

TOWN OF RED HOOK
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting

May 11, 2011

Members present: Chairwoman Brenda Cagle, Laurie Husted, Zoie Riel, Dr. Jane Ferguson, Susan Ellis Sarah Imboden (7:22 P.M.), Denis Collet (7:42 P.M.)

Chairwoman Brenda Cagle called the meeting to order at 7:15 P.M.

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 13, 2011 MEETING: Benda Cagle noted that on Page 4, in the third sentence, the Planning Board hired Cary Institute biologist Michael Klemens. The minutes were approved as amended with a motion made by Jane Ferguson and seconded by Zoie Riel.

ARBOR DAY/EARTH DAY: Sarah Imboden reported that Arbor Day/Earth day was sunny and breezy, bringing a decent turn out to the activities. She said that the display had 8 large posters of ideas for recycling and reducing environmental impact. Many people looked at the posters and said that they already followed all the suggestions. Sarah observed that it would have been helpful to have put together more hands on activities for children, such as taking cleaning product recipes and having them make the product.

A suggestion for the The Zero Waste concept presentation is to have a comparison of the cost of taking one's own trash to the Recycling Center for pay-per-bag disposal, versus the cost of garbage pick-up at the door. Zoie suggested that it might be good information to put on the bulletin board or post at the Recycling Center. The challenge for next year will be to implement the suggestions, including the idea that the display needs a banner to stand out. CAC members were interested in locating environmentally sensitive printing. Susan Ellis said that there is a need to add events to attract people who are not committed to environmental practices, such as musical or other performances.

APPLE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL: Brenda Cagle reported that she, Energy Manager Anne Marie Hirschberger, Laurie Husted, Kathy O'Connor and Susan Ellis helped staff a booth at Apple Blossom Festival Day on April 30, 2011. They handed out information on National Bike Week and Bike to Work Day, the Red Hook 10% Challenge pledge and events schedule.

REGIONAL FRESHWATER ISSUES FORUM: Anne Rubin and Sarah Imboden attended the Regional Freshwater Issues Forum on April 16, 2011 at the Cary Institute. Sarah reported that Russell Urban-Mead gave a presentation on groundwater issues. Other presentations were given on wetlands, the water cycle and New York State's new Stormwater Regulations. Sarah noted that the new Stormwater Regulations are much stricter; they include Low Impact Development (LID) practices, what is necessary to do for replacing contaminated soils, keeping natural run-off barriers, and what is backed up by law to achieve net zero run-off after development. As climate change is expected to increase precipitation in this area, stormwater will be more of an issue.

NEW HIGHWAY GARAGE PROPOSAL: Highway Superintendent Theresa Burke spoke with the Engineer for the proposed project, Dan Proper, who said that he will include water monitoring in the plans. He is also looking into the deed to the Recycling Center, and noted that engineering plans are required to use LID practices. Zoie Riel added that she would research the deed agreements on the Recycling Center also.

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES REVIEW: Jane Ferguson summarized the Planning Board minutes for April 16 and May 2, 2011. She said that the proposed subdivision for the Feller property that the CAC discussed at the April 13, 2011 CAC meeting did not come up. The Planning Board did discuss the application of Wendy and Arvine Coon for a special permit to establish a farm market at the intersection of Rokeby Road and Route 9. There was disagreement about whether or not the proposal would be regulated as a farm market, or as agriculture. The applicants had approval from the Department of Transportation (DOT) for a curb cut and driveway to Route 9, but no Planning Board approval. Anne Rubin reviewed the May 2 Planning Board minutes and sent an e-mail comment emphasizing that the Town is not doing anything to reduce impervious surfaces. Laurie Husted will review the Planning Board minutes for the June meeting.

CELLULAR ANTENNAE ON TOWN WATER TOWER: Denis Collet noted that he had not realized that the Town owns the Water Tower which is a host for cellular antennae. Neighboring landowner Frank Green has experienced health complaints that he attributes to increased radiation from the antennae. Brenda Cagle said that the issue had been discussed before, at the time of an application to add an additional antenna. At that time, she asked members of the Environmental Management Council list serve network to report on their town's experience with cellular antennae. The answers at that time indicated that no particular issues were known, and that cell phone tower radiation was well below regulated standards.

Denis said that Frank had used a meter that detects the level of radiation from a microwave oven and was seeing spikes double the recommended amount. Denis recommended that the Town have an independent testing and review. Brenda Cagle will review the comments from the list serve, and see if the CAC should follow up on the issue.

CONSERT: Brenda Cagle reported that a firm named CONSERT is working with Central Hudson to monitor residential electric usage, and will install meters in houses of volunteers who agree to participate in a pilot program.

CONFERENCE CALL WITH ENERGY MANAGER ANNE MARIE HIRSCHBERGER: The CAC had a report from Energy Manager Anne Marie Hirschberger by phone conference. She said that the most exciting project proposed is the CONSERT Smart Grid Pilot Project, adding that Red Hook is one of the first towns in New York to be considered for the pilot project. CONSERT works with Central Hudson to measure electric usage of a residence in real time. The company installs meters that will let them keep track of electric usage and set up pre-programmed adjustments for electric hot water heaters and air conditioning units to shift usage to off-peak times. The adjustments should allow for a reduction of 15 – 20 % in monthly electric charges and a reduction in carbon emissions by reducing power consumption.

Central Hudson needs 200 residents to agree to installation of a "smart meter," and is looking for residents with high usage from air conditioning systems or electric hot water heaters. Brenda Cagle, Laurie Husted

and Anne Marie are working to put links on the website. Anne Marie added that she thinks that CONCERT is still working out the details to be ready to implement the program on July 1.

Anne Marie gave a follow-up of the application situation for the New York Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) 22-28 Grant. She has spoken with Leo from the Northern Westchester Energy Action Consortium and learned that they are bidding for categories 1 and 2 of the grant. As NYSERDA is only awarding one or two grants per region, Anne Marie suggested that the Town would not have much chance to be awarded the grant. Anne Marie did write a letter of support for Red Hook and it should be at the Town Hall on May 12.

Laurie Husted asked Anne Marie for an update on the School District lighting and solar opportunities. Anne Marie has copies of three Central Hudson lighting upgrade proposals from School Facilities and Operations Director, Perry Sheldon. She spoke with Michael Mathison, Central Hudson contractor for the proposals, and confirmed that the proposals only need to be signed and returned, and the upgrades will not cost the school. Laurie noted that it would be helpful to recontact Perry Sheldon and keep the contracts on the top of his list to do.

Anne Marie Hirschberger reported that she e-mailed Dan Proper, the Town engineer working on the Highway Garage proposal to follow up by asking if any assistance would be helpful with energy issues. Denis Collet asked Anne Marie if she is involved with the photovoltaic installation project for the Firehouse. She said that she is not and asked what is going on. Denis said that he went to a Board meeting at the Firehouse and noted that they are still trying to decide who will do the engineering to determine the ability of the roof to support the photovoltaic installation. In a conversation with Town Purchasing Agent Ted Kudzy and Jay Trapp, Denis learned that Crawford Associates is doing engineering work for the Town. Denis asked Anne Marie to give a synopsis of her meeting with Ron Kamen.

RECYCLING: Sarah Imboden reported on her research into the concept of a Recycle Bank. She said that a basic issue is whether or not the Town or Village pays the cost of garbage collection and removal. Only the villages do, so they would be able to do a Recycle Bank. Sarah noted that the annual fee for the program would be \$10,000. She added that Jenn Norris, Red Hook Village Trustee, is getting up to speed on garbage issues. The program would need a strong, independent local management.

Zoie Riel said that she would like the numbers that Sarah put together for the Recycle Bank concept, she would really like to distribute the information. Sarah agreed to make a summary of the pros and cons, and will e-mail it.

Laurie Husted asked if T. J. Hackett would give the CAC a Recycling 2010 report and inform the CAC of what the Town pays for hauling. Laurie noted that Green Fiber is paying Bard College for paper; they are an Albany company that makes cellulose insulation. She will give their name to T. J. Hackett.

10% CHALLENGE: Laurie Husted reported that she has worked on energy parties. On Earth Day, the 10% Challenge Committee awarded raffle prizes of compost bins. They promoted National Bike month. Brenda Cagle suggested that Town Councilpersons should consider biking. Brenda added that the Tour de Red Hook is scheduled for May 18, 2011, and Taste Budds is offering free coffee to bikers.

Brenda Cagle noted that September 24, 2011 is Planet Moving Day; she thought that the symbol of a bicycle would be a unifying theme. She added that the day is also Hardscrabble Day, and suggested that perhaps the CAC could buy a bicycle and raffle it off. She also said that it would be nice to have a shuttle for Red Hook villagers to go to Rhinebeck and Hannaford.

ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARD: Brenda Cagle announced that the nominations for the Environmental Excellence Award are due in May 20, 2011. She asked if any CAC member had an interest in writing part of it.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS:

- 1) **PHOTOVOLTAIC GRANTS FOR FARMS:** Denis Collet reported that Rose Hill Farm and Northwind Farms are trying for grants to do photovoltaic installations. Dave Byrne of Hudson Valley Clean Energy is working with Rich Brezinski. Denis suggested that the CAC send a letter of support and said that Hudson Valley Clean Energy may know of grants that the CAC is not aware of.
- 2) **SEWER PROJECT:** Brenda Cagle reported that Village Trustee Brent Kovalchik suggested that if the CAC had an interest in a reworking of the sewer project that it should send a letter of support. CAC members discussed the possibility. Susan Ellis said that she would need some assurance that the economics of the project could be supported by the parties included, suggesting a program to help with the hook-up fee. Jane Ferguson said that she would encourage the County Health Department to do a survey of the proposed sewer district.
- 3) **BRUSH DISPOSAL:** Jane Ferguson expressed interest in pursuing a request that the Town address the issue of brush disposal for residents who have no space to do so.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, June 8, 2011 at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary