

Town of Saugerties

Conservation Advisory Commission

Meeting minutes for May 29th, 2008

Present: L. Thornton, B. Sawchuk, J. Barbour, M. Wrolsen, S. Thorpe, J. Randall,
E. Shafer, J. Kane, G. Marzec

Absent: A. Weeks

Convened: 7:00 pm, Saugerties Town Hall.

A special meeting was convened to hear a presentation by Behan Planning Associates, one of the vendors that submitted a proposal for the Town's Open Space Plan.

- Mike Welti, Melissa Barry and John Behan of Behan Associates provided background information on their experience with conservation planning and open space planning. The plans fit the community – they don't have a cookie-cutter approach.
- They stated that a successful plan needs to be supported, funded and implemented.
- Melissa Barry stated that they would be flexible with what we want.. They have experience with many Hudson Valley communities. Behan would use existing map resources where available. They would produce resource-rating maps similar to what they produced for the Town of Lagrange. Behan would also determine what State funding is available.
- E. Shafer prepared some comments for discussion and a copy was distributed to all.
- L. Thornton brought up the initial steps of developing a questionnaire for the town.
- J. Behan stated that the initial outreach program is important for shaping future meetings and work groups.
- The question was raised about using available resources to augment/offset the consultant's efforts. Although they were agreeable to some extent, they made a good point of making sure that the level of quality they provide is maintained throughout the process.
- S. Thorpe asked about resource dedication. Melissa stated that now is a good time for them since Behan is wrapping up other work. They typically produce 2 to 3 open space plans per year.
- J. Randall asked if they assist in the implementation and seeking out available grants. J. Behan said, "That's what we love".
- B. Sawchuk asked about the meaning of "preserve". Through conservation zoning, some land would be set aside. Some of this would be accomplished with easements. A discussion on how easements operate ensued.
- A question was raised about how long the plan would take – about a year.
- J. Kane asked about how the NYS Ag and Markets grants could be tied to the Open Space Plan. Farmland preservation is typically a part of such a plan.
- G. Marzec asked if the plan is flexible over time. Ideally, the land that is conserved as open space will remain open. Some elements may need to be modified if situations change.
- L. Thornton asked them about start-up. They could start work this summer.

After the team from Behan left, the members of the CAC held a vote. We were all impressed with Behan's presentation and depth of knowledge in developing Open Space Plans. Voting in favor of recommending Behan Associates to the Town Board were S. Thorpe, J. Randall, J. Barbour, G. Marzec, B. Sawchuk, M. Wrolson and E. Shafer. No one voted against the recommendation. L. Thornton and J. Kane abstained from voting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at ca. 9:00 pm.