

**TOWN OF RED HOOK
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Minutes of meeting
February 11, 2009

Members present: Chairwoman Brenda Cagle, Susan Ellis, Denise Barton, Anne Rubin, Dr. Jane Ferguson, Zoie Riel, Laurie Husted

Guests: Councilwoman Micki Strawinski, Councilman Robert McKeon, Molly Williams, Denis Collet, Middle School science teacher Mary Pat Budd, students Spencer Cavotti and Julian Garcia-Kwan, and parents Ling Kwan and Martin Bathrick

Chairwoman Brenda Cagle called the meeting to order at 7:10 P.M. The minutes of the January meeting were approved with a motion made by Denise Barton and seconded by Jane Ferguson.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SAWKILL STREAM MONITORING PROJECT: Brenda Cagle introduced teacher Mary Pat Budd and her students Spencer Cavotti and Julian Garcia-Kwan, who were invited to speak to the CAC about their stream monitoring project and studies of the Sawkill Creek. They have a day each year when they test 5 sites along the Sawkill; the project now has 10 years of data. They described how they test water samples from the stream for levels of chemicals using a colorimeter, as well as a Hach kit. They collect buckets and put samples in petri dishes under microscopes to determine the types of macroinvertebrates living in the stream.

Spencer and Julian noted that one of the most unusual findings was a Chinese mitten crab caught just below the dam by the Bard College Field Station. Mary Pat added that it is an invasive species that has come from the ballasts of ships from China. They informed Erik Kiviat of Hudsonia and learned that Bob Schmidt at the Field Station has found four or five during the summer months. They may be a threat to the native blue crab. Hudsonia has also worked with other invasives, such as purple loosestrife and water chestnut and concluded that they can't really control them, but must learn what we can do to live with them without losing native habitat.

One of the worst problems seen in the monitoring is that phosphate levels are above 3mg/liter, with high concentrations noted at the Recreation Park. Mary Pat noted that at one point she took data to Albany about levels of 7 mg/liter at the Bard College sewage pipe outflow; the next year the sewage treatment plant was enlarged, which mitigated the readings. Currently, Julian and Spencer conclude that residential land use and runoff from agriculture are the major causes. Failing septic systems can be a problem. CAC members discussed the potential sources for phosphates. Anne Rubin noted that herbicides are organophosphates. Molly Williams suggested that solvents or detergents could be a source. As phosphates have been removed from most detergents (with the possible exception of some dishwasher detergents), fertilizers and herbicides would be a main source. Susan Ellis noted that agriculture is often unfairly targeted as the main source, when farmers are less likely to over use costly chemicals, and nitrates did not show up as a problem. There is much less control of residential use of fertilizers and herbicides.

Robert McKeon asked if particular areas of greater pollution are seen on the Sawkill. Mary Pat noted that different classes do different sites, so there is not much comparison.

Another observation that concerned the students is that there is an oily sheen on the surface of the stream water, especially near the Recreation Park. Mary Pat noted that since the beginning of the monitoring program in 1998, the visual clarity of the stream has changed from clear to the oily sheen. The CAC suggested that the monitoring program ask for tests for the oily substance, and perhaps contact the Institute for Ecosystem Studies.

Anne Rubin and Zoie Riel asked Spencer and Julian what recommendations they could make about changing the pollution based on their conclusions. Julian noted that there is no filter on the sewage pipe from Bard College as it enters the stream, and that there should be less land use and reduced use of chemicals on farms and residences. Spencer expressed concern about effects of new construction at Bard College. Anne Rubin noted that Bard must treat stormwater on site. Laurie Husted added that there was a discharge from the science building, because drilling for the geothermal installation produced sediments too fine to be stopped by the traditional hay bale barrier. Mary Pat Budd suggested that more education of Bard students would be helpful. Anne said that she would send information on Groundwater Guardian school programs to Mary Pat, and recommended the Oneida County Soil and Water District website as a good source. The CAC also informed Mary Pat of the formation of the Stream Alliance of Northern Dutchess (SAND).

The CAC thanked Mary Pat, Spencer and Julian for sharing their observations and projects with the CAC.

RECYCLING: Zoie Riel reported that Brenda Cagle found the Rent Repair and Reuse brochure produced by the CAC some years ago. The CAC discussed updating and redistributing the flyer. Councilman Micki Strawinski offered to scan and e-mail the old brochure for corrections and to contact the Chamber of Commerce. Susan Ellis noted that an original of the flyer must be kept as a permanent record in the files, and corrected some businesses that are gone. Micki also reported that Recycling Director T J Hackett has given the old signs for plastics at the Recycling Center to be updated for the current numbers that may be recycled.

ARBOR DAY/EARTH DAY IN APRIL: Brenda Cagle suggested that the CAC ask if AGWAY would be willing to do a compost bin sale. She also noted that Winnakee Land Trust would help set up a “No Child left Inside” program. Zoie Riel reported that the County legislators are considering selling rain barrels; she suggested a month of composting and rain barrel promotion. Molly Williams offered to be part of a composting team, as well as work on activities for a “No Child Left Inside” program. Brenda Cagle will work with AGWAY. CAC members agreed to designate April the month for composting and recycling.

LAWN CARE AND RAIN BARRELS FOR MAY: The CAC decided to focus on lawn care and rain barrel programs for May. Anne Rubin agreed to work on the project if she has help, and will hope to combine integrated pest management.

Laurie Husted asked if it would be possible to have a time slot for environmental matters at Town Board meetings, perhaps 5 minutes. Councilman Robert McKeon agreed with the idea and thought that it would be good to have it on PANDA. He will ask Susan Simon about having it on PANDA.

GRANT OPTIONS: Anne Rubin reported that Scott Cuppett of the Department of Environmental Conservation thinks that it is a good idea to combine a proposal for biodiversity mapping with working to adopt a water ordinance to qualify for a Hudson River Estuary grant. Anne is looking for

an estimate from Russell Urban Meade, as well as from Planning Consultant Michele Greig and Town Attorney Chris Chale for the cost of an ordinance.

Anne is reviewing three ordinances from Russell Urban Meade. She will suggest that Russell strengthen the tie of economic viability of a community with the protection of water resources. The water resource section has two areas with two subsections that include all of the Town of Amenia's ordinance. There is a section on groundwater and surface water, aquifer recharge rates and density impacts. The water resource management ordinance includes stormwater management. Anne is looking for a grant writer.

PHOTOVOLTAIC GRANT UPDATE: Laurie Husted reported that she has submitted the information on outreach efforts to Morris Associates to comply with the follow-up requirement of the grant. She will also include a page to the Village of Red Hook and the Town Water Board. She added that occupancy sensors and weather stripping were a part of the grant, and that they need to be installed to complete the grant.

Denis Collet noted that he spoke with Jeff English of Hudson Valley Clean Energy, who informed him that the company would make available a real time energy read out display if asked. The CAC needs to send a memo to the Town Board.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION SUMMER CAMP

SCHOLARSHIPS: Denise Barton reported that two girls, Becky Nesel and Morgan Sitler, have been chosen as recipients of the DEC summer camp scholarships. Denise has sent letters to the campers and information to Debbie Marks. She sent a press release to Town Clerk Sue McCann and will post the news on the CAC website.

ENERGY STAR ORDINANCE PROPOSAL: Brenda Cagle reported that Town Attorney Chris Chale wrote up a request for the proposal. The Town Board is scheduled to discuss the issue further at its February 25 meeting. A public hearing is scheduled for March 10, 2009.

ICLEI: Denise Barton was asked where the Town would stand with its carbon footprint data project if it did not renew ICLEI membership. Denise noted that there would be no support for the software used for data entry and comparison. Denise also reported that student Lindsey Chapman is willing to do a full time summer internship without pay. Molly Williams said that she might be able to donate Microsoft Office to be installed so that work could be done at the Town Hall. Brenda Cagle has asked Purchasing agent Ted Kudzy if it could be purchased for the conference room computer. Brenda Cagle reported that Tivoli Mayor Tom Cordier and Village Trustees Ed Blundell and Brent Kovalchik are interested in working with the project, and perhaps could help contribute to the cost.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL MEETING: Brenda Cagle reported on the January EMC meeting. The EMC is working on a chart of what environmental ordinances each town has. The Cornell Cooperative Extension environmental program was a forum on private well water testing. Brenda Cagle noted that the Health Department is not doing "trending" of test results.

CLEAN SWEEP NY: The Clean Sweep NY program will have a spring collection of hazardous wastes on April 6, 2009 at the NYSDOT facility on Route 66 in Hudson. The program accepts pesticides and hazardous wastes from certified applicators (landscaping), agricultural operators, marinas and schools. Brenda Cagle suggested including information on the CAC website.

LOGO: The CAC has discussed using a “green hook” logo for CAC environmental projects. Brenda Cagle noted that John Schmidt is available to speak with the CAC in April.

CENTERS AND GREENSPACES: Brenda Cagle asked if the CAC would act as an “interested agency” in the preparation of the draft scoping document. The Planning Board has made a positive declaration for SEQR review. The CAC agreed to work on the review.

MEMBERSHIP: Brenda Cagle noted that the CAC has two interested and very qualified individuals in Molly Williams and Denis Collet for the vacancy on the CAC. Molly graciously agreed to defer the position to Denis and be an assistant on CAC projects. Brenda thanked Molly and will submit Denis’ name for Town Board approval.

WATER COMMITTEE: Zoie Riel reported that she, Molly Williams and Sheila Buff of Milan will work on the Groundwater Guardian Program.

Zoie asked how the reed beds at Omega Institute and Tivoli sewage treatment facilities are working. Denise Barton replied that the scum from the top of the treatment beds had to be trucked to Newburgh, but that now it can be composted. The option of using reed beds for sewage treatment was discussed with C T Male, but they didn’t see too much advantage and are no longer considering it an option.

Zoie asked if the CAC could provide a link to scholarships for environmental studies on the website. It will be worked on.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 P.M.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, March 11, 2009 at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary