

May 11, 2011

Attending: Trina Porte (Chair), David Cullen, Craig Westcott (Secretary), Gretchen Stevens (Guest)  
The Chair, Trina Porte called the meeting to order at 4:07pm  
David Cullen moved to approve the April 6 minutes, Craig Westcott seconded, and all were in favor.

Gretchen Stevens defined the key difference between an Open Space Inventory (OSI) versus Open Space Plan (OSP). The former is "knowing what you have," the latter is proposing "what to do" with the open space.

OSI-This effort/document requires some mapping, and to do it properly, dedicated GIS work from aerial photos. The best starting point for this are the orthophoto images available from New York State GIS Clearinghouse, which will include both public and private lands. It is typical that most of the conservation will need to occur on private land. The "pubic education" component of both OSI and Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) is of key importance, e.g. a landowner may have 10 acres of forest that is actually part of a 650 forest that supports important species, which could lead to the recommendation that the multiple privately owned parcels that make up a significant habitat be subject to some type of conservation arrangement together. These documents should be produced in "dispassionate" or unbiased way.

The Hillsdale CAC has commented on proposed projects during planning board meetings, has been invited to report to the planning board on the activities of CAC, has conducted site visits, and then has presented that as information to the planning board.

-Gretchen Stevens shared a document called "Preliminary Steps for Preparing NRI and OSI" and the following suggestions:

1. Create a list of goals (OUTLINE) for the project/document, and a procedure to ensure that the CAC remains in control of the process and the scope of work.
2. Start by identifying "undeveloped" open spaces. Where is the open space and what is its character? Must establish a minimum size threshold. e.g. Contiguous habitat areas of 25, 50, 100, 250, etc. acres.
3. Partners (e.g. Clark Engineering: would this firm be willing to support an Open Space Inventory using their resources? Do they know someone, e.g. graduate student, who could/would take it on?)
4. The CAC/Town could hire a planning consultant to produce both documents, and should be careful to select a firm/individual who will create something original, not simply re-work a similar report from a different project.

David Cullen reported on the NYSEDA energy auditing process. He has approached several Town residents who have agreed in principle to be contacts for the Town for home energy efficiency audits, upgrades, and funding. He will continue to develop the project.

Craig Westcott moves to table the letter regarding a moratorium on development on the Knob/Taconic Ridge. David Cullen seconds. All in favor.

David Cullen moves that we present a report to the Town Board based on Karen Strong's Habitat Report. Craig Westcott seconds, all in favor. The process for this presentation will be presented at the next meeting of the CAC.

Next meeting: Wednesday, June 29th, 2011, 4-5:30pm @ the Darrow School Samson Environmental Center.

Trina Porte adjourns meeting at 5:46pm