

Saugerties Conservation Advisory Commission

June 16, 2025

Zoom Video Conferencing

MINUTES

Present: Skip Arthur, Mike Harkavy, Ken Goldberg, Mary O'Donnell, Leslie Surprenant, Kathleen Gray, Zach Horton, Stephen and Elizabeth Shafer, Linda Armour, Adriana Beltrani, Stephanie Bassler, Bill Barr, Janet and Margarita Asiain, Michelle Aizenstat, Kathy Gordon

Approval of May 15, 2025, Minutes

The May 15 minutes were accepted.

Power Point presentation / Discussion of DGEIS/PDD

Skip opened the discussion on the Winston Farm Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) and proposed Planned Development District (PDD).

Adriana Beltrani, Senior Environmental Planner with Nelson Pope Voorhees serving as the town's planning consultant made a Power Point Presentation and recapped the project's evolution since its initial submission in 2022. On April 30 of this year, a revised preliminary DGEIS for the Winston Farm Planned Development District was submitted to the Town Board. She explained that the Town Board issued a notice of completion May 21, 2025, on the revised DGEIS document. The Town Board certified that the DGEIS is adequate for public review ~~and~~ which began the 45-day public comment period that is necessary for the final GEIS and the Finding Statement.

Adriana explained that the project sponsor has updated the proposed action to only incorporate a rezoning of the property to a Planned Development District (PDD). This new approach shifts the analysis of the DGEIS from one that is specific to a development outcome to one that is focused on identifying environmental thresholds. She explained how the threshold-specific DGEIS ~~now~~ can establish numeric limits for water use, traffic capacity, greenhouse gas emissions, and other resource constraints that will be codified in the PDD. Stephanie and Skip pointed out that if thresholds were based on worst case scenarios (RWCS) the results would be unacceptable. Adriana emphasized that future developers must demonstrate compliance with these thresholds at each stage: master plan, site-specific review, and final approvals.

Mary asked about the feasibility of a permanent reservation of the approximately 500-acre contiguous forest block in the western portion of the site, underscoring its carbon-sequestration value. Adriana agreed that a mapped conservation easement or deed restriction could be woven into the PDD language. Mike and Skip urged a clearly delineated open-space overlay to prevent ambiguity about protected lands. Stephen sought assurance that open-space and other thresholds would serve as binding ceilings, not aspirational goals. Adriana confirmed that proposing anything ~~below~~ above the stated thresholds would trigger a supplemental SEQRA review. Janet

Asiain and Michelle Aizenstat questioned who would craft and vet the eventual Master Development Plan in the absence of a single project sponsor and whether an additional public hearing would be mandated. Adriana responded that the Town Board, supported by planning staff and consultants, will oversee that phase under procedures to be finalized in the Findings Statement.

There was discussion about the precise definitions of “open space,” “conservation easement,” and compliance with forthcoming DEC wetland regulations; explicit mapping of preserved versus developable parcels, and enforceable language in Appendix P of the DGEIS to prevent piecemeal development. Adriana assured the CAC that all substantive comments would be incorporated into the public record, inform revisions to the PDD zoning text and shape the Findings Statement. Public hearings are scheduled for June 18 and July 16 with a deadline for submission of written comment July 28. Mike reiterated that the true impact of the CAC’s work will come through its written comments on the DGEIS/PDD, focusing on open-space definitions, greenhouse-gas thresholds, and clear review criteria, rather than solely through public hearings.

Repair Café Update

Linda gave an update on the latest Repair Café. She reported that the past Saturday’s event held at the Greco Senior Center drew 67 community members and was staffed by 18 volunteer fixers, supported by a crew of five or six for set up and breakdown. 100 items were brought for repair, 80 were successfully restored to service, while 20 were beyond repair. To avoid overtaxing volunteers, the Repair Café will be held three times a year with the next session set for October 4th.

Adjournment

The motion carried.

Prepared by: Kevin Freeman, Secretary