

Saugerties Conservation Advisory Commission

January 18, 2024, Zoom Video Conferencing

MINUTES

CLIMATE SMART TASK FORCE 5:00 pm Start

Present: Mary O'Donnell, Ken Goldberg, Leslie Surprenant, Skip Arthur, Elizabeth Shafer, Mike Harkavy, Nicole Roskos, Kathleen Gray, Carole Furman, Zach Horton

Approval of November Minutes

Mary moved to accept, Elizabeth second. Minutes approved.

CSC PE 9 Climate Change Education and Engagement Follow up

The committee discussed the guidelines outlined in the CSC document on public education and engagement. The first step would involve a resolution passed by the Town Board, but it would also have to include a summary of the program and a plan to work with partner organizations. There are 4 points available for both engagement strategy/activities for climate change mitigation and adaptation. The action would require at minimum two public events and outreach materials that explain the causes and effects of climate change. It was understood that this would be a large project and, given the confusion over the adaptation/mitigation aspects, it was agreed to table the matter until the next meeting when Robert Irizarry might offer additional input.

Clean Energy Communities 3.0 Actions/Grant Opportunity

Mary questioned if the committee would try to achieve CSC Silver status which would require a total of 300 points. She has documented 247 points at present with the understanding that all points might not be awarded. The application results should be available mid-February. There was discussion on what actions might allow qualification for Silver status. Ken pointed out that achieving Silver might qualify the town for additional grant funding. He mentioned some of the less complicated actions that might earn points, such as trash cans for recyclables in public buildings and a heat emergency plan. These actions would require cooperation with the Town Board. He mentioned that the town could already qualify for part or all of the PE7 Source Water Protection as outlined in the 2021 Comprehensive Plan document. Skip pointed out that increased standing in the CSC program would make it easier to obtain funding from the CEC. Mary explained that it was not a direct correlation of points between CSC certification and the CEC program, but getting to Silver should net an additional 600 points on the CEC scale. The deadline to apply for a CEC \$100,000 grant is October 1st, 2024. She urged members to review the CEC Guidance Document for further discussion.

EMC Report

Leslie reported there was no formal meeting in December.

Planning Board Report

Carole said the previous board meeting was brief, only covering a few subdivisions. She reported on the SEQRA training sessions she attended.

Town Liaison Report

Zach reported on the status of recent water main breaks in Glasco and expressed concern about the stress development will place on the town's infrastructure in the future. An inventory on the existing water and sewer systems was suggested. Kathleen mentioned a study done in Barclay Heights and how there could be FEMA funding available for improvements. She said there are recommendations for proactively protecting resources. Mary asked if the Comprehensive Plan addressed that. Carole added that the NY State is mandating preservation of 30% of open land. Ken added that the DEC has a special source water protection plan and offered to send information to Zach and the committee.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Adjournment

Mary moved with Elizabeth seconding. The motion passed.

CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION 6:40 pm Start

Present: Mary O'Donnell, Ken Goldberg, Leslie Surprenant, Skip Arthur, Elizabeth Shafer, Mike Harkavy, Kathleen Gray, Carole Furman, Mary McNamara

Approval of Minutes

Mary moved to approve the June CAC minutes and Mike seconded. Approved.

Lower Esopus Creek Management Plan

Mary McNamara was called on to inform the commission on the status of the Draft Management Plan and the January 22 deadline for public comments. Skip had indicated that water quality and invasive species management were priorities from his perspective. Leslie added that one of the best ways to gauge water quality is a macroinvertebrate study, specifically above and below sewage treatment facilities and tributaries. Mary McNamara indicated that there's already money for the county and Hudson River Foundation to implement projects on day two. She mentioned her priorities of septic management and stormwater management and wanted to make sure the CAC was in agreement. Skip added to the discussion about turbidity that the source was controlled by the DEP. Mary McNamara said a consent order that was signed in 2013 between New York State DEC and New York City DEP saying if the Management Plan is done while the environmental impact statement has not yet been completed, then the environmental impact statement must consider the Management Plan. In addition to the turbidity issue, she also referred to a section addressing personal septic systems. The commission agreed to review a draft proposal by Mary McNamara to lend their support.

Critical Environmental Areas Follow up

There was no report.

Pollinator Meadow Update

Leslie thanked Carole, Skip, Kathleen, Mike and Elizabeth for their help. She said the town had fenced off and mulched the area. She reported on the activity coordinated with the Boys & Girls Club as well as the media coverage. Since one of the aims of the grant was community involvement, Leslie hoped to engage the high school Ecology or AG Clubs.

Announcements

Mary McNamara was pleased that the town and village have applied for a Department of Transportation grant for an alternative transportation program and carbon reduction program along a segment of 9W. This would be for where the sidewalk ends, not for building sidewalks, but for a side path.

Leslie added that there would be a Clean Power Expo and Information Session for home energy improvements in Kingston on the 25th.

Adjournment

Mary moved to adjourn with Elizabeth seconding. Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Prepared by: Kevin Freeman, Secretary