

Town of Lansing Conservation Advisory Committee

Minutes of meeting 3-2-23, 6:30 pm via Zoom

In Attendance: Carrie A. Koplinka-Loehr; Edward Dubovi; Todd Walter; David Wolfe; Karen Edelstein; Robyn Bailey; Ruth Groff (Lansing Town Board liaison); Tom Butler

Absent: John Fleming; Gabrielle Desnoes; Adam Buck

First item on the agenda was John Steinmetz from Bergmann Associates who discussed how to apply the prioritization grid for the Open Space Index to specific parcels in Lansing. He showed the Lansing Site Evaluation Worksheet which shows criteria for prioritizing different elements. Should we nominate 2-3 parcels for evaluation? John has not yet looked at the CE criteria that the CAC has previously worked on. There was a lengthy discussion about farmland as targets for conservation but not wanting to tell farmers what to do with their land.

Subgroup formed to work on this: Carrie, David, Karen

Second item on the agenda was the Flyer (FAQ) regarding the Open Space Index and CAC.

- Comments: John, David, and Karen offered edits which were made in real time. John Zepko provided comments that would make it more transparent how landowners could potentially be impacted. Carrie will prepare final copy and send to John Zepko for review.
- Distribution: In lieu of another public meeting, we plan to distribute this.
 - Town of Lansing listserv
 - School board listserv...maybe by featuring Gabrielle
 - Send to Ag Committee by hardcopy. Adam or John might be willing to distribute.
 - Post to CAC website so it can be distributed as a link to e.g., social media
 - Ithaca Times or similar newspaper

Third item on the agenda was the NYSACC Conference on the Environment 2023, Ithaca, NY.

- Do we want to participate? If so, who would like to be on the planning group that Cait Darfler is forming?
 - We are apparently a member of NYSACC.
- Ideas for a theme, talks, tour, or special event
 - Tour of Bell Station might be nice. It was more than the Town of Lansing's efforts though, so highlight the UNA and EMCs work on this.
 - Talks: Tree City USA program (Jeanne Grace?). Waterfront native bird restoration (Jody Enck). Street Tree Committee? Representative Anna Kelling on the NYS 30/30 (saving 30% by 2030). The new NYS Environmental Bond Act that recently passed which could create more funding.
 - David: should we give a talk about our own OSI and activities?
- The EMC has invited us to attend their joint EMC/CAC meeting at Stewart Park, 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 11. They're planning for a big event with CACs from around the county.

Fourth item on the agenda was the proposed meeting with the Ag Committee.

- March agenda was already full.

Miscellaneous:

- Karen suggests that the formal title of Bell Station be changed to “Nut Ridge” if and when the NYSDEC takes over management. This would better reflect the natural history, since the nuclear foundation was not actually dug at this site (as far as can be told).
- Carrie: Regarding April meeting, assessing group comfort with in-person meeting. Need up to 3 hours to go through various parcels and as a group this would be easier to do in person. Likely for the April meeting only. Most people are willing to come in person (assuming they are in town), but we need to check the Town Hall calendar.

Department and Other Committee Reports

- Town Board Liaison Report – Andy Zepp sent around an email today to the Town Board regarding FLLT Cayuga Cliffs and Bell Station. Positive use of Bell Station after well-attended open house. Deer hunting is allowed. Would like to subdivide into 2 parcels to sell shoreline piece to NYSDEC. The other parcel would be utilized by AES solar. An adjacent parcel is under contract for 110 acres of the former Cedar View Golf Course, thus expanding opportunities for outdoor recreation and shoreline preservation. Simms-Jennings Nature Preserve is being expanded, under contract to purchase 23 acres with road frontage on 34B to improve traffic safety and access. Candidates for ZBA will be approved at the March Town Board meeting. Trails committee has engaged Cornell Design Connect to help with trails planning.
- Tompkins County Environmental Management Council Report – Tom H. gave a talk about the Ithaca Green New Deal score card system. Cait Darfler is asking that various municipalities give a talk about what they’re working on. David will have to take a turn in a few months about our CAC and will reach out for data.
- Agriculture and Farmland Protection – no members present
- Planning Department – Nothing that affects the CAC. Tom needs to recuse himself from talking about current activities.

Meeting adjourned at 8:18pm.