

Draft

**TOWN OF RED HOOK
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Minutes of meeting
April 13, 2016

Members present: Chairwoman Laurie Husted, Susan Ellis, Mike Zelig, Ross Gould, Lori Urbin, Jen Cavanaugh, Jody Jacobs, Michael Callejo, Denis Collet (7:22 P.M.)

CALL TO ORDER / QUORUM : Chairwoman Laurie Husted called the meeting to order at 7:15 P.M. A quorum was present.

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 9, 2016 CAC MEETING: The minutes of the March 9, 2106 meeting were approved with a motion made by Lori Urbin and seconded by Mike Zelig.

CAC LIAISON TO ZONING REVIEW COMMITTEE (ZRC): Laurie Husted reported that Councilwoman Sarah Imboden requested that the CAC designate a liaison to the ZRC. She noted that there was only one meeting of the ZRC last year. Laurie asked Mike Zelig if he would consider being a liaison, as he already does the Planning Board Review. The CAC discussed what types of issues are brought to the ZRC. They relate to considering adjustments to the Zoning Code, and Mike said that Planning is likely to ask for a discussion of solar installations, as there are not many specific provisions in the Zoning Code. Laurie said that perhaps Denis would consider to address zoning issues for solar, and if either one could not make all meetings, then another CAC member might fill in. The CAC will revisit the commitment.

RUTH OJA ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOLARSHIP: Jen Cavanaugh reported that the application time has closed. She just received an e-mail notice from Community Foundations that there are two applicants, and the CAC will receive e-mail voting instructions. Cristin McPeake of Community Foundations noted that they have adjusted and streamlined the format as much as possible to address CAC concerns with the process.

Denis Collet joined the meeting.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION (DEC) SUMMER CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS: Jen Cavanaugh reported that the formal presentation of the camp scholarships on Tuesday, April 12 went well. Commander Bill Moore of the VFW

presented a scholarship to William Holtman. Bruce Cuttler of Hendrick Hudson Lodge of the Masons presented a scholarship to Sarah Scott.

AMPHIBIAN MIGRATIONS: Laurie Husted reported that the “Big Night” amphibian crossings were over. There were enough people helping to cover the designated locations. They mostly found spotted salamanders and another type with white bellies and spots, though Laurie did see a Jefferson salamander. Laurie thanked those who came out and those who were on call. Jen Cavanaugh asked if there is any comparison with the numbers of previous years. Laurie replied that the organizer for the County has the data and is compiling the input.

TRAILS PLAN: Laurie Husted reported that there has been an e-mail about the review of the final draft of the Trails Plan for any additional comment.

SOLARIZE NORTHERN DUTCHESS CAMPAIGN: Laurie Husted reported that the Solarize campaign has a total 78 installation leads (from two installers recommended under the program) through the fourth event, which does not include numbers from the Village of Tivoli or the Town of Pleasant Valley. Laurie estimated that for the campaign to secure a total of 100 installation contracts, it will need about 600 leads. Remaining events coming up are two in the Town of Hyde Park, a second one in the Town of Pleasant Valley, and a first one in the Town of Milan. There will be a separate event for commercial installations.

PLANNING BOARD REVIEWS: Mike Zelig reported on the following discussions.

- ◆ *Poets' Walk Park upgrade proposals:* Scenic Hudson has submitted their final plan. They will define the parking area with locust logs and reroute the first section of trail to lessen the grade to increase accessibility.
- ◆ *Hudson Solar installation proposal :* Hudson Solar was applying for a ground installation of a solar array on Lasher Road that is on the edge of a flood plain, so it required some approvals. The Planning Board did comment that there is not much in the law locally regulating solar installations. Denis Collet noted that there could be an issue made that if there is no local approval standard, then by default, an installation can be denied. He added that there is precedent in other municipalities' codes, but it would be better to have the issue addressed. Ross Gould mentioned that he thought that the Solarize NY group has planned a “Train the Trainer” program, which would address models for appropriate ordinances. Ross will check on that.
- ◆ *Hoffman Residential Development :* Mike Zelig said that the Planning Board is in continuing discussion with the developers about issues to be addressed before Final Site Plan approval.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT TRAINING: Jen Cavanaugh reported on a stormwater management training class that she recently attended. A stormwater protection case about the Planning Board in Fishkill looked at a large area of permeable pavement and determined that it was too much for a Homeowners' Association to handle. Jen also was skeptical about the technical and oversight capabilities of a Homeowners' Association, as they frequently fail.

ROUNDTABLE FOR DISCUSSION OF GEOTHERMAL HEATING/COOLING OPTION FOR HOFFMAN RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT:

Denis Collet reported on a roundtable discussion that he arranged at the Town Hall in March to discuss a proposal and cost analysis with the developers of the Hoffman Residential development for consideration of offering a ground source geothermal heating and cooling option to buyers of their units. The roundtable included Gordon Donovan (of NY Geo and Executive Director of Renewable Heating and Cooling for NYSERDA), Jim Burke (program manager for Zero Energy Homes – solarize), Supervisor Robert McKeon, Richard Rang (lead planner for Kirchoff Associates), Giovanni (in house architect for Kirchoff), Troy Kirchoff, John Ciovacco (Aztec Geothermal). Denis also had been in contact with Amanda Schwenk, regional representative for Water Furnace products, which have a 60% share of the New York market; John Ciovacco deals with their products.

Denis and John Ciovacco had worked on some models to see what might apply to the Hoffman Residential Development. They took the current plan information for some of the town houses to calculate a cost of a ground source heat pump system as compared to propane and conventional air conditioning or air source heat pumps with two heads. The dilemma is the cost recovery. A ground source heat pump system would cost about \$27,000 for a vertical bore in each driveway. The current plan for phasing in the development is to build clusters of perhaps 20 homes at a time. Units will be sold in fee simple, where the customer chooses a model, the finish materials, the interior and the mechanics. The units are required to be Energy Star compliant. For the larger town house, the installation of a ground source heat pump system would be about \$27,000 compared to about \$11,000 for propane with conventional air conditioning or air source heat pumps with two heads and an outside condenser, before incentives. With incentives and tax rebates, the cost of the ground source heat pump could reduce to \$13,500. They calculated the operating fuel costs savings with ground source heat pumps to be about \$1,000 per year. There are logistical issues with the credits, such as who gets to take the tax credits and how are they passed on, but the greater problem with the credits is that they were extended by the Federal IPC renewal to 2022 for solar and air source heat pumps, without including ground source heat pumps.

There are efforts to correct that oversight. Meanwhile, Gordon Donovan is going back to rework a plan in case that extension is not made, as he is very interested in presenting a competitive proposal for the Hoffman Residential Development. Denis will have to get back to Gordon Donovan to see if the tax extension will apply to ground water source heat pumps.

- ◆ Laurie noted that Troy Kirchoff is the head of Kirchoff Associates Green Plan and she discussed the Solarize campaign with him. Ross Gould suggested that financing with power purchasing agreements (PPA) could be another option.
- ◆ Denis pointed out that non-profit organizations such as municipalities or churches could not take any tax incentives, and private developers are not likely to extend any great benefits to customers.

SOLAR FARM PROJECT OPTIONS: Denis Collet said that he would get information on what zoning legislation is available for solar farm projects. There will be discussion of visual screening for the solar panels. There should probably be regulation of what herbicides or pesticides can be used to control vegetation under the panels; Denis likes the idea of using goats. Laurie Husted asked about the 2 megawatt proposal; Denis replied that it would be slightly less than 2 megawatts. The project group has discussed a solar array plan and the need for security fencing. They are waiting for a reply from Central Hudson on the requirements for interconnection.

Denis' project group is part of the group Co-Share Community Solar, which met today. Denis is on the Interconnection Task Force and the Financial Task Force. They came out of the New York Energy Democracy Alliance group (NYDEA). The NYEDA allows organizations (not individuals) to join. Denis said that they look like a beneficial group and Denis suggested that the Town consider joining the NYEDA. Ross Gould noted that Citizens for Local Power and Clearwater are among the members, and that the NYEDA participates in lobbying the PSC, which might not work for local membership.

Denis mentioned other considerations – fixed pricing and managing billings. The idea is to simplify the model and give people options. Denis is convinced that the creation of one solar farm will give momentum to further progress. Laurie Husted noted that it is a lot of work and Denis will need support. Denis said that as soon as the numbers detailing the costs and benefits are complete, there will need to be a decision about the choice of options of power purchase agreement (PPA), community shared solar or lease/ownership. Denis and Ross will talk together to find someone who understands the financing for community solar and research the zoning issues.

MID HUDSON STREET LIGHT CONSORTIUM: Pat Courtney Strong will be at the Tuesday, May 10 Town Board meeting for a presentation on the Consortium.

BARD COLLEGE WATER LAB: Eli Dueker announced the opening of the Bard College Water Lab to the Saw Kill Watershed Community. The first water samples collected for expanded water monitoring project will be a weekend in May.

PRESENTATION AT THE SAWKILL WATERSHED COMMUNITY MONTHLY MEETING: Michael Callejo announced that at the meeting on Monday, May 2, at 7:00 P.M. At the Village Hall, he will do a presentation about ordinances and the need to manage storm water flows. He will discuss low impact design. Jen Cavanaugh does stormwater management and offered to provide information. Michael said one focus would be the use and impacts of permeable pavement, and that he is working on a GIS map of impervious cover.

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

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, May 11, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. at the Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary