

**TOWN OF RED HOOK
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Minutes of meeting
October 14, 2009

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

Guests: Councilman Robert McKeon; intern Lindsay Chapman

Acting as Chairwoman in the absence of Brenda Cagle, Susan Ellis called the meeting to order at 7:15 P.M. The minutes of the September meeting were approved with a motion made by Jane Ferguson and seconded by Laurie Husted.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES SURVEY UPDATE: Susan Ellis reported that Chairwoman Brenda Cagle has been researching the history of the criteria for including structures on the Historic Structures Map. She noted that the Gurland house is not on it, but qualifies as one of the earliest homes. Susan noted that she has told Brenda that though she worked on photographing and describing historic structures in one area, Elise Barry of Hudson River Heritage compiled the final document. Anne Rubin asked if the survey included any information on wells and septic locations. Susan answered that it did not look for them, and unless someone knew of an old well that indicated a previous dwelling site, there is probably no information in the survey. She suggested that the Town Assessor would be the best source.

ENERGY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT: Lindsay Chapman reported that she was unable to attend the Pace University conference on solar financing. Denis Collet reported that the group has met twice and plans to continue weekly on Thursdays. The group includes Denis, Lindsay, Dan Smith, Dan Raskin, Jun Hurada, Andres Stewart Gonzales, Laurie Husted and Councilman Robert McKeon. Dan Smith is working on a Master's thesis about "willingness to pay for energy conservation." He is researching how much communities and individuals are willing to commit to finance energy reduction projects. He has selected community based renewable energy initiatives.

The Committee has discussed the Long Island Homes Weatherization initiative and individual solar panel/solar thermal installations. They discounted the idea of a solar farm as too difficult for a funding model. To determine how to present an initiative, they would like to conduct a survey to determine the level of understanding of renewable energy options. They may try door to door, and a website online form. They are discussing how deep and detailed the survey should be. They want a response from the community without any inhibitors. One suggestion was to consider setting up a table with survey forms at a place with a good amount of traffic. Anne Rubin noted that many people are not informed and asked if the group knew how the Long Island project approached the elderly. Denis noted that the survey project itself will bring up questions. Zoie Riel recommended "survey monkey," which is free to a point. Anne Rubin suggested that the CAC do a "Green Spot" about the project. Denis liked the idea. Susan Ellis asked Lindsay Chapman if she had any response from Bard students interested in helping with Green Spots, but the answer was no.

Robert McKeon spoke of the “green jobs” that weatherization would bring. Anne Rubin asked who would vet the contractors. Denis suggested that any initiative be backed up by a Town requirement that there be a separate inspection by an independently certified contractor. Denise Barton asked about the feed in rate from the utilities, noting that utilities are required to buy electricity at a higher rate. Denis said that for solar farm initiatives, legislation is not favorable in New York.

ICLEI: Intern Lindsay Chapman reported that she has acquired year 2000 census data about the number of homes, and what kind of heating was used. The Federal Energy Information Administration gave data for averages of energy use. She added that Assessor Jeff Churchill is working on getting her the current figures on the number of homes. Lindsay stated that 30% of the homes in Red Hook are pre-1940, which brings up a consideration of how to keep the historic features and increase energy efficiency.

Though not a final presentation, Lindsay has finished the inventory of municipal buildings for the period 2004 – 2008. She presented a report of the greenhouse gas emissions for those years for buildings and facilities, streetlights and traffic signals, water delivery facilities, wastewater facilities, vehicle fleet and employee commutes. Lindsay noted that she had to use the amount of fuel consumed to calculate the emissions of the vehicle fleet, as vehicle mileage logs were not consistent. She suggested that a recommendation be made that the record be more consistent, so that there would be valid data for making decisions about usage. CAC members noted that the buildings and facilities emissions showed a rather steady increase from 2004 – 2007, but dropped below the 2004 level in 2008. In considering what had changed, Laurie Husted noted that the programmable thermostat and new lights were installed in the Town Hall in the spring of 2008. Anne Rubin asked Lindsay if ICLEI gives case study information from other communities on its web site.

Lindsay reported that the pilot project for installing LED lights in parking lots at Bard College should be looked at by the Town. If the results show potential, perhaps the Town could ask Central Hudson for help with conversion.

After completion of the inventory, Lindsay advised that the CAC needs to set targets and forecasts for 15 – 20 years. She suggested a goal of reduction of 15 – 20 % on greenhouse gas emissions. Data should be kept with an annualized average, and Denis Collet suggested a pie chart graph of usage. Denise Barton asked when Lindsay wants to have goals established. Lindsay replied that she needs to get information before the next CAC meeting to confirm at the presentation.

ROADSIDE CLEAN-UP DAY: Councilman Robert McKeon reported that the September 19 clean-up was a good success, with Bard College contributing over 100 volunteers. Camp Ramapo youths also participated. There was less collected than in the spring, most likely because it was a short time in between.

HARDSCRABBLE DAY WATER PROJECT: Brenda Cagle, Denise Barton, Susan Ellis and Andres Stewart Gonzales set up the water refilling stations and water taste test. The video on the waste caused by bottled water was somewhat difficult to see, and thus not as successful as hoped. Denise reported that she and Brenda had to carry the jugs of water out, which the Village was going to do. There was an advertisement for the water bottle refill stations in the Hardscrabble brochure, but Denise felt that more publicity was needed. She suggested that the water taste test

be done with all the water kept in glass containers, so that no added taste would affect the outcome.

Some of the recycling bin frames were put out, but the CAC learned that the Village had some of their own. They did need to be placed next to trash bins, as bottles and cans were being thrown in the trash, if it was more convenient. Susan Ellis suggested that the CAC needs to think of other events or places where the bins could be used.

RECYCLING: The Rent, Reuse and Repair brochure needs more input. Laurie Husted suggested trying a “Green Spot” asking for businesses that would like to be listed in it.

UNWANTED PHARMACEUTICAL COLLECTION/DISPOSAL: Susan Ellis noted that Brenda Cagle had asked for discussion of the possibility of working on a pharmaceutical collection. Anne Rubin suggested that unwanted pharmaceuticals should be brought back to the pharmacies. Zoie Riel said that a program for returning them to the pharmacies is just not happening, but a pilot project for collection at the Household Hazardous Waste Day collection is. As pharmaceutical collection of any quantity requires law enforcement supervision, it would be difficult for the CAC to provide one. Laurie Husted suggested that she would be willing to hold up a “Green Spot” with information about proper disposal of pharmaceuticals at the October 20 Town Board meeting. Denise Barton suggested “Don’t Flush it – render it inert.”

PHOTOVOLTAIC METER READINGS: Denise Barton requested that the photovoltaic meter reading for the Town Hall solar panels be reported in the minutes each month. The reading up through October 14 was 4479kw.

Denise Barton reported that the Energy Star Ordinance requirement for new building permits takes effect next week. There should be a notice for contractors.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, November 18, 2009 at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall

** note that due to the closure of the Town Hall on November 11, the meeting is postponed a week.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary