

Draft

**TOWN OF RED HOOK
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Minutes of Meeting
March 12, 2014

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

Guest: Councilwoman Brenda Cagle

CALL TO ORDER / QUORUM: Chairwoman Laurie Husted called the meeting to order at 7:15 P.M. A quorum was present. Laurie noted that Sarah Imboden had informed her of a conflict.

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 13, 2014 MEETING: The minutes of the February meeting were approved with a motion made by Mike Zelig and seconded by Denis Collet.

DUTCHESS COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL (EMC) ROUNDTABLE FOR CAC'S: Laurie Husted reported on the EMC Roundtable held on February 26, 2014. Laurie said that the roundtable was a good networking session, though fewer CAC's attended, and only ten of those had reports for the group. There were a variety of projects.

Solarize: Laurie reported that the CAC did get one follow-up call from Dutchess County Planning who is looking at Solarize, a program where a community government puts together a community network of solar power and identifies reputable solar power installers who will give better prices for a network of solar installation. There are communities in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Tompkins County, New York who are doing it. Brenda Cagle added that she took the idea to the Northern Dutchess Alliance where she is a Board member, and they want to hear more about it.

Laurie said that the Dutchess County Planning representative asked if volunteers in the community or the CAC would be a liaison for the program. Laurie replied that would be possible, if the organizing was coordinated for it. She asked Brenda if the Northern Dutchess Alliance might consider that, and perhaps County Planning would do the Request For Proposals (RFP). Brenda noted that the experience of Tompkins County

was presented at an Association of Towns Conference; the County had over 300 respondents and expected to do 100% of installations. Brenda added that it must always be stressed that the contract is between the homeowner and the installer, as government should not indicate preferences.

WHOLE EARTH SUMMIT: Laurie Husted announce that there is a free online conference, the Whole Earth Summit that runs through Thursday. They will be available as a recording for 48 hours afterward.

**GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE BASICS: MANAGING STORMWATER
ONSITE :**

This conference will be held at the Farm and Home Center in Millbrook on Wednesday, March 26 from 7 – 9 P.M. Laurie is signed up to go and will take any other interested member.

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION (DEC) SUMMER
CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS:** Laurie announced that the CAC had chosen Hunter Nelson and Nicholas Urbin as the recipients of the summer camp scholarships. She asked if any CAC member could attend the Town Board meeting on Tuesday, April 8, 2014 at 7:30 P.M. to take photos of the presentation of the awards by VFW Commander William Moore to the students. Susan Ellis said that she would attend the presentation to do so, if she had use of a suitable camera. Brenda Cagle offered to bring hers.

RUTH OJA ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOLARSHIP: Anne Rubin had researched the Community Foundation website for details on the application forms, so that the CAC could promote the opportunity to students. Brenda Cagle said that the Community Foundation always said that they do advertising for all the scholarships and have a firm deadline. Laurie read that the deadline is April 1, and added that more specific advertising should be helpful. Anne said that she could go to the high school on Thursday and speak with the science teachers and the guidance counselors and ask them to direct information to students who might be good candidates for the scholarship. Laurie suggested that first Anne send an e-mail with information and then follow up with posters and a school visit.

GREEN SPOTS: Anne Rubin reported that she has not been able to reach the person she planned to use for recording the voice-overs and asked if anyone knew someone who could record her reader. There were suggestions of local radio stations (such as WKZE), or PANDA television, and Laurie has asked Kathy O'Connor who was at PANDA, and is amenable to the idea. Brenda Cagle suggested that the Town Board videographer, Stephen, might be asked to do recordings before the Town Board meeting if he were booked for a half hour. Brenda will ask Stephen if he will do the recording,

and asked the CAC if it would use the CAC budget to hire him. Anne Rubin will then arrange the date with her voice-over reader. Laurie added that the rest of the GREEN Spots need to be completed.

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES REVIEW: Mike Zelig reported that the continued public hearing for the Preserve at Lakes Kill was adjourned to March 17, 2014. The March 3 meeting had discussion of the renewed application for Anderson Commons. Mike added that the developer is modifying the Storm Water Protection Plan to address the Town Engineer's concerns about drainage. Laurie said that she would like to ask Karen Schneller-McDonald to review the changes. The application will go to public hearing at the March 17 meeting. Brenda noted that at the last Town Board meeting, they formally appointed Sarah Gilbert to the vacancy on the Planning Board, but still need two alternates if CAC members could suggest anyone.

WATER RESOURCES – SALAMANDERS AND “THE BIG NIGHT” : Laurie Husted reported that she had sent out the map showing crossing sites. Mike Zelig volunteered to take Yantz Road. Anne Rubin asked what road she should take; Laurie assigned her Rokeby Road, as there are sightings there. Susan Ellis offered to help Anne if the timing worked. Anne proposed to get a group of middle school students to help. Susan cautioned that safety on Rokeby Road at night is an issue, especially if it is rainy. Laurie added that temperatures need to be mid thirties Fahrenheit or above. She will get all the safety vests that she has, and participants need flashlights and extra batteries. The goal is to take salamanders out of the road and place them on the side in the direction they were going.

WASTE SUBCOMMITTEE: Laurie noted that Julian Lesser who contacted the CAC about a composting business has not made any reply. Anne Rubin asked if Sarah Imboden had spoken about the representative that she met with to discuss recycling with TerraCycle. Anne happened to be present where they were meeting and sat in. There was explanation of the TerraCycle program and suggestions of whether to start with juice boxes or snack bags. Laurie noted that TerraCycle is a company that takes random streams of garbage, as many as 40 different streams to recycle. There has been a start with the swim team, and consideration of the program for the schools. There is a box for selected items, and when it is full, the group prints out a free shipping label and sends it off. Anne added that there was talk of doing something with TerraCycle on Apple Blossom Day. Also considered was taking a survey to learn what items residents are finding they have to place in the trash.

Community Shred Day: Laurie Husted reported that a community member had asked her about holding a day when residents could bring documents to be shredded. Laurie passed it on to Sarah, who is researching the possibility, perhaps looking for assistance

TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE: Laurie Husted asked Brenda Cagle the status of grant possibilities for sidewalks on the east side of Route 9. Brenda replied that none are pending, but she has spoken with the Regional Director of the Department of Transportation (DOT) in Poughkeepsie, who has indicated that she was familiar with the Town's proposal. The Director made some suggestions that would tighten up the proposal and make it likely to be awarded a grant, such as more detailed mapping of what fire hydrants might need to be moved or how curb cuts would be handled. The Town also needs to look at whether or not any of the proposed project is outside of DOT right-of-way and would require easements. Laurie asked what support Brenda has in moving forward the project. Brenda said that there is a lot of interest, but she hopes to form a core group that might include some Trails Committee members and some CAC members. The Grant application for another round of funds from DOT is due by June 11, 2014; the minimum project must be \$250,000 and the Town's share would be 20%.

Brenda noted that there has been some discussion about a proposal for sidewalks on Route 9G, but it would require a partnership to fund the 7.5 million estimated cost, and the DOT grant pool is only 1 million. Laurie said that the Vice President of Bard College has indicated that the college might be able to fund half of the money. Brenda suggested that then there should be a meeting with them and Kevin Cahill. Denis Collett raised that question of what the CAC's role is in the decisions for sidewalks, noting that many other environmental issues need to be addressed. Other CAC members agreed that other priorities are in need, but the support of the Climate Action Plan to improve areas for walking, biking and hiking and connecting communities to reduce vehicle emissions is valid. There was further discussion of the costs and how sidewalks would work and be maintained on a road such as Route 9G, which has large stretches with little population. Brenda reported that there had been other suggestions, such as striping of shoulder areas, and/or reflective painting, which she included in a letter for the Town Board to sign asking the Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council (PDCTC) to consider as a part of the proposed upgrades of safety measures. She added that the letter probably also should go to DOT. She asked that any interested CAC members attend the March 26 workshop from 1 – 4 P.M. at the Town Hall. It will include discussion of the NYSDOT applications for Federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP); specific questions can be asked. Denis concluded that since this project has immediacy, interest and support at this time, it should be addressed, but he defined a distinction between the priorities of the CAC and priorities for individual members.

ENERGY SUBCOMMITTEE: Laurie Husted reported that County Legislator Micki Strawinski had asked for some help answering constituents who had been told to contact their legislator about the changes in their energy costs and their electric bills. She said

that Micki thought that the CAC could reference projects done by the CAC, such as promoting energy audits and refrigerator exchanges, and offer ways for residents to have more control over their electric bill. Laurie asked for discussion of purchasing power from a third party company, which may be “Green” energy, and any other tips that CAC members brought. Susan Ellis noted that third party companies are not guaranteed to save you money; are not regulated by the Public Service Commission (PSC), and promise that at least you will save the cost of the sales taxes, which means that the State and County government will get it from you another way.

Tips to lower energy costs:

- 1) Keep yourself warmer with layers of clothing so you can lower thermostats.
- 2) Practice water conservation to minimize water heating and well pump use.
- 3) Change light bulbs to LED's.
- 4) Find an area in your house to hang clothes to dry during winter and outside in good weather.
- 5) For longer term savings, Denis Collet suggested that investment in improving the envelope of the house or installing more efficient energy sources. He recommended a hybrid hot water heater with a heat pump, which uses 1/3 less electric energy and qualifies for a \$400 rebate from Central Hudson. The units cost about \$1,000 and act as an air conditioner in the summer, as they take moisture out of the air to produce hot water. There is also a tax incentive, which can bring the cost down to about \$300 for a water heater.
- 6) The County might consider establishing a help line as a clearing house for energy information for residents, staffed with volunteers who have expertise in or contacts for energy issues.

Laurie Husted read the draft of Taking Control of Your Electric Bills that she wants to present to Micki Strawinski:

- A) Contacts for help with energy rebates and energy audits
- B) Consider changing your energy supplier.
- C) Look at free or rebated Central Hudson energy saving programs
 - 1) Free audit of energy draw in appliances, outlets and fixtures.
 - 2) Heat pump water heater - \$400 rebate, also tax rebate.
 - 3) Professional sealing of home with electric heat- \$420 rebate.
 - 4) Replacement of old refrigerator with new energy saver - \$50 and free pick-up of old refrigerator.
 - 5) Dennis added air source heat pumps (mini-splits) if applied for by Central Hudson authorized installer - \$400 rebate. He explained that they allow decentralization of heat, so that areas in use can be set to comfortable temperatures, while areas not in use can be set at 50 or 55 degrees.

- 6) A suggestion for making arrangements to hold some Saturday workshops from 10 A.M. - 12 P.M. with representatives from Central Hudson and Rural Ulster Preservation Co. (RUPCO) available to answer residents' questions.

HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION DAYS: Brenda Cagle announced that Hazardous Waste Collection Days have been announced for the County. There will be two held at the Rhinebeck Transfer Station – June 7 and October 2014.

SEPTIC TANK MAINTENANCE: Mike Zelig gave Laurie Husted a septic tank maintenance folder. She will pass it to the Waste Subcommittee to consider a promotion for reaching residents about the importance, perhaps on Apple Blossom Day. Susan Ellis suggested that septic pumping companies be approached to offer a low fee check of a homeowner's system to see if the solids level requires pumping or the lines are clogged, as not all septic systems require pumping on the same schedule, and homeowners tend to put off the maintenance if they feel that they can't afford the pumping fee.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, April 9, 2014 at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary