

**TOWN OF RED HOOK
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Minutes of meeting
December 9, 2015

Members present: Chairwoman Laurie Husted, Susan Ellis, Mike Zelic, Sarah Imboden (6:34), Jen Cavanaugh (6:35), Denis Collet (7:27), Ross Gould (7:27), Jody Jacobs (7:27) Anne Rubin (8:28)

Guests: Saw Kill Community Watershed members Professor Eli Dueker, Karen Schneller-McDonald, Jen Epstein (Riverkeeper), Dan Shapley (Riverkeeper), MaryElisa Blundell (Red Hook Library), Sheila Buff (Town of Milan) Chris Hulbert (Bard Water Quality Lab)

Lori Urbin, village resident interested in CAC position, Michael Callejo, Bard student with Office of Sustainability, Councilwoman Brenda Cagle.

SAW KILL COMMUNITY WATERSHED GROUP: The Watershed Group joined the CAC for a planning session to determine site locations for the expansion of the Bard College Saw Kill Water Monitoring Program to the Saw Kill Community Watershed Group. Eli Dueker began the discussion by asking Susan Ellis why the Saw Kill Water Monitoring project from 1976-1982 was started. Susan replied that waste from Orchard Hill Farms factory processing chickens for pies was discharged into a wetland area that flowed into a tributary of the Saw Kill, causing a pollution problem. The Red Hook Rod and Gun Club pushed the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation to require a tertiary waste water treatment . Bob Becker of the Rod and Gun Club, and Dr. Michael Rosenthal of Bard College Chemistry Department initiated the joint water quality monitoring project, sampling and analyzing on a monthly basis. Information from that project is now being digitized by the Bard College program.

Eli Dueker asked the meeting group to indicate on the Saw Kill Watershed Map any sites which might show potential for watershed contamination and help determine the choice of watershed sampling sites. Karen Schneller-McDonald suggested that golf courses are a potential source of contaminants, and testing sites would be important downstream of large agricultural operations. Susan Ellis noted that when the Red Hook Golf Course expanded its greens to 18 and constructed a group of condominiums, the permitting process addressed many of the concerns, though there has been no monitoring to evaluate the results. Other sites, such as the old Red Hook Airport and the Mill Pond were noted for consideration.

Eli Dueker introduced his team, Chris Hulbert, who is setting up the Bard Water Quality Lab, and Dan Shapley of Riverkeeper. Chris said that he had done a lot of work with Eli's water class. Dan Shapley noted that he has just moved to a location near the Saw Kill Watershed and works on the Enterococcus Modeling Program run by Riverkeeper since 2008. CAC and other Saw Kill Watershed Community group members gave their connection with the group.

Choosing monitoring sites for the Saw Kill Watershed Community Project: Jen Epstein of Riverkeeper began the discussion about choosing sites with a question of which sites that have been previous monitoring sites does the group wish to keep. There are 17 in consideration, but they will probably need to be reduced to about 10 for a workable budget. The group needs to decide which to keep, which new ones will be added and what they will be tested for.

Sheila Buff asked what makes a good sampling site. Jen Epstein replied that with an emphasis on enterococcus levels, any site used by the public as access for recreation is an area of exposure to contamination. In wintertime there is a need for easy and safe accessibility. Jen noted that private sewage treatment plants are not well monitored, as DEC is understaffed to manage them all. Karen Schneller-McDonald said that large residential developments that are primarily all on septic systems may have failing systems that should be looked for. Locating and monitoring below outfalls from stormwater drains or other pipes would be important. Provision to monitor after rain events would be beneficial.

Eli Dueker summarized that first the group needs to set up 10 sites with Riverkeeper. Enterococcus would be the primary test, costing \$100 for 10 sites per month, and requiring analysis in a timely manner. Other samples could be taken and tested later as money allows. If problems do show up, Eli's team will do the research needed to find the source. Some head water sites need to be included for the portion of the watershed outside of Red Hook.

Karen Schneller-McDonald asked if some of the standard chemical protocol tests could be addressed – dissolved oxygen, nitrates, Biological Oxygen Demand, conductivity.

Councilwoman Brenda Cagle joined the meeting.

Chris Hulbert said that the Bard Water Quality Lab could do some of those tests very easily. Eli Dueker said that the next level would be to work with Cary Arboretum for nutrient analysis. Sarah Fernald said that the Hudson River Estuary Research Reserve contracts with Cary Arboretum for 12 site sample testings monthly for nitrates ammonia, sulfates, phosphates and chlorides at a cost of about \$5,000 per year. Eli continued that he felt that it would be helpful to work with Cary arboretum the first year, while the program and the Bard Water Lab are gearing up. He felt that seeking more support for

the Bard environmental programs, and possible training of some interns could make the testing cheaper. There was a question of how long a sampling session would take; Chris Hulbert drove the length of the watershed, and estimated that with 2 dedicated volunteers it would take about 2 hours.

There was further discussion of sampling sites, and Sheila Buff pointed out possibilities for some in the headwaters in Milan. The number of sites was reduced from 17 to 12 or 14, which seemed agreeable. Eli said that he would work with Riverkeeper to refine the locations and test protocols. He envisions the water monitoring program to be a partnership with the CAC, Bard Water Quality Lab and Watershed Community members, with a possibility that some community members would like to learn the lab process.

Eli Dueker thanked the group for all the helpful ideas and said that in the coming months the site decisions and sampling procedures will be set. He asked how the group would propose to publicize the watershed monitoring project and educate residents. Suggestions were to have presentations at the Town and Village Boards, the Red Hook Library and at the schools. MaryElisa Blundell suggested an interactive display at the library.

Eli Dueker and the Saw Kill Watershed Community Group left the meeting.

Denis Collet, Jody Jacobs, Ross Gould, Lori Urbin , and Michael Callejo joined the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER / QUORUM: Chairwoman Laurie Husted called to order the regular portion of the CAC meeting at 7:38 P.M. A quorum was present. Laurie introduced Lori Urbin, a Village resident interested in a position on the CAC and Michael Callejo, a Bard student and resident of the Village, who is working with the Bard Office of Sustainability as an Outreach Coordinator.

Laurie Husted set the focus of the regular meeting to be a review of the CAC activities in 2015 and discussion of what activities the CAC will pursue for 2016.

SOLARIZE ANNOUNCEMENT: Laurie Husted announced that Denis Collet had successfully submitted a grant for the Solarize NY Program. Lori Urbin is the Village of Red Hook representative, Sarah Imboden is the Town Board representative, Laurie Husted is Bard College representative. There will be representatives for the Town of Milan, Town and Village of Rhinebeck, and Hyde Park as the campaign progresses.

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 11, 2015 CAC MEETING: The minutes of the November meeting were approved with a motion made by Mike Zelig and seconded by Jen Cavanaugh.

DEC SUMMER ENVIRONMENTAL CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS: Jen Cavanaugh reported that the VFW hopes to be able to fund a scholarship for 2016, but she has no reply from the Masons. She had contacted various other groups last year, but most are financially challenged. Brenda suggested Tivoli Masons.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE – BIKE RACKS AND BUS SHELTER:

Laurie Husted asked Councilwoman Brenda Cagle if the Town is prepared to site the bike racks, and Brenda said yes. Laurie noted the difficulties in siting a bus shelter in the Village or Town of Red Hook and concluded that she should notify the County that the Town will cancel the order. Brenda and the CAC agreed that Laurie should do that.

CAC FACEBOOK PAGE: The CAC launched a Facebook Page in 2015; Laurie Husted asked if anyone had posted on it. Laurie, Jody Jacobs, Jen Cavanaugh and Sarah Imboden have. Denis Collet asked what could be posted on it. Sarah said that the scope is still being worked on, but that most of the posts should be locally related. Denis added that perhaps someone would have an interest in being a media person in charge of communications. Laurie replied that for the Solarize NY project, Sarah Imboden is Town Board representative and communications person, she is working to set that up.

PLANNING BOARD REVIEWS: Mike Zelig diligently followed Planning Board Reviews and brought information to the attention of the CAC for comments. CAC members felt that discussions of trail considerations and water and waste water management were worth bringing to the table and added positive impact.

ENERGY SUBCOMMITTEE: Denis Collet is preparing information to present to Richard Rang, planner for Hoffman Residential Development, to show the savings potential of offering renewable energy options for the homes that will be built. Denis considered doing an estimate of the carbon footprint for the life of the proposed structures if they use fossil fuels, as that speaks volumes about whether or not the Town is going to continue to allow development that does not use renewable energy. The Town Environmental Climate Action Plan (E-CAP) has a goal for reduction of carbon footprint that the Town will not meet if the three large developments in various stages are allowed to rely on fossil fuel energy. Denis feels that if they can look at savings experienced in other Towns, such as New Paltz and see that the investment in renewable energy has a reasonable return. Denis suggested that the Hoffman residential could have the possibility of including a solar farm that would connect with a Community Distributed Generation (CDV) as the Solarize NY program progresses.

Solar Growth and Solarize projects: Denis Collet presented information on the proposed solar installations in Central Hudson territory that indicated an increase in proposed solar farms and larger commercial installations.

Brenda Cagle left the meeting.

Denis spoke of some of the issues to be addressed to move forward on the Solarize projects, such as finding suitable locations for installations and solar contractors. Laurie Husted said that then Denis is working on this project for 2016 and will ask if he needs help. Laurie noted that there are two parts to the CAC's Solarize programs – one effort to encourage and assist residents with individual solar installations if their site qualifies, and the other to establish a Community Solar Farm for residents to purchase solar energy. Denis has spoken with the Coordinator for Astrum Solar and John Weigman of Solarize NY. Both noted that some municipal Solarize campaigns were not able to meet their goals for solar installations, as they were not prepared to do the neighbor to neighbor contact. Denis added that they are interested on working with Red Hook, because the Town already has evidence of the success of solar installations, and the support and information prepared to move forward. John Weigman suggested having a separate vendor for the commercial and residential sectors. Ross Gould was concerned that the vendors should be local, if possible, and New York State based at the least, as the grant monies are taxpayers' money. Laurie and Denis agreed that would be considered, but felt that having the best qualifications for the projects is most important. The Solarize projects will be a serious time commitment for the CAC.

SAW KILL WATERSHED COMMUNITY GROUP SAMPLING PROJECT: The sampling project will involve CAC support. Jen Cavanaugh said she felt that once the program is set up, the CAC will tell them what the CAC is willing to do and they will tell us what they will provide. Laurie encouraged anyone who wants to be trained to do the sampling to participate.

NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY: Mike Zelig is interested in working on that. The State has set new guidelines for the Inventories, and the Town should look at the resource information that it has to see what needs to be coordinated or updated.

Anne Rubin joined the meeting.

RECYCLING CENTER PERMITS: Jen Cavanaugh asked if the CAC is supposed to help the Transfer Station monitor permits to see that users have purchased stickers for 2016. Laurie Husted suggested that The CAC could offer to help on E-Waste Collection Day on January 16, 2016, as members will be there for the collection, and taking fees for tv's.

E-WASTE COLLECTION DAY JANUARY 16, 2016: The Collection will be held from 8A.M. To 12.30 P.M. Volunteers are needed for time slots. Laurie said that Bard students will come at 10 A.M. for heavy work.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 P.M.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, January 13, 2016 at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary