

Conservation Advisory Council, Town of New Lebanon, New York

Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 11, 2016, Samson Environmental Center, Darrow School

Attendees: Cynthia Creech, David Farren, Craig Westcott

Guest: Eric Johnson

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 P.M.

Eric Johnson reintroduced himself. His main concern about joining the CAC is time.

Cynthia Creech shared details on the current organization of the Town Board. In her new role as deputy town supervisor, she will act for now as the CAC liaison.

David Farren discussed a draft of the 2015 Annual Report and asked Cynthia and Craig to provide details about training sessions they attended during the year.

David Farren provided an update on the Hudson River Estuary Program grant for the Natural Resources Conservation Plan (NRCP). He was assured in a telephone call at the end of the week that the contract is in final review and should be completed shortly. Cynthia suggested that the contract would need to be approved by the Town Board. Colleen Teal, as the NYS Grants Gateway administrator for the town, will need to assign a contract signatory role in the Grants Gateway before the contract can be released for approval. Meanwhile, Gretchen Stevens of Hudsonia will prepare and submit a contract between Hudsonia and the Farmscape Ecology Program, our consultants for the NRCP, and the town, which would also likely need to be approved by the Town Board.

Craig Westcott reviewed the process for completing the NRCP. He has reached out to the New Lebanon School Superintendent but has not yet made contact with the high school teacher who could provide student volunteers. Eric Johnson stressed the importance of involving young people in town undertakings and we will continue to pursue the involvement of New Lebanon Junior/Senior High School students.

Meanwhile, Craig has arranged for the participation of the Hands to Work program at Darrow School each Wednesday morning from 8:45 to 11:20 A.M. Claudia and Conrad Vispo of the Hawthorne Valley Farmscape Ecology Program and Gretchen Stevens attended the initial session on January 6. Gretchen presented an illustrated lecture on intermittent woodland pools and Conrad one on ancient forests, the initial focus of our NRCP project. Craig and David of the CAC attended as did Caleb Corliss (Darrow staff) and Darrow students Abe Pritzker, Marshall Dong and Fei. Our guest was Ben Brownell, who lives nearby and is involved with the current restructuring at the Abode.

The next CAC meeting will be Monday, February 8, beginning at 6:30 P.M. in the Samson Environmental Center at Darrow. Gretchen Stevens and the Vispos will present an overview of the NRCP project.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

*(Respectfully submitted by David Farren)*