

**TOWN OF RED HOOK  
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Minutes of meeting  
May 13, 2009

Members present: Chairwoman Brenda Cagle, Laurie Husted, Susan Ellis, Mike Ignatowski, Denise Barton, Zoie Riel, Denis Collet, Dr. Jane Ferguson, research assistant Molly Williams

Guests: Councilwoman Micki Strawinski, Councilman Robert McKeon, Lindsay Chapman, Dan Raskin, Jun Hurada

Chairwoman Brenda Cagle called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. She introduced Lindsay Chapman from Bard College, who will be an intern for the CAC starting on June 8, 2009 and work about 30 hours a week, possibly until December. Lindsay will be working on the data collection and entry for the ICLEI program.

Brenda Cagle noted a correction to the minutes of the April meeting under “brush dumping” that Jane Ferguson would draft a memo to the Town Board stating the problems and asking the Town Board to propose some alternatives for alleviating the difficulty of disposing of brush for small lot owners. She also added that Denise Barton said that the Town website should list projects of the CAC. The minutes of the April meeting were approved with a motion made by Denise Barton and seconded by Jane Ferguson.

**BRUSH DUMPING:** The CAC reviewed the letter written by Jane Ferguson to describe the problems of yard waste disposal and ask the Town Board to propose alternatives. Brenda Cagle thanked Jane and will pass the letter on to the Recreation Park Director.

**CAC LOGO:** CAC members discussed the draft logo of a “green hook” for the CAC. Denis Collet suggested that it could be more three dimensional, perhaps by twisting or shading the hook. CAC members thought that different letterheads could be arranged for specific uses of the logo. Denise Barton suggested that a press release be done when the CAC kicks off the program and credit be given to the graphic designer, Fiona Lawrence.

**EARTH DAY COMPOSTING PROGRAM:** Molly Williams and Denis Collet reported that the project was a successful day with attendance and interest, though there was no update on the winner of the raffle for a composting bin. There had been press releases and flyers about the event. Michele Higgins brought her composting box with worms and demonstrated the process. Molly noted that the question and answer format seemed to work well, and suggested that to improve the program, it might be included with gardening information to reach a wider audience. Denis noted that the location was a bit remote, as the set-up was in the back in the nursery, and there was no sign. He suggested that if Mac’s Farm and Garden World would allow set-up in the grassy area by parking, it would be better.

**RED HOOK GREEN ENERGY PROPOSAL FOR A RED HOOK ENERGY ALLIANCE:** Denis Collet introduced Bard College students Dan Raskin and Jun Hurada who work with Laurie Husted at Bard. They developed a presentation of 3 models of community energy projects involving solar energy and weatherization.

The Berkeley First Finance Program was set up by the City of Berkeley, California with a municipal bond to fund the upfront costs of solar and renewal energy installations. A homeowner would apply for a project, with a cap of \$37,500 per installation. When approved and completed, the homeowner would receive payment from the First Finance program and a 20 year payment would be set and attached to the property taxes for the home. Thus, the payment would transfer with ownership, and the owner would be paying off the cost as they were saving costs on energy. The model was successful as a simple financing strategy that helped to diminish upfront costs, and allowed for education about and standardization of solar photovoltaics. Some drawbacks were the need to bond initial funding, high payback time and the lower efficiency of individual rooftop solar systems. Denis Collet noted that the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, NYSERDA, decreases incentives if the site has less than 80% radiation. He added that the Berkeley model is not ideal, and that geothermal systems have outsold conventional systems in the last year. Mike Ignatowski suggested that the Berkeley financing program be applied here to weatherization.

The Ellensburg, Washington Municipal Solar Project is a shareholder owned, municipally operated solar grid. Residents invested as shareholders in the virtual net metering solar project and receive credits on their electric bills. Half of the initial investment was covered by the Bonneville Environmental Foundation, a private investor. The program is voluntary, with all residents eligible, and has economy of scale. Its drawbacks are finding funding, unsupportive net metering laws in New York, lack of state financing for municipal projects and lack of utility cooperation.

The third model is Long Island Green Homes, a weatherization project in Babylon. The City or Town pays the upfront cost for improvements recommended after a home performance evaluation, and the homeowner pays back through a benefits assessment charge, including 3% interest for administration. The cap on renovations is \$12,000, with a payback cap of 10 years, though average payback is 7.75 years. Advantages are that it is voluntary, the homeowner has no upfront cost, it saves money and improves efficiency of existing structures. Drawbacks are finding capital and administration needs.

Brenda Cagle asked Jun Hurada why they had chosen a 6 kilowatt photovoltaic system for calculating costs of home installation. Denis Collet replied that he had suggested that as a reference point. CAC members thanked Jun and Dan for their work and presentation, and CAC members will discuss presentation of alternatives that might work locally.

**RUTH OJA SCHOLARSHIP:** Brenda Cagle reported that there have been no applicants for the scholarship. She contacted Neville Smythe of the Community Foundation to ask if Red Hook students had applied for other scholarships with the Foundation, and he replied that 7 had applied for 5 scholarships. Applications were announced last October and e-mailed; clubs and the Guidance Counselor were recontacted. The scholarship fund currently is \$1,756.

**RECYCLING:** Brenda urged members to keep working on additions to the information document for the Rent, Repair and Reuse Brochure, and suggested that Laurie resend the e-mail.

**“GREEN SPOT:”** The CAC discussed doing the first “GREEN SPOT” on information that Williams Express will be accepting compact fluorescent bulbs and certain batteries for proper disposal.

**PHOTOVOLTAIC DISPLAY:** Denis Collet reported that the frame has been made by Woogs O’Keefe, and Dennis has taken the frame and posters to Hudson Valley Clean Energy. They will test out the display and install it in the frame with the poster. Then the CAC will hang it in the Town Hall.

**ENERGY STAR ORDINANCE:** Since the Town passed the ordinance requiring Energy Star construction, the CAC needs to work with the Building Inspector and Code Enforcement to prepare for implementation. Councilman Robert McKeon asked what materials should be given to a new homeowner/builder. Denise Barton noted that the NYSERDA website would have good information. The Energy Star Ordinance takes effect on October 22, 2009. The CAC will work with a NYSERDA representative to speak with builders about specifications for Energy Star. Zoie Riel suggested that data on new Energy Star construction be part of the ICLEI project to track the progress of reduction in energy use and carbon emissions.

**ICLEI:** Lindsay Chapman, who will work on the ICLEI project as a student intern did get scholarship funding. She will help with the initial baseline survey of energy usage, and the CAC will work on target goals for reduction. Brenda Cagle noted that she hopes that the internship can be continued on a permanent basis for tracking and updating carbon emission data. Denise Barton and Lindsay Chapman will attend an ICLEI conference on Friday.

**WATERSHED AWARENESS MONTH – JULY:** Brenda Cagle reported that she met with Carolyn Clocker, Cooperative Extension Environmental Educator, Raphael Notin from Rhinebeck CAC, Sheila Buff from Milan, Neil Curry from the Environmental Management Council and Winnakee Land Trust about plans for an event for Watershed Awareness month. It will take place on July 19, 2009 at Mazzarella Park behind Starr Library. There will be scavenger hunts and other activities for children and families.

Zoie Riel noted that for the CAC to become a Groundwater Guardian, it needs a political liaison. She asked if a Councilperson would be willing. Anne Rubin, Sheila Buff and Zoie are working on watershed issues, and Zoie suggested perhaps having a table with the CAC logo at the event, and possibly kayaks. Denis Collet noted that there is a list serve for kayakers in northern Dutchess.

**EARTH DAY LOBBY DAY:** Brenda Cagle reported that on Earth Day Lobby Day, Environmental Advocates briefed attendees on 5 bills before the legislature. One would expand Freshwater Wetlands Law to include wetlands down to 1 acre, another reopen discussion on a Bigger Better Bottle Bill. Councilman Robert McKeon added that the event was well attended, but not as large in previous years.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 P.M.

**NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday, June 10, 2009 at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary