



CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Zoom videoconference
Thursday, September 7, 2023
6:30 PM via Zoom

MINUTES

1. Call Meeting to Order

Present: Ed Dubovi., Carrie Koplinka-Loehr, John Fleming, Robyn Bailey David Wolfe, Karen Edelstein., Katie Darcy from Bergmann (Katie Darcy katie.darcy@collierseng.com)

Absent: , Todd Walter, Adam Buck, and Gabby Desnoes

2. Approve minutes of meeting

Note new emails for Katie & John S. (katie.darcy@collierseng.com; john.steinmetz@collierseng.com)

3. Discussion of the OSI and Conservation Plan with Katie Darcy

Commentary on John Zepko's comments:

The CAC discussed John Zepko's comments and spent particular attention on the "Community Vision" and not overstating its role. Need to refine the Vision statement to specify that it's just the vision for Open Space, not the entire town. CAC decided to remove the "conservation zoning" implementation option since it is unlikely to happen. Notably, the group voted to change the name of the document to "Open Space Conservation Plan."

Decision: we need to write a point-by-point response to John Zepko's letter of comments.

Carrie and Ed will go to the Oct. 31 Planning Board meeting to present and discuss the draft.

Question: Does the document need to be fully completed by Nov. 9? Maybe not.

Budget: CAC asked for \$15k in the budget for consultants to help with the implementation of the Open Space Plan. Costs for mailing and administrative assistance also. Total ask was just over \$20k.

Open meeting law: The CAC will try to comply with the principles of the open meeting law even if not strictly required. November meeting will be at Walnut Ridge. December will be at Town Hall.

Ruth Groff: Wants to put in the town board budget some money to hire a consultant to help with the codes committee on updating the zoning. Town doesn't have capacity to get the zoning updates done in a timely fashion. A consultant would help them get through the process in a year or two rather than ~5 years.

Tom Butler: The Planning Board is pretty quiet right now. The last two meetings one client came. Perhaps this is because interest rates are high, but in any case things have really slowed down for the planning board. Not much to report other than a warehouse going in near the Town Barns in an area zoned as industrial.

The focus of the conversation was on the implementation chart of the OSI (August draft) and CAC comments on the entire document. The updated document will be available (pdf and web-based) to the CAC prior to the Oct 5 meeting for any additional changes. OSI plan may be presented to the Planning Board prior to the public meeting on Nov 9.

4. Planning for the public meeting focused on the OSI with Katie and John S.

The second public meeting to present the OSI plan to town residents will be held on Nov 9 from 5:30-7:30. Town Hall is preferred location pending availability. The In-person meeting will be open-house style with presentation boards. Brief presentations will likely be made by Katie Darcy or John Steinmetz. A story map (digital version of plan) will be available on the website for viewing by the public. Comments from in person participants as well as online participants will be solicited.

Promotion of the event will be a challenge but may involve a banner, messaging board, flyers, or postcards depending on resources available. Katie can put together promotional materials.

5. Future meetings

The issue of the format for future meetings was discussed. There was a consensus of opinion that the Zoom format was preferred as it allowed the largest number of committee members to attend the “meeting”. The issue of whether the CAC is required to adhere to the provisions of the Open Meeting regulations was in question and resolution of this issue will dictate the format for future meetings. Questions still remain as to the implications of the proposal for the Ag Committee to become a subcommittee of the CAC. Will Ag Committee members be permitted on the CAC or a CAB if approved?

6. Other Business

Registration for NYSACC Conference on the Environment 2023, September 20-22
DEC Announces \$3 Million in Grants Available for Invasive Species Projects

7. Departmental and Committee Reports

Town Board:

Ruth Groff : still moving forward w/master trail plan. CU Design Connect team did work and one student is putting in form of master plan. Will send us the maps when done.

Emergency meeting re: solar farm Yellow Barn Solar Host Community Agreement for revenue sharing between towns of Groton and Lansing.

Cargill has indicated an intent to sell the salt mine and unofficially had 3 bids from other organizations. Concerns expressed by state env orgs about ongoing issues with the mine and how these would be addressed by new owners. Presentation about issues to be made at the Town Board meeting on Sept 20.

Planning Board

- Conditional approval issued July 24 for Lansing Community Solar LLC/Genie Solar Energy, 5 MW solar facility on 18 acres, Lansingville Road. See site plan attached. FMI: <https://lfweb.tompkins-co.org/WebLink/Browse.aspx?id=71127&dbid=7&repo=Lansing>
- Application for a 9,600 square foot site plan on Verizon Lane (August meeting).

Agriculture and Farmland Protection

Committee discussed amendments regarding the Ag Committee's relationship to the CAC. Concerned with lack of communication with the committee on this change and with the implications of this change.

Still trying to assess the differences between committee recommendations and the final wording of the Ag.