

Town of Saugerties

Conservation Advisory Commission

Meeting minutes for July 15th, 2010

Present: Sandra Thorpe; Josh Randall; Mary Anne Wrolsen; Lizbeth Shafer; Brian Sawchuk, Chairperson; Leanne Thornton, Town Board Liaison

Absent: G. Marzec; J. Barbour

Convened: 7:00 pm, Saugerties Town Hall.

- Leanne spoke about complaints by neighbors regarding a homeowner's construction on a Sensitive Overlay Water District in Malden, issues of potential Building Code non-compliance, and what could be done about these problems.
- Leanne then reported on a meeting the Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC) had with Saugerties' Tax Assessor Frank Orlando, on questions such as what tax consequences the Open Space Plan might have for Saugerties. Mr. Orlando discussed the assessment process according to market value of land in accord with four criteria, and said that all vacant land is assessed the same way using this criteria. Josh took issue, saying that with regard to vacant land more thought should be given to the different types of soil, rock structures, etc, and Leanne said these were taken into account. The proviso for conservation subdivisions in the Open Space Plan can serve similar purposes as conservation easements. Saugerties should encourage conservation easements through the purchase of development rights as Warwick and Red Hook have done, though the economy now makes this difficult. Many young people want to farm but the cost of farmland is prohibitive; Leanne spoke of a California program, Farm Link, in which owners of large properties lease part of their land to young people for farming. She gave us copies of CPC questions and Mr. Orlando's responses.
- Sandra raised issues of concern about water use, and said there are now houses along Fish Creek Road without water. This is not only due to variations in wells but may be due to overuse of the reservoir. We also discussed the problem of the increasing number and toxicity of pollutants in local and regional water. Sandra also gave us a list of Policy Tools for riparian protection and restoration, and reminded us of an upcoming deadline to apply for assistance like Hudson Estuary's Trees for Tribs, that provides plantings along streams for erosion control. In discussing funding issues, Sandra said she thought there were additional --perhaps D.E.P.-- funds available from a group associated with the Upper Ashokan, and Leanne said she would look into this.
- Brian raised concerns about the lax or erratic enforcement of local laws on Signage, especially laws about temporary signs, saying he thinks Saugerties 'picks and chooses' which laws to enforce. He expressed particular concern about temporary signs such as one on a farm stand on Route 32, on a carpet store and on Farchers (Lox & Bagels). Concern was also expressed about the Used Car Park and two old gas stations near Guttenberg.
- A meeting on the future of Opus 40 is planned, with a potential grant or public funding (though opposed by Nelson Birhans) being considered.
- The CPC Review Committee will be held next Thursday July 22 at 7 pm.; Josh will serve as CAC Liaison to this meeting. Leanne asked Lizbeth if she is

available as a liaison for an alternate meeting, which she could be normally although not on July 22nd.

As we had no further agenda items to discuss, a motion was made and seconded at about 8:50 pm, for our meeting to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,
Lizbeth Shafer