

Saugerties Conservation Advisory Commission

June 15, 2023 Zoom Video Conferencing

MINUTES

CLIMATE SMART TASK FORCE 5:00 pm Start

Present: Elizabeth Shafer, Mike Harkavy, Ken Goldberg, Leslie Surprenant, Carole Furman, Skip Arthur, Sakinah Irizarry, Tana Bigelow, Zach Horton

Approval of May Minutes

Minutes accepted with Kathleen's clarification.

Presentation: Update on Environmental Projects by Supervisor Fred Costello

Fred Costello joined to speak about the Bristol Beach State Park. He said the news was optimistic working with the state to improve access and utilization. The state had concerns about the defined use and were opposed to a planned amphitheater. There will be a walking path along the old railway line and along ATV trails. The town and state agree to pursue goals and work will begin on the trails.

Elizabeth inquired about a possible brickyard museum. Fred said they could maintain the structures but it would be left as an artifact.

Leslie inquired about informational kiosks for the railway, brick making and ecosystem.

Fred brought up the Winston Farm, emphasizing it will be impactful beyond our borders. He said conversations with the owners are maturing and they are engaged with the town planners for the environmental impact statement. He was told the water study was successful. He said it is clear the zoning change will not allow development from Route 32 to North Ridge Road. It would not appreciably be in competition with the village. He mentioned the development in Poughkeepsie called Eastdale where the developers invited the ambulance corps onsite including coffee shops, dog parks etc. Fred said the zoning opportunity could allow consolidation of amenities and scale buildings appropriately. The density would allow the utilization of alternative energies.

Skip said he visited Eastdale with Mike and it was disappointing that all the units were industrial, including Astroturf, and all were rental with no opportunity for home ownership. Fred agreed that Winston Farms would need a blend of housing stock.

Mike asked about the water studies and the relationship of supply to the town and village. Fred said the water situation was in early conversations but the plan was for the developers to connect to town distribution.

Fred expressed frustration with the town's inability to source electric vehicles. There are issues with the supply and options that make internal combustion engine-powered vehicles still more cost effective.

He was happy to report that the chiller for the ice rink was being upgraded thanks to a DEC grant to reduce the carbon footprint.

On the CCA, Fred said it was more accepted than the previous implementation.

Carole had a question about the electric vehicles and how the cost effectiveness might be investigated moving forward.

Mike asked for a follow up on the CCA, including Fred's sense of the program. Fred said people were more accepting and he was hopeful that it would succeed.

Skip added that in the village there were calls but less resistance to the opt-out mandate. At the public meetings on the CCA he said that the public asked reasonable questions. He reiterated that the real confusion was attributable to the verbiage in the CCA letter itself. He said that Joule CEO Stromback Jessica suggestion was to write letters about the confusion on the subject of the letter.

Fred remained optimistic that the CCA can breed new programs moving forward.

Zach reiterated the feedback he has received about frustration concerning the opt-out feature. He added that the town's goals are being better received.

UC Fair CSC Volunteers

The fair will take place August and Mike encouraged CSC members to sign up and attend.

Planning Board Report

Carole said the planning board wouldn't meet until later in the week and there was nothing to report.

Town Liaison Report

Zach said the JC Field park in Barclay Heights is in need of upgrades. Both the pickleball courts in Cantine and the dog park are nearing completion.

He said he has no feedback from the board yet but plans to revisit the town's short-term rental regulations, perhaps imposing a cap.

He reiterated that the board is still waiting for the Winston Farms studies.

Mike asked about the short-term regulation amendment. Zach said that Saugerties has the most lawful AirBNB in Ulster County. He would like to focus on the owner/operator model

Ulster County Environmental Management Council Report

Leslie missed the last meeting and had nothing to report.

Adjournment

The motion passed.

CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION 6:00 pm Start

Present: Elizabeth Shafer, Mike Harkavy, Ken Goldberg, Leslie Surprenant, Carole Furman, Skip Arthur

Approval of Minutes

The May minutes were approved.

Report on Ashokan Reservoir Protocols

Leslie attended a presentation on the release of reservoir operations. The city has decision points on the shutdown regarding flow.

Starting October water will be channeled to the Catskill/Croton system temporarily until next June when the system is rebalanced. Releases will continue. Ashokan will maintain a 10% void but still kept relatively high. There was what was called animated discussion about the releases especially if a flood is expected. This was a discussion with the DEP that is ongoing.

The DEP was adamant that they will not postpone the project due to infrastructure readiness and hydrological considerations. Any questions should be directed to the DEP. Next meeting of the working group is September 8th.

Announcements

Leslie met with Greg Chorvas about the pollinator meadow. It was determined that the site would not get enough sun. There was an adjustment in the site orientation.

Leslie will schedule an assessment of aquatic vegetation.

Adjournment

The motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 6:22 pm.

Prepared by: Kevin Freeman, Secretary