

**TOWN OF RED HOOK
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Minutes of meeting
June 10, 2009

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

Guests: Councilman Robert McKeon

Brenda Cagle called the meeting to order at 7:15 P.M. CAC members looked at the photovoltaic display in the lobby showing the details of the energy being produced and the savings realized from the PV installation on the Town Hall. Thanks to Denis Collet, Woogs O'Keefe and Hudson Valley Clean Energy for making and installing the display.

The minutes of the May meeting were approved with a motion made by Jane Ferguson and seconded by Denise Barton.

NET METERING: The CAC discussed the current lack of options for businesses to receive net metering for any solar projects. Denis Collet noted that while the utilities are not supportive of net metering for businesses, the utility only pays wholesale rates for any electricity added to the grid by a customer. Denis suggested that forming an association of communities looking to proceed with initiatives for solar projects might help the situation.

ICLEI CONFERENCE: Denise Barton reported on the ICLEI climate change conference that she and Lindsay Chapman attended. Denise noted that the attendance was lower than last year. Denise and Lindsay divided up the sessions to cover the maximum amount of information; both wrote an outline of notes for the CAC.

Denise spoke of a mock planning session process, which pointed out the need to focus on those ideas which will reduce CO2 emissions and to prioritize the steps to reduce the carbon footprint of the community. There needs to be acceptance from all stakeholders, and an evolving action plan which identifies responsibility, funding, timeline and approval of the local government. Denise noted that Westchester County is much further ahead in the process than Dutchess County, and can be a good source of information.

Brenda Cagle reported that at Tuesday's meeting, the Town Board pledged to reduce CO2 emissions by 15% in 2015 of what the projected use would be in 2015. The Department of Environmental Conservation wrote a generic pledge, which 30 communities have adopted. The CAC supports the pledge, but has concerns that there are no teeth to the program goals. The CAC feels that there is an opportunity to proceed, and discussed working on real targets.

Denise Barton met with student intern Lindsay Chapman to get her started on energy use data entry for determining the baseline carbon emissions of the Town. Denis Collet asked how Denise and Lindsay were prioritizing the inventory. Denise noted that she has a list of invoices from Business Manager Deb Marks for municipal usage, and they will work in breaking down data from shared uses between the Town and Village.

Zoie Riel asked what Lindsay would be expected to complete by the end of her internship in December. Denise said that she should have all the data entry done. Denise noted that she and Lindsay will work on surveys, and the ICLEI software includes estimates where actual figures are not available. Denise suggested that she might be able to get energy usage information from Central Hudson by rate classes.

Lindsay is receiving a stipend from Bard College for the project, and CAC members suggested that she should keep a log of her hours.

AMENIA RURAL SITING GUIDELINES: The Intermunicipal Task Force determined that it is too cumbersome to write a code for all the scenic roads that the CAC designated. Planning Consultant Michele Greig suggested that the CAC look at the Town of Amenia Siting Guidelines. Jane Ferguson asked if Amenia feels that the guidelines have been helpful. Brenda Cagle called the Town of Amenia to ask how the guidelines are working for preservation of Scenic Roads; the reply was that they had not been tested yet. The CAC will send the issue back to the Planning Board and ask that they review the section 121-14.1 of the Town of Amenia Zoning Code. Brenda will also discuss the consideration of the Siting Guidelines with Ag and Open Space Chairwoman Mary Ann Johnson.

TEVIOT PROPERTY PROPOSAL FOR A HELIPAD: Brenda Cagle brought to the CAC for discussion a proposal before the Planning Board by the owners of Teviot estate to create a helipad for landing of helicopters. CAC members reviewed the Environmental Assessment and Positive Declaration of Environmental Impact under SEQR. The potential impacts listed were disturbance of eagle nesting sites, excessive noise for the character of the neighborhood, and effects on a waterbody designated as protected. The Assessment also noted that the proposal did not necessarily conform to the character of the Historic District and the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. CAC members noted that frequency of flights and potential fuel spills should be considered. Anne Rubin pointed out that there appeared to be an intermittent stream near the site proposed for the helipad, and that any permit should include stipulations that the owners are responsible for spills.

The Environmental Assessment showed no mitigating features for the impacts. Zoie Riel asked why the project would not be denied if the positive impacts could not be mitigated. Susan Ellis said that as she understood SEQR, positive impacts were not an automatic case for denial, but through the process would give legal standing to a challenge if alternatives did not offer mitigation. Brenda Cagle suggested that she would ask on list serve whether or not any other towns have dealt with the situation.

WATERSHED MONTH: Zoie Riel noted that a municipal official needs to sign the Groundwater Guardian application. She asked Councilman Robert McKeon if he would be willing to be the official to sign.

Brenda Cagle reported that today Anne Rubin, Molly Williams and she met with the Rhinebeck committee working on the Watershed Month event. Anne, Molly and Brenda will be working on a “toad abode” educational project for children. Brenda added that Cooperative Extension has asked every Town to declare July “Watershed Awareness Month.”

Anne Rubin noted that she would like to promote a plan for on-site septic maintenance by dividing zones and going zone to zone to reduce price. Denise Barton asked if one company would do the job, or would there be bids?

GREEN SPOT ON PANDA: The first CAC “Green Spot” was taped on PANDA at the last Town Board meeting. It included information on the collection of compact fluorescent light bulbs, batteries and other small electronic items at Williams Lumber and Williams Express. Anne Rubin asked whether or not the items were taken by certified recyclers. She noted that there should be a third party certifier that states that the items are not being shipped overseas. Laurie Husted will do the next “Green spot” and follow up with Williams Lumber. Brenda Cagle noted that Susan Simon of PANDA will do a “Green Spot” at every Town Board meeting.

RED HOOK GREEN ENERGY PROPOSAL: Zoie Riel asked what the CAC would propose to the Town Board as follow-up to the presentation by Jun Hurada and Dan Raskin at the CAC meeting last month. Denis Collet said that the CAC should take advantage of using the presentation and present information on use of energy assessment for financing. Robert KcKeon suggested a presentation on Energy Star incentives to the Town Board. Jane Ferguson felt that the presentation of the three energy incentive models should emphasize the Town of Babylon weatherization program, because it would be the most simple, affordable and comprehensive project to help residents reduce energy use. However, discussion of community solar and geothermal projects should be included as potential future programs. CAC members agreed, and will schedule a presentation and make recommendations.

The meeting was adjourned at 10 P.M.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, July 8, 2009 at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary