

# **Saugerties Conservation Advisory Commission**

April 17, 2025

Zoom Video Conferencing

## **MINUTES**

**Present:** Skip Arthur, Mike Harkavy, Ken Goldberg, Mary O'Donnell, Elizabeth and Stephen Shafer, Carole Furman, Linda Armour, Leslie Surprenant

### **Approval of March 20, 2025 Minutes**

Mary requested edits to the minutes under the "Conservation Protection Fund" section, specifically deletion of two strikeouts. Kevin agreed and said he would send the updated PDF that evening to be posted on the town's website CAC page.

Skip asked for approval; no objections were raised.

### **Climate Smart Community Task Force Report**

Linda and Mary have reviewed submitted actions for credit under the Climate Smart Communities program.

They are considering working on an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy. Up to four points can be earned depending on how robust the policy is (energy efficiency, recycled goods, locally made/organic, stewardship).

Zach will be asked whether the town already has such a policy.

### **Funding Futures Grant**

Linda outlined the program for towns (not villages or cities) in six New York counties: Ulster, Dutchess, Columbia, Green, Orange, and Putnam.

The purpose is to engage communities in structured conversations about what residents want, with stipends for participants and leadership.

Requires a team of at least four. The lead organizer must dedicate 10–12 hours/week. There is funding available including up to \$10,000 for community engagement expenses and \$12,000 for administration/stipends.

Skip mentioned that Katie Cokinos and her husband Alex who are involved with community outreach programs at the Orpheum might be approached as potential leaders.

Linda stressed that the effort might be better suited for next year but could align with long-term engagement goals like the Community Preservation Fund. Linda will contact the grant coordinators for clarification on administrative cost allocation, specifically if any can be earmarked for a coordinator.

## **Repair Café – June 7, 2025**

Linda needs volunteers to sign in guests and act as ushers. Set-up starts at 9 AM. She noted a partnership with Smith Hardware allows on-the-spot parts retrieval with a discount.

## **Community Preservation Fund**

Skip has shared the information with multiple groups (Saugerties Democratic Committee, Beautiful Saugerties, Planning Board) and received minimal responses.

Marbletown Supervisor Rich Parete had offered to speak on his community's experience with CPF but due to initial minimal interest Skip will postpone that offer.

Linda noted this could be a future use of the Funding Futures grant to gauge support for such initiatives.

## **Plastic Reduction Legislation**

There was a discussion about the Town Board's support for NY State Plastic Packaging Reduction Bill. Skip circulated a model resolution and bill for CAC endorsement.

Mike and Mary supported it. Mary highlighted a key benefit: towns could receive reimbursement for recycling and reuse efforts.

Concerns were raised about the long implementation timeline, potential town burden, and the need for future staff to manage grants.

## **Pollinator Meadow**

Leslie couldn't visit the meadow yet but plans to host an Earth Week presentation at the site on Sunday, April 27.

Budget estimate is under \$500 for plantings and materials.

Linda proposed educational partnerships with schools, art and science programs, and groups like Key Club and Blue Cats.

Carole asked about installing a bee hive. Leslie and Linda clarified that managed hives are not allowed due to allergies and competition with native bees.

## **Earth Week Schedule**

Elizabeth Shafer invited members to her farm tour on April 25 to see lambs.

Leslie mentioned that her pollinator event is also on the Earth Week calendar.

Mary and Linda noted Earth Week activities can't be claimed for CSC points because the town isn't the lead organizer.

## **Leachate Letter**

Skip reported that there were three members of the Board who didn't support sending the proposed draft of the letter. There was concern that it might negatively affect the relationship between Doug Meyer, manager of the transfer station, and the representative of DEC that he's working with.

The idea of the letter was to push the DEC to speed their rulemaking process so as to offer guidance in dealing with the contaminated leachate.

It was proposed that the CAC monitor the situation and see what happens between Doug Meyer, the town and the DEC on how leachate is handled moving forward.

## **Environmental Management Council (EMC) Updates**

Leslie noted the upcoming NYSACC Conference: October 24–25, 2025 will take place at the Ukrainian Center in Kerhonkson. The Theme is “Innovative Solutions for a Changing Environment.”

Site visits may include the Zero Waste facility in Clintondale. Hurley and other towns are starting zero waste initiatives.

Leslie will likely step down from EMC in November 2025 at the end of her 3-year term. She explained the responsibilities of the position.

Mary stressed the critical value of EMC liaison which has helped Saugerties access community solar, GHG inventories, and key Ulster County resources.

Skip asked Leslie to advocate for county action on the Zero Waste Implementation Plan stalled since 2019 due to lack of a \$5k planner hire.

Leslie also mentioned the Ulster County's plans to open a re-use center for salvaged materials.

Skip will send Zero Waste information to Leslie for potential EMC advocacy.

There was discussion of the County's Zero Waste Implementation Plan (ZWIP), which has been in committee since 2019. It was hoped that Legislator Hewitt would move it forward at the Energy, Environment, and Sustainability Committee of the Council.

It is a program that informs citizens about zero waste. Apparently the ZWIP and the more recent \$25,000 legislative allocation for Zero Waste training have yet to be implemented.

Leslie was asked to question Manna Jo Green at the next EMC meeting about the status of these projects

## **Zero Waste Program**

There was discussion about the Greenway's Zero Waste Program that was implemented for the Garlic Festival last year and how it might be expanded to the Caribbean Festival, the Food Truck Festival and other events. It was noted that there was reluctance on the part of the Parks Dept. to being involved, possibly due to lack of understanding of extent of resources they would have to commit, which probably would be minimal.

Following the presentation to the Town Board, Skip emailed Zach, Leanne and Fred and asked how the board felt about it and if they had enough information to produce an RFP as Greenway had suggested. If not, what information would they need to go forward on this?

Zach replied that he was impressed with the presentation's mention of granting opportunities. Leanne wrote back that she'd have to talk to the rest of the board, but it might be an option to put it out to the whole community.

Mike asked if the CAC could start to investigate as an environmental group to see if they could generate interest.

There followed a conversation about composting. At present the Saugerties' transfer station offers only drop-off service for organic waste which is taken by Community Composting to be composted at their facility. Hurley had put out a Request For Qualifications involving composting and only Greenways satisfied the request. Although it was felt that Greenway offered solutions, there were questions about the differentiation between organics, compostables and the limitations of "zero waste" as a concept. Unfortunately, Zach was not in attendance to give the Town Board's perspective on any of the issues and possible solutions. Skip will follow up with Leanne on the Town Board's interest in pursuing zero waste program.

## **Adjournment**

Leslie moved and Skip seconded. The motion carried.

Approved unanimously at 6:55 pm

*Prepared by: Kevin Freeman, Secretary*