

TOWN OF RED HOOK
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting

October 12, 2011

Members present: Chairwoman Brenda Cagle, Susan Ellis, Dr. Jane Ferguson, Zoie Riel (7:20 P.M.)

Absent: Anne Rubin, Denis Collet, Laurie Husted, Sarah Imboden, Karen Schneller-McDonald

Guests: Energy Manager Anne Marie Hirschberger, Councilwoman Micki Strawinski

CALL TO ORDER/ QUORUM: Chairwoman Brenda Cagle called the meeting to order at 7:15 P.M. There was not a quorum for approval of the September minutes.

RUTH OJA ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOLARSHIP: Brenda Cagle reported that she had received a letter from the Community Foundation about the funding of the Ruth Oja Environmental Scholarship. According to the rules of the Foundation, the Scholarship fund needs to reach a level of \$10,000 within 5 years to remain a separate scholarship offering. If the fund fails to reach the level required by the agreement, its balance will become a part of the Education Field of Interest Fund. The Community Foundation told Brenda that Fund is something for teachers. If the balance is at least \$5,000 at the time of transfer, it shall retain its fund name and be listed under the Education Field of Interest funds in the annual report. It would be called the Ruth Oja Scholarship, but Brenda added that she didn't think that it would go specifically for environmental education.

CAC members discussed the situation and Brenda Cagle noted that she spoke with Andrea Reynolds, President of the Community Foundation. Andrea told Brenda that the CAC needs to make a decision, and that there are two options: to develop a plan to raise funds to bring the scholarship up to \$10,000, or to spend it down at \$500 per year. The total gifts made were \$5,230; the total scholarships awarded were \$2,000; and the current balance is \$1,703.77. The last gifts were in 2007, until Ruth Oja donated in May this year. Jane Ferguson asked if that meant that there would be scholarships for three more years; Brenda thinks that the Foundation would do the scholarships for three more years if they know that it is the CAC's plan. CAC members further discussed the options and concluded that raising \$10,000 would be difficult in this economy and perhaps the best option would be to spend it down. Susan Ellis asked if the CAC would consider speaking to Ruth about a trust set-up or whether or not to spend it down. Zoie Riel said that she would speak with Ruth to find out what she would like.

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (CAP) REVIEW: Anne Marie Hirschberger reported that 3 stakeholder meetings have been scheduled for October 19, 20 and 24. In November there would be a 30 day public comment period. She has met with Kim Gomez of the Red Hook Chamber of Commerce and Mary Pat Budd, science teacher at Red Hook Central School as individual stakeholder contacts. Zoie Riel asked how Anne Marie is promoting the stakeholder meetings. Anne Marie replied that she met with Kathy O'Connor of PANDA and filmed a short spot for the television station. She spoke to a public relations person at Pace University who will send a press release to local newspapers. Zoie suggested an e-mail to \$10% Challenge participants. Micki Strawinski said that she has a whole list of media contacts, including radio stations and will e-mail it to Anne Marie.

Zoie asked if Anne Marie had an agenda for the stakeholder meetings. Anne Marie replied that she will go over the draft Climate Action Plan section by section with bullet points for actions that can be taken by the public; she wants those who attend to feel comfortable asking questions and making comments. Jane Ferguson suggested that for news releases that the meetings be called something other than "stakeholder" meetings, perhaps a "public

comment period,” as it may be a more familiar term. Brenda Cagle said that public comment might imply a legal response. Micki Strawinski suggested Community Forum on the draft Climate Action Plan.

Emissions Targets: Anne Marie said that she wants to confirm an emissions target; she feels that 15% by 2020 town wide is most realistic. The Mayor of Croton said that they are finding it difficult to achieve savings. The Town of Bedford has set a goal of 20% by 2020, but has a lot of manpower to work on it. The whole point is to motivate residents to work on emissions reductions. Brenda Cagle noted that the CAC couldn't make a decision without a quorum, and would need e-mail feedback from absent members.

Zoie Riel asked if using the term climate change is a turn-off to people who don't believe in climate change. Anne Marie replied that the title needs to include the term to follow ICLEI protocol, but the program name includes Climate Smart Communities. Zoie thought that would be more positive. Jane Ferguson said that while keeping the name there should be an emphasis on “saving energy is saving money.” Anne Marie will draft a flyer and circulate it for comment.

Who will take charge of each sector of the Climate Action Plan (CAP)?: Anne Marie asked CAC members to be thinking of who would take charge of each sector of the CAP, such as Energy, Transportation, etc., to see that the actions are implemented.

Website posting: Anne Marie asked about posting a draft Climate Action Plan on the website. Brenda said that is not a problem, but asked if Anne Marie is ready. Anne Marie will send the draft CAP to Brenda.

Challenges/Awards: Anne Marie said that in speaking with Sustainable Hudson Valley Director Melissa Everett, Brenda, and Laurie Husted, she realized that it is important to motivate people with awards and challenges. She asked CAC members for suggestions. Zoie asked if Red Hook could compete with other towns, would it increase participation. Anne Marie replied that competition motivates action. Zoie added that it would be helpful if the State would assist with set up of groups of like communities or keep a chart of goals and projects. Anne Marie agreed, and added that a statewide database would be particularly helpful. She asked that CAC members let her know where any suggestions for awards or challenges might fit in. Brenda Cagle noted that the CAC has about 14 gift certificates to local restaurants from the time that she visited local businesses with a contractor for the Central Hudson energy project.

Brenda asked Anne Marie about some charts and data that she is working on. Anne Marie replied that Tim Banach is working on that for her as part of the Greenhouse Gas Inventory update. Tim is an Energy Policy Analyst at Pace University and he will come up with Anne Marie, probably next week, to gather more data that he couldn't download.

Bike Lanes: CAC members discussed bike lanes as part of the Transportation Sector. Micki Strawinski noted that as the Town roads have been repaved, the additional material has made a drop to the shoulders that make it difficult for bikers. Susan Ellis added that it would be good, if when repaving is planned, that the shoulder be addressed. Zoie asked if when the Town makes any Town road improvements, could they include bike lanes? Councilwoman Micki Strawinski added that it would help if there were grant funding for the improvement. Brenda Cagle said that it can be required of proposals in the Traditional Neighborhood Development zone. Zoie added that it is a cost efficient addition, and the Town should stress bike lanes.

CAC members acknowledged Anne Marie's extensive and detailed work on the CAP.

Anne Marie left at 8:20 P.M.

NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION COUNCILS CONFERENCE, October 21-23, 2010: Brenda Cagle asked if any CAC member thought that they would like to go. Susan Ellis said that she might. Brenda asked Supervisor Sue Crane for budget permission for one, but would ask for another. Brenda might go if no one else does.

FIREHOUSE PHOTOVOLTAIC INSTALLATION: Brenda Cagle had asked Denis Collet to review solar siting guidelines. She reported that regarding the installation of solar panels on the Firehouse, the solar array cannot go on the roof. After the Intermunicipal Task Force meeting Friday September 9, Village Trustee Brent Kovalchik, Supervisor Sue Crane, Councilman Bill O'Neill, Dick Hansen and Brenda went over to the Firehouse. Sue Crane noted that structural issues prevent installation of the solar panels on the firehouse roof. They will have to go in the field behind, which straddles Village and Town property. There also was concern about the visibility of the solar array, which is 18 feet high, from Glen Ridge Road. Sue Crane suggested moving the array behind the Firehouse parking lot so that the property is entirely owned by the Village.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT: Brenda and Laurie Husted have talked about a new grant proposal, a Consolidated Funding Application, which is due on October 31, 2011. Melissa Everett is working on it. Brenda spoke with the engineer for the new Highway Garage, who is interested. The engineer felt that the biggest value would be the asphalt needed for the Highway Garage site, but Brenda did not see how that would fit the category of infrastructure. The engineer asked who would be writing the grant.

ELECTRONIC WASTE COLLECTION: Brenda Cagle thanked Zoie Riel for her work on the e-waste collection held on Hardscrabble Day. Brenda reported that there were 12,668 pounds collected. Zoie wants to plan another collection. Jane Ferguson suggested doing Apple Blossom Day and Hardscrabble Day as a yearly schedule; all were in favor. Zoie would like to have a paper shredder and find some funding to do a hazardous waste collection.

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN REVISITED: CAC members discussed further thoughts on the CAP. Ideas were that there need to be more specifics and examples. The Flex Tech Audit option should be brought to Kim Gomez at the Chamber of Commerce, so that it can be discussed with the businesses. Susan Ellis noted that under the Recycling Sector, all plastics except #4 and #6 should be included, not just #1 and #2.

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

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, November 9, 2011 at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Ellis, Secretary