

Draft

**TOWN OF RED HOOK
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Minutes of meeting
February 8, 2017

Members present: Chairwoman Laurie Husted, Susan Ellis, Mike Zelig, Lori Urbin, Jen Cavanaugh, Julia Solomon, Denis Collet

Absent : Michael Callejo, Ross Gould

Guest: Isaac Yelchin, Bard College student researching salamander, newts, frogs and other amphibian populations of the area.

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

RECYCLING BROCHURE REVISIONS: Julia Solomon has been reviewing the Recycling Brochure for revisions and presented her recommendations for CAC comment. She passed around a sample update and members were adding ideas. Secretary Susan Ellis asked if she would e-mail a copy with the added comments.

CLEAN ENERGY COMMUNITY CERTIFICATION: Jen Cavanaugh congratulated Denis Collet and Laurie Husted for their efforts that resulted in the awarding of Clean Energy Community Certification for the Town of Red Hook. They documented the projects, and completed the last steps to show that the Town qualified in 4 out of the 10 possible actions necessary for approval. With support from Supervisor McKeon, they pushed to get the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to inspect two solar installations and uploaded the summary reports and documents which resulted in the certification. Denis added that Red Hook was the 4th and last submission to qualify for a \$100,000 grant possibility. Denis noted that the Electrical Vehicle Charging Station Grant that was submitted last December 31 was approved.

Denis continued that there may be some movement on a Community Distributed Generation (CDG) project, one of the options that Supervisor McKeon has said could be considered as a qualifying proposal for the \$100,000 grant possibility. The Energy Subcommittee is trying to do a strategic review to determine what are the different options that the Town would like to consider, one of them perhaps to be an upgrade of the Town Hall to a Zero Energy building. Different methods to accomplish

the upgrade include improving insulation, and converting from oil and propane heat to ground source heat pumps or air source heat pumps. Governor Cuomo recently signed legislation to support ground source heat pumps. The federal 30% tax credit expired in 2016 for solar and geothermal installations. The tax credit for solar was extended several years, but not for geothermal. NYSERDA rolled out a \$6,000 rebate for geothermal installations, so the Town might look at that as an option to upgrade the Town site. An estimate of \$170,000 was given for installing a 38 kW solar array on the Town Highway Garage. Denis offered the option of populating the west roof of the Town Hall to maximize the production of energy, and public visibility of the Town's commitment, but wants to see the comparison of all the electric usage at the Town Hall with the actual production of the current solar installation.

AMPHIBIAN MIGRATIONS PRESENTATION: Laurie Husted introduced Isaac Yelchin, a Bard College student working on a study of local amphibian populations and their habitat needs and migration patterns, particularly salamanders. Isaac said that his Professor Bruce Robinson had suggested such a study for a project and told Isaac about the “BIG NIGHT” project where local volunteers go out on nights when amphibians are migrating to breed and lay their eggs. This has been done for several years in Red Hook, and Professor Bruce and Isaac want to analyze the data collected to identify the different species of salamanders and test what the data shows about how well they have been identified and what mapping can be done to show where they are coming from (hibernation locations) and where they are migrating to (vernal pools or other bodies of water). A goal of the analysis and mapping is to determine the ecological needs to support viable amphibian populations.

Isaac presented a video power point showing the the species that he has identified as local – spotted, Jefferson's, blue spotted, northern red backed slender, four-toed, white spotted slimy, among others. Isaac has done talks to share his enthusiasm with young students and show them how to handle amphibians carefully. He hopes to be able to join one of the “BIG NIGHTS” groups

Laurie said that the next thing needed is a good map of the roads to use to pinpoint the crossing sites that are covered. The CAC thanked Isaac for his presentation and discussion.

Isaac left the meeting.

ENERGY SUBCOMMITTEE: The CAC returned to the Clean Energy Community Certification grant opportunity discussion. The \$100,000, if awarded, will not go that far, and Denis Collet said that it needs to be tied to something like the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). The Town has 3 months from the date of certification to present a project proposal. Then there is a contract negotiation with

NYSERDA validation. Then within 6 months of qualifying, the project must be started, and completed within 3 years after the award.

There is a lot of work to do; when municipalities do these grants contracts they require a lot of paperwork, such as prevailing wage, a new minority (women's enterprises) representation requirement that there is effort to reach out to women owned businesses. Jen Cavanaugh noted that she researched suitable contractors and would send notice to the three that she found with qualifying representation in Long Island.

Denis did contact some contractors who claim that they do installation of charging stations. Next Thursday, February 16, Denis has one coming to do a site visit and give an estimate. He noted that it would not be an official estimate, as the Town needs to determine whether or not a Request For Proposal (RFP) is needed and will ask advice from other local municipalities that have done them. The contractor that will come next Thursday does a GE installation and is not certified to do Charge Point. Charge Point is the preferred software, but is also expensive - \$250.00 per port per year. The Town installation will have 4 ports, which would mean \$1,000.00 per year for software on a station that may use less than \$300.00 in electricity. Denis will compare the cost of a GE installation.

Solar Zoning : The solar zoning regulations are close to finished. One of the issues they have tried to address is how NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets will weigh in on the SEQR review if a farmer proposes a solar installation on prime agricultural land or land with soils of statewide importance. Ag and Markets has to make a determination of whether the project complies with their objective of maintaining agricultural lands. Ag and Markets has not objected to proposals that meet the needs of a farming operation, even on lands in conservation easement, but have not given approval for commercial size solar operations. The solar zoning committee is paying a lot of attention to the issue to reflect the concerns of losing agricultural land.

Solar Farms : Denis reported that the Public Service Commission (PSC) at the end of January responded to a request of a working group of developers and utilities that the PSC try to clean up the Que of pending applications for Community Distributed Generation (CDG) projects. Denis noted that Red Hook is 4th in the Que for consideration of a project on its regional circuit.

WASTE SUBCOMMITTEE: Laurie Husted moved the conversation to the Waste section on the agenda, as she needed to leave the meeting early. She asked Susan Ellis to review and make recommendations on a letter from Kathy O'Connor of Tivoli Green, in which she asks the CAC to write a letter of support for Assembly Bill 1038 in the NYS Assembly Standing Committee on Environmental Conservation. The Bill would

establish requirements for recycling of paint products. Susan will review it and report.

Styrofoam : The CAC has been asked to write a letter asking businesses to change from using styrofoam to a more environmentally friendly packaging. Laurie asked CAC members to consider ways to approach the issue and discuss it at the next meeting.

Laurie left the meeting .

MINUTES OF THE CAC MEETING OF JANUARY 11, 2019:

Correction to the correction of the December 14, 2016 meeting of the CAC - On page 1 paragraph 2 of the MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 14, 2016 CAC MEETING, line 5, Jen Cavanaugh clarified that along with a letter of support from Bard College removes the impression that Bard College is working on the proposal.

The Minutes of the January 11, 2017 CAC meeting, as amended with the clarification of corrections of the December 14, 2016 CAC minutes, were approved with a motion made by Lori Urbin and seconded by Jen Cavanaugh. Secretary Susan Ellis noted that she is trying to catch Purchasing Agent Ted Kudzy to have him listen to the recorder and see if he feels that it is operating operating correctly and what options there might be to improve it.

ELECTRONIC WASTE DAY ON MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY OF ENGAGEMENT, JANUARY 14, 2017: Susan Ellis asked if the remaining CAC members wanted to report on other agenda items, and if Jen Cavanaugh is in a deputy position to act as Chairman. Jen did not know that she was officially a deputy, but was willing to do some reports.

Lori Urbin, Julia Soloman and Jen reported. They said that there were photos taken of the event. There were 20 pallets wrapped, less than previous years, but perhaps because greater accumulations had already been brought to the earlier ones. Participants seemed to be happy with the assistance given.

DEC SUMMER ENVIRONMENTAL CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS: Jen Cavanaugh reported on the winners of the scholarship awards. They are one boy and one girl, Angel Selenis age 13 in 8th grade and Ashley Santibanez age 11 in 6th grade. They are both signed up for their weeks and awaiting reimbursement to send in. CAC members thanked Jen for all her work on the applications; it takes a lot of coordination.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 P.M.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, March 8 at 6 P.M. at the Village Hall for Energize NY program, followed by regular meeting at 7:15 P.M. at the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary