah said that they could help with parts of it, but could not lead it. The CAC discussed whether the Chamber or the EDC would be likely to take it on. Susan Ellis noted that she had not seen much involvement of the EDC with many of the small retail merchants.

**GREEN SPOTS:** Laurie Husted asked CAC members to discuss their ideas for “GREEN Spots,” one to three minute ads to be put on PANDA or other media.

- ◆ *Trees:* Mike Zelig said that he wanted to do a spot on the value of trees, but hadn't completed a draft yet. He mentioned that a lot of visitors come to the Hudson Valley for fall foliage season, that trees add value to a property, slow erosion, and function as a carbon sequester to reduce climate change. Laurie suggested that he might want to break down the points into two sessions to keep within the time limit, and asked what the priorities would be. Anne Rubin added that trees increase economic value of a

property, and Laurie said that a homeowner should have information about whether to keep a tree or plant a tree. Sarah Imboden suggested adding that if you take down a tree, plan to replant. Brenda Cagle said it would be fine to add a pitch for the Village and Town Tree Committee planting days.

- ◆ *Take Back Medications:* Jane Ferguson read her draft to encourage residents to clean out medicine cabinets and take outdated and unused medications to drop-off centers or take-back collection days. CAC members suggested that she include pictures of medicines and a picture of how it gets into the ground table if flushed into the septic system.
- ◆ *Compost:* Brenda Cagle noted that a presentation done by Jeff Urbin has been a great hit.
- ◆ *Fostering biodiversity in your backyard:* Anne Rubin wants to talk about planting local plants, information on gardens for bees and butterflies, and how to transform your yard into a backyard habitat. Laurie Husted asked if she had looked at the National Wildlife Federation Program for Backyard habitat. Anne said that she would add rain gardens if there is time.
- ◆ *Energy:* Laurie Husted asked Denis what he could do on energy. Denis said that he wants to do something about energy conservation, but has to think more about making it relevant to the general homeowner and their budget. Laurie suggested weatherstripping or caulking.
- ◆ *Don't put yard waste in wetland or drainage areas:* Susan Ellis said that she would like to have a "GREEN Spot" that focused on the issue of dumping yard waste (brush, leaves and grass clippings) in wetland and drainage areas. She asked Karen Schneller-McDonald if she would like to help with it. She noted that the people who do it probably don't even think that it is harmful, as yard waste is organic, non-polluting, and will biodegrade. However, the infill can restrict drainage to reduce flood retention capacity, cause increased water tables, and hasten succession of plant growth to the point that the value of the wetland will change. CAC members said that would complete a "spot," and Sarah added that it would be good to have a positive note to show what people should do. Susan added that it would need a program to help people have a place to take the yard waste or show them how to compost on their property.
- ◆ *Recycling plastic bags:* Sarah Imboden said that she had sketched out a text and pictures of items that people might not know that they could recycle, and realized that plastic bags alone would make a 1 – 2 minute presentation. She discussed how and where they could be recycled, and how to prepare them. String and zipper bags must have the string and zippers cut off; food bags should be washed and dry. She noted that the stores that take the plastic bags for recycling have trouble if they are contaminated.
- ◆ *Karen Schneller-McDonald left the meeting at 9 P.M.*
- ◆ *Transportation:* Ross Gould had e-mailed suggestions for workshops on transportation issues and efficiency measures, such as workshops on fuel efficiency,

anti-idling and ride sharing, along with education of pedestrians and bicyclists about State right-of-way laws and crosswalks. Jane Ferguson thought that the LOOP bus should be discussed, with a link to its schedule. CAC members agreed that he should start with the LOOP bus and bicycles as a way of reducing energy and emissions, and work on anti-idling later.

◆ *Energy assessments:* Laurie Husted worked on free home energy assessments, revising a power point from the 10% Challenge and describing the process. She thought that she would reduce the graphics and get more to the point. CAC members suggested emphasizing that it is free for most homeowners, they will save money on energy bills, live more comfortably and add value to the home. Brenda Cagle thought that the CAC still needs to offer help sessions. Laurie said that she would work it into a commercial for a live help session.

Laurie asked CAC members to try to complete a draft in the next two weeks, so that Anne Rubin can arrange a date with her friend who does voice-overs in three weeks.

Brenda Cagle reported that she found two volunteers interested in working with the CAC when she was at Volunteer Night at Bard College.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 P.M.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary