

Draft

**TOWN OF RED HOOK
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Minutes of meeting
March 9, 2016

Members present: Chairwoman Laurie Husted, Susan Ellis, Mike Zelig, Ross Gould, Jen Cavanaugh, Jody Jacobs, Denis Collet, Lori Urbin, Michael Callejo

CALL TO ORDER / QUORUM: Chairwoman Laurie Husted called the meeting to order at 7:12 P.M. A quorum was present.

MINUTES OF THE CAC MEETING ON FEBRUARY 10, 2016: The minutes of the February meeting of the CAC were approved with a motion made by Mike Zelig and seconded by Denis Collet.

AGENDA: Laurie Husted noted that a main task of the meeting would be to box, label, consolidate and move CAC files to a basement storage area where they can be reorganized in the file cabinets there. This will make the room off the main meeting room available for Zoning Board of Appeals Clerk Anne Rubin to do her work.

LED STREETLIGHT PROJECT: Denis Collet has been researching LED streetlight project options and feels that it could be a reasonable project to offer municipal reduction of streetlight bills. He said that the Town currently pays \$170.00 per year for each streetlight, which includes their rental from Central Hudson, plus energy consumption for sodium vapor lamps. There are about 260 lights in the Town and an equal number for the Village. The cost of the energy consumed is about 4 to 5 times that of LED lamps. The utility would like the Town to convert to LED lamps and continue to rent from them.

Denis continued that there is a group forming called the Mid Hudson Streetlight Consortium promoted by Pat Courtney Strong of Courtney strong Inc. (formerly of Mid Hudson Energy Smart Communities). The Consortium has put together a team which has produced case studies for the City of Kingston and Town of Ulster. The calculations for the City of Kingston to convert to purchasing LED streetlights indicate that the City would save enough in lighting bills to pay off the cost of installation in about 2 ½ years. The Town of Ulster would realize about \$38,000 in savings a year. Denis believes that the Town and Village of Red Hook could each save about \$30,000 per year. There was a

question of how that would be reflected in the line item of property owners in the lighting districts, when the line item is part of the Town and Village property tax.

Denis Collet added that the idea is that the Town would own the lighting fixture and LED bulb, along with the arm that connects to the light pole. What is helpful with the Consortium is that they have the legal structure and RFP's, and will put out a contract. The warranties are 10 years on LED fixtures, but they can potentially last for 30. Laurie Husted added that she had passed information to Supervisor Mckeon about street light audits. Jen Cavanaugh asked about ownership of the light pole and Denis replied that the Central Hudson would still own the pole. Jen asked if the light fixture broke, would the Town have the capability to replace it. Denis spoke with Mayor Ed Blundell, but the Village does not currently have a suitable truck with a boom. Denis then suggested looking into a maintenance contract.

Laurie Husted asked Denis to follow up with the information. Supervisor McKeon has set a schedule for a meeting with someone from Central Hudson, and Denis intends to be part of the discussion, as Central Hudson offers two options at this time – one a “clean sweep” where Central Hudson replaces all the current bulbs with LEDs under a rental program of \$158 per light per year. Ownership costs would still be lower.

RUTH OJA ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOLARSHIP: Jen Cavanaugh reported that she has learned that an application has been received for the scholarship.

SOLARIZE NORTHERN DUTCHESS PROGRAM: Jen Cavanaugh reported that she canvassed her whole neighborhood. Village liaison Lori Urbin reported that the Solarize Launch at Rhinebeck Town Hall on March 5, 2016 was a success, with about 100 attendees, positive energy and registrations filled out. Lori announced that the next presentation is scheduled for March 17, 2016 at the Elmendorph Inn in Red Hook. Denis Collet said that he would try to be there.

Denis asked if there had been any response to a commercial program, as he had no reply from John Wackman from Solarize NY. As Laurie Husted said she had none, Denis then noted that the Town doesn't have a base price for commercial installation. Laurie spoke of more publicity for the Red Hook solarize launch, noting that she hopes that Mayor Ed Blundell will do a radio interview prior to the event and asked Jody Jacobs how many flyers he would need to canvas Red Hook Estates. Ross Gould would try to do some.

GEOHERMAL OPTION TO OFFER TO HOFFMAN RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT APPLICANTS: Denis Collet reported that he has been in contact with John Ciovacco of Aztec Geothermal Company in Ballston Spa to ask if they would

be interested in submitting a design proposal which could offer a cost competitive option to the Hoffman Residential Development for geothermal installation for their project. John agreed that Aztec Geothermal would be interested, and Denis forwarded him the current plans for the development. John Ciovacco is also a board member of a group called NY Geothermal Energy Organization (NY-Geo), which has connections with the NYS Energy Research and Development Association (NYSERDA).

Denis contacted Richard Rang, the Kirchoff Associates liaison for the project, to notify him that he has been in discussion with a firm that has expertise in geothermal installation. They think that they can provide some compelling arguments for offering geothermal installation (ground source heat pumps) as a first choice for heating/cooling energy. Gordon Donovan of NY-Geo has recently been appointed Director of Renewable Heating and Cooling for NYSERDA, which might offer some other options. Richard Rang is currently offering air source heat pumps as an option. If we can provide an alternative that has an economy of scale in numbers of installations, and if NYSERDA is willing to use the project as a showcase for heating and cooling projects, it should be of interest. Denis is planning for a meeting in the next week when he can arrange for all parties to participate in the discussion. Denis asked Richard Rang if he had settled on the options to be offered. Richard said that customers will be offered multiple heat source options, but he would be happy to discuss the proposal for geothermal installation. The CAC congratulated Denis on the detailed work that he is doing.

PLANNING REVIEWS: Mike Zelig reported that the Planning Board is reviewing a proposal from Scenic Hudson to make improvements at Poets' Walk Park. They include revising the parking area to accommodate more cars and define how they should park, and improving accessibility.

SOLAR FARM PROJECT: Denis Collet reported that there has been some progress in the proposal to create a solar farm. There have been changes to the State Public Service Commission (PSC) requirement for a Coordinated Electric System Interconnect Review (CESIR) when a renewable energy project plans to connect to a utility grid. Denis noted that these reviews have been costing \$30,000 – \$35,000, which only tells you what the requirements for an upgrade will be. There is much resistance among community solar aggregation groups. Denis added that there is awareness at the PSC that the CESIR cost is a hardship for communities and is working on a change to the regulation.

Denis is participating in a statewide group doing community solar called Co-Share Community Solar. Susan Gillespie from Citizens For Local Power told Denis that there would be a meeting on next Friday in Syracuse, which he would like to attend. It will

include much discussion on the issues of community energy projects. He asked if a CAC member would like to go up to the meeting, planning to leave at 6 A.M. to make the 9 A.M. start. He would like to encourage others to take part in learning about the project, as a solar farm project will need more than one person to put together. Laurie asked if the Village might send someone, if they intend to be a partner in the proposal.

Denis mentioned another consideration about the potential community solar project is that he learned that there is another project in the works seeking approval in the Red Hook area grid. With the competitive market for solar projects, he noted that there are providers seeking lease agreements, especially from farm owners. Lori Urbin asked if the solar farm proposal would conflict or compete with the current Solarize Northern Dutchess project. She felt that owners with marginal solar exposure might change their minds about signing on to Solarize. Denis and Laurie as the Energy Subcommittee said that they had worked on the proposals for both solar projects to offer a blended option for the residents. Some may find that their solar exposure and the Solarize offer with tax incentives would work best for them, while others without adequate solar exposure would be able to achieve savings with a contract with a solar farm project. Denis noted that the Town could not take tax credits for a municipally owned program.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 P.M. so that the CAC could box and move files.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary