

Draft

**TOWN OF RED HOOK
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Minutes of meeting
November 13, 2013

Members present: Chairwoman Laurie Husted, Susan Ellis, Mike Zelig, Anne Rubin, Sarah Imboden Absent: Denis Collet, Karen Schneller-McDonald, Ross Gould, Dr. Jane Ferguson

Guest: Russell Schneck

CALL TO ORDER / QUORUM: Chairwoman Laurie Husted called the meeting to order at 7:10 P.M. A quorum was present.

INTRODUCTION: Russell Schneck was introduced to the CAC as a resident interested about membership and the work of the CAC. Russell said that he had discussed environmental interests with Councilwoman Brenda Cagle at the Volunteer Fair at Bard College, and learned about the Town's solar array projects and anti-fracking resolution. He has attended a Trails Committee meeting and came to the CAC meeting to see how each might fit his interests and time.

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 9, 2013 MEETING: Mike Zelig and Sarah Imboden noted that they had a correction for the RECREATION PARK EXTENSION section on page 4 of the October minutes. Both had offered to walk the parcel with Recreation Park Director John Kuhn, but Mike was the CAC person ultimately assigned to do so, which he did. CAC members made suggestions for summarizing discussions in the minutes. The October minutes were approved with a motion made by Sarah Imboden and seconded by Mike Zelig.

LETTERS:

- 1) *High Voltage Transmission Line* – Laurie Husted noted receipt of another public notice of the proposal to install a high voltage transmission line under the Hudson River. Anne Rubin asked if a copy is posted on the Town bulletin board and if not, should it be. CAC members agreed; Laurie will copy the notice and put it on the bulletin board.
- 2) *Loop Bus Service* – Laurie Husted was forwarded a letter to the editor of the Poughkeepsie Journal from a LaGrange resident concerned about a need for more service routes for the Loop Bus, looking for municipal leaders to voice concerns.

Laurie will ask Ross Gould to include it as a point in his “GREEN Spot” on transportation. Anne Rubin asked if the Loop Bus was included as part of Red Hook's Energy and Climate Action Plan (ECAP), and suggested that a letter could be written to the Loop Bus agency to note that Red Hook supports increase in service to reduce greenhouse gases. The CAC also discussed a need for bus shelters. 2

TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE: Laurie Husted reported that the Subcommittee is still trying to locate 2 bus shelters that the County is offering for free. The Village of Red Hook did not agree to accept a bus shelter. There has been no response to attempts to get permission from the landowner or manager of Dunkin Donuts. CAC members thought it would be an ideal location and discussed how to be persistent. Laurie is continuing to work on the Annandale Road / Route 9G location through the Department of Transportation (DOT).

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE WORKSHOP: Laurie Husted announced that she is attending the workshop at the Farm and Home Center on Thursday November 14, 2013 at 6:30 P.M., and would ask for a seat for any other CAC members who want to attend.

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW (SEQR) WORKSHOP ON NEW FULL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FORMS (NFEAF) : Anne Rubin reported on the second SEQR workshop sponsored by Dutchess County Planning on October 24, 2013. They compared the new short EAF and new full EAF to the old forms. They recommended workbooks that are now online. DC Planning has forwarded a link to the workbooks, which Anne can forward to CAC members.

Anne noted that SEQR applies to any discretionary action by a Town Board, Village Board or Planning Board regulation. Russell Schneck asked if a bus shelter proposal would fall under SEQR. Anne replied probably so, but could be given a negative declaration. The workshop stated that the purpose of SEQR is to identify and mitigate significant impacts, not only environmental, but economic and community character. The new EAF forms are designed to have communities consider the SEQR process as a complex system and to break it down into smaller parts and consider how they all relate. The new short EAF is more thorough with 37 questions, 30 of which are environmental, and includes questions about the Comprehensive Plan. Anne said that the new full form (NFEAF) has 512 questions. The workshop discussed small, medium and large impacts. The view of the SEQR process now is that if there are many small impacts in a context that creates larger impacts, the community can ask for a deeper review.

Anne said that the new forms were put into use as of October 6, 2013 and added that a municipality can create its own forms, but must include all the information on the new State forms. Anne felt that this would be a window for the CAC to comment if it felt

that there were issues not being addressed in the EAF's because of the way the questions were framed. Laurie Husted asked if that had to be done on a formal permanent basis, or could be on a project by project basis. Anne replied that she would need to ask for an answer to that question, as it would not be very useful to have to create a separate form. Sarah Imboden felt that a developer should be able to come in as an applicant and know what they are going to be asked, not given a new form for each case. Susan Ellis said that it would seem that creating a new form for a specific case could be legally challenged. Anne said that she would call Dutchess County Planning for clarification of the conditions for creating new forms.

With the new short EAF, part 1, it is the applicant's responsibility to gather site specific data from existing sources, and the State SEQR workbooks are links to those sources. Anne noted that there are new concepts in the new short EAF part 1. Questions include kinds of permits needed, acreage, size of project, what land uses are on or near the site, and are they consistent with land use plans, built or natural environments, and is there a conservation easement present. Anne said that she would write all this down; Sarah asked if she would copy the whole CAC for other members' input.

Another new topic addressed on the new short form is Critical Environmental Area (CEA) designations, which the workshop explained. Laurie Husted asked if the Town had done any. Susan Ellis replied that years ago there was a CAC proposal to designate the Sawkill Creek watershed a Critical Environmental Area. At the time there was a Conservation District Zoning for the Creek, which required review for any structure proposed within 100' of the center line of the Creek. The CEA proposal was to extend the review requirement to 200' from the center line of the creek, but there was public opposition and it was never completed.

Additional concepts: substantial increases in traffic level, State energy code requirements, water and waste water facilities, historical and archeological resources, wetlands, water bodies and flood plains, threatened or endangered species, drainage, storm water impoundments, presence of solid or hazardous waste, and status of point source or non-point source pollution, such as lawn chemicals, buried storage tanks, leaking septic .

Laurie thanked Anne for the report and Anne said that she would write up the rest of the information.

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES REVIEW: Mike Zelig reported that the last 3 Planning Board meetings were mostly discussion of the Red Hook Diner project and the Plimpton Hills Corporation proposal for plumbing supply business at the former NAPA Auto Parts property. Their current proposal is construction of a new two story building

for a show room with tenant space on the second floor as discussed at the October CAC meeting. Mike said that the CAC interest would be that they are removing some buried gas tanks and removing some impervious surface. Anne Rubin asked if they were doing any soil testing. Laurie Husted said that they would be required to, and Sarah Imboden added that it is currently being done. Anne asked who is doing the testing and Laurie said that would be a good question to ask. Sarah said she thought that Planning was on top of that issue. Laurie asked if Mike would check about the gas tanks.

Mike added that the Red Hook Diner project is adding a bike rack to replace some parking spaces that they were asked by Planning to remove. Laurie asked if Mike would inquire if the the business owner applicant for the Diner could reach the property owner with the CAC request for a bus shelter location.

ENERGY SUBCOMMITTEE: Laurie Husted reported that she went to a Rotary Club meeting on Tuesday to give a presentation on free energy assessments. A representative from the Rural Ulster Preservation Company (RUPCO), who subcontracts with NYSERDA to implement the program, was supposed to join her, but didn't show. Laurie said that Rotary members were receptive to her talk and she hope that some would follow up with the program. Laurie explained the program, and noted that most CAC members had done the assessment; Anne Rubin added that hers was scheduled for the next day. Laurie asked Anne to take some photos and share her information.

Federal Department of Energy (DOE) Sunshot Initiative Rooftop Solar Challenge II Award :

Laurie Husted announced that it now is official that New York Solar Smart has been awarded a grant from the Federal DOE for the Sunshot initiative. The Town of Red Hook received a press release that it will be one of only 16 State municipalities to participate in the project. The outcome is supposed to be a tool kit for making the process for putting solar energy on your home easier and reducing the cost of installation. Laurie noted that the Town needs to put out its own press release.

WASTE SUBCOMMITTEE: Sarah Imboden reported that the Town Recycling Center will no longer have an e-waste collection trailer, because Royal Carting / Welsh decided that they would charge a fee. Laurie said that any transfer station using the waste hauler is affected. Sarah said that the Recycling Brochure would need to be changed; she has the file and will see about printing some new ones. The County is moving their e-waste to the Ulster County Transfer Station, where it will still be collected for free if it is brought to the office at the Transfer Station. Susan Ellis noted that many residents would find it difficult to make the extra effort. Anne Rubin suggested that she could talk with the Boy Scouts to see if they could put together a project. Laurie said that it would be a good community minded project if they would take it on, and the CAC Recycling

brochure will be updated to note the Ulster Transfer Station option.

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TRAILS: Russell Schneck reported that at the Trails Committee there was discussion of the proposed extension of sidewalk on the east side of Route 9 from the Town Hall to Hannaford Supermarket. The Committee expects a grant to be approved for the project. There are business owners and residents opposed to the sidewalk. One issue is snow removal responsibility. The Town Board plans to go ahead with the sidewalk proposal. Sarah Imboden suggested that the CAC could speak in support at a Town Board meeting or send a letter. Laurie said that she would ask Ross Gould to write a letter of support for it as a goal of the ECAP to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

RECREATION PARK EXTENSION: Mike Zelig reported on his walk with Recreation Park Director John Kuhn at the proposed site for the Recreation Park Extension. Mike said that he likes what they are doing, though he hasn't seen a formal plan. They discussed the maintenance of the mitigation wetland. He said that John's position was that they don't want fences, but an untouched buffer to keep people away from it, about 50 yards. Laurie Husted said the the CAC would like John to develop some best management practices and for Mike to follow up on it.

“GREEN SPOTS:” Laurie Husted asked CAC members to read their “GREEN Spots” for review and comment. Anne Rubin reported that she would be meeting with her voice over person who will read the “GREEN Spots” for the videos that will go to PANDA and other media. Anne said that her subject would be Biodiversity, but was not done yet.

Plastic Bag recycling: Sarah Imboden read her text for plastic bag recycling. She described what kinds of bags can be recycled, and how to do it. There are bins at supermarkets and CVS. She noted that for a complete list, use the link of www.dec.ny.gov, or ask your supermarket. There are penalties for the store that does recycling if improper bags or bags with food residue contaminate the load. When possible, reduce waste by using reusable bags or containers. Anne Rubin suggested that it be clearly stated that bags can only be recycled at stores, not in single stream recycling. Sarah has photos of different bags for a power point.

No Yard Wastes in Wetlands of Drainage Ditches: Susan Ellis read her topic of keeping yard wastes out of wetlands and drainage ditches. She noted that she hoped to reach those residents who know not to dispose of old paint cans, old toys, grocery carts and items that would pollute, but don't think about the impact on wetlands and drainage of dumping grass, leaves and brush in them. Often those wetlands and ditches are not even on the property of the person dumping. Susan noted that the yard wastes infill would limit flood retention, increase water tables and contribute to overgrowth in wetlands

diminishing their function. She suggested planning mowing grass and leaves in a

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manner to mulch them, or finding a corner of the property where they can be composted. Anne Rubin suggested to add that in the Village of Red Hook, yard wastes are picked up for free.

Free Energy Assessments: Laurie Husted did her “Green Spot ” on free energy assessments. To start, a homeowner does an online application and should have information about how much electricity and fuel the home used last year. Then choose a contractor to do the assessment from a list of approved contractors. There is a tip sheet to make the two steps easy. When the application is filed, the contractor will call and set a date to make the comprehensive assessment with a blower door test. The contractor will give a report on the measurement of heat/energy loss and give ideas for ways to make the home more energy efficient. Laurie noted that if the homeowner decides to go forward with any of the energy saving ideas, they can finance them on their Central Hudson utility bill over 5, 10 or 15 years, so that the energy saved will pay the cost.

Russell Schneck suggested that where to do the online application at www.redhookchallenge.org should be up front. Sarah Imboden offered to streamline the power point.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, December 12, 2013 at 7 P.M. At the Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary