

## Conservation and Sustainability Advisory Committee

**DRAFT** Minutes of June 15 meeting

Present: Roxanne Marino, David Diaz, Don Ellis, Andy Hillman, Bara Hotchkiss, Robert Oswald, Sue Poelvoorde, Brice Smith

**Roxanne called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.**

### **Approval of Minutes**

Roxanne submitted the draft April 24, 2017 meeting minutes for review and approval. Don moved to accept the meeting minutes as submitted. Roxanne seconded. Approved. Andy abstained.

Roxanne submitted the draft May 3, 2017 meeting minutes for review and approval. Don moved to accept the meeting minutes as submitted. Roxanne seconded. Approved. Andy abstained.

### **Updates on Town issues or Board actions relate to Sustainability/Conservation**

#### ● Clean Energy Communities

Roxanne reported the Town completed the application process to be designated a Clean Energy Community, meeting four actions required for designation. Once approved, the Town will be able to apply for grant funding to make energy improvements to Town-owned infrastructure. Roxanne discussed possible projects with Liz Thomas and Darby Kiley. Projects include upgrading the Town Hall HVAC system to a heat pump system and installing an electric car charging station.

Roxanne will send the grant fund project criteria to the committee to generate other ideas for projects.

### **Old Business**

#### **A) Zoning update**

##### ● Report on ZUSC meeting June 1, presentations by stakeholder groups, and next steps.

Roxanne reported out on the June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the ZUSC where stakeholder groups were asked to present their comments on the draft Agriculture Zone and identify their top issue related to the draft document. While each group had differing positions, it seemed all stakeholder groups have significant issues with the draft.

##### ● Next ZUSC meeting to discuss Ag zoning revision draft is June 22

Roxanne will continue to attend the ZUSC meetings to follow the progression of the draft. She noted that the zoning committee expects to meet twice in July.

### **New Business**

#### **A) Discussion of ideas for possible committee projects**

The committee discussed several short- and long-term projects to consider per the committee's charge. Roxanne noted that the group may be asked to participate in the Clean Energy Community projects too.

##### ● Next 3-6 mos.

1) **Conservation Tools:** Do research and put together details of easements (tax advantages, requirements for holding and enforcing easements, etc.) for Town Board and info to the public. Sponsor

an educational session or series in the Town, on conservation tools (easements, PDR's and beyond), tax benefits; possible participants would be the Finger Lakes Land Trust, Tompkins County Planning.

**2) Tools for supporting Agriculture in the town (beyond PDR and easements):** Research the possibility of establishing a revolving loan fund in the Town, as a program to assist with agricultural land preservation by supporting farm operations and land acquisition for farming. This gets to some of the other action items in the Ag and Farmland Protection Plan, beyond zoning. Establish a real estate transfer tax (NYS allows municipalities to do this) that goes into a town fund; research how this is done, what the requirements are, what discretion the town has for defining uses for the funds (such as a revolving loan fund), what are requirements for a loan fund in NYS law and with the Comptroller's office.

Potentially useful reference: Red Hook local law #1 in 2007 (Community Preservation Fund) which establishes a 2% real estate transfer tax into a Town fund for the purpose of preserving open space, agricultural and historic places (Town of Red Hook website, community preservation transfer tax).

**3) Feasibility of developing a town-led/town-established water quality protection program:** Topics might include use of constructed or natural wetlands for water quality and flood protection; education on roadside ditches and water issues, storm water protection plan requirements by the DEC. Possible people for the CSAC to work with in researching and developing this would be Rebecca Schneider (T of U Planning Board, wetland and ditches expert); Jim Curatolo (The Wetland Trust, constructed wetlands expert); Carl Schwartz (US Fish and Wildlife, wetlands); TC Soil and Water Conservation, Finger Lakes Land Trust

**4) Trail to Taughannock BDT to/from the Village:** As a start, work on developing designated on-road routes, with signage for biking and walking routes/lanes. We can look at the Black Diamond Trail Master Plan as a resource. Meetings with Town of Ulysses, Village of Trumansburg, State Parks to outline best on-road routes; other possible participants: Bike Walk Tompkins, BDT Enthusiasts Network; Fernando de Aragón - ITCTC. Research possibility of Ulysses participating in establishing a kiosk in/near the Jacksonville Road parking lot to provide information on where things are in the Village and how to get there by bike; something in Cass Park.

**5) Develop a natural resource inventory for the Salo Drive Town-owned land:** A "bio-blitz" field event, to introduce the property to the community and involve citizens. Coordinate this with the urban forestry grant that the Town has applied for (awards should be announced in mid-July.) There are a lot of people in Trumansburg who are good with flora and fauna identification. This is also a possible opportunity to engage the Wetland Trust.

**6) Jacksonville Community Association Park:** Work with JCA to assess needs for the park as a local community resource. Andy will think more about the details for this.

**7) CSAC proposed Glare Standard for Large Solar installations:** A field evaluation /proof of concept should be done, as the glare tool is based on needs of the aviation industry, and this is an innovative and new standard, useful to municipalities. Brice can do this as a class project (in the fall?), would need a formal request from the Town Board; no cost to the Town anticipated.

**Ongoing:** Clean Energy Community grant, committee members (Roxanne, Brice) can be of help with some aspects of the grant / project development

- Potentially longer term (>6 mos.) note that our committee is authorized through Dec 31, 2017
- Work on a Town-wide natural resource plan, using the County Natural Features inventory and related information. Note that this is an action item that counts towards status as a Climate Smart Community. Also note that in Ag zoning revision for Cluster subdivision proposed as of July 2017, a Natural Resource Inventory would be necessary for the Town to have; as such, perhaps Town staff or a hired consultant will be taking the lead on this.

### **Agenda items for next meeting**

- Schedule next meeting.

Roxanne recommended the committee not meet in July and take the time to think about which project each member would like to work on for the remainder of 2017. She will type up the list and email it to committee members with a deadline to contact her with each member's interest in projects.

The next meeting of the CSAC is scheduled for Wednesday, August 17th, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.**