

Conservation Advisory Council, Town of New Lebanon
Minutes for monthly meeting on January 10, 2022, held via Zoom

Present: CAC members David Farren, Tyler Fogg, Robert Gilson, Donald Lamonaca, Peg Munves, Steve Powers; Guests Marc Anthonisen, Deb Gordon, Bill O'Neil, Bruce Shenker, Monte Wasch

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M.

- **Bill O'Neil:** We interviewed Bill O'Neil to become a member of the CAC. A retired lawyer from Springfield, MA, Bill has lived in New Lebanon for 8 years, is treasurer of the Town Library Board and has devoted many volunteer hours to Trees for Tribes in Shatford Park. At the end of the meeting, the CAC voted unanimously to invite Bill to join us. David Farren will pass that news to Supervisor Houghtling for the Town Board to appoint Bill tomorrow evening.
- **Minutes:** We approved the minutes for the monthly meeting on December 10, 2021, as amended and they will be sent to the Town Clerk for posting.
- **Hudson River Estuary Program:** David reminded everyone that HREP will host a webinar on rare species on January 20. They have also scheduled a 3-part series on vernal pools and amphibians to be held in the early evenings of January 25 and February 1 and 15.
- **NYSACC membership:** David arranged for the 2022 membership dues of \$75 to be paid from unexpended 2021 funds.
- **Trees for Tribes:** The unplanted potted seedlings are currently overwintering behind the smaller parks garage. Peg Munves will update the Town Board in March and present a revised plan with the aim of completing the work in May.
- **Realtor Brochure:** David received the realtor brochure from Gretchen Stevens. A print run of 800 copies is intended for realty and homebuilding companies as well as planning board members but may be too few. The colorful brochure calls attention to environmental issues that should help shape site planning for new residences. He'll send it out tomorrow for members to review. Gretchen invites members to join a Zoom call in late January or February to determine how best to distribute the brochure. Steve Powers suggested that New Lebanon could print copies for its own needs.
- **Water Study:** We have money in the budget to sample wells for PFAs but are in a holding pattern. Spring and early summer would be the best times for sampling. Peg sent a letter to selected town residents, including the town historian, asking for information on New Lebanon's manufacturing history. Peg has identified a company that can test samples for \$247 each. Steve Winkley will help identify wells to be sampled.
- **Wastewater Treatment Study:** Peg and Deb Gordon have been exploring the possibility of developing wastewater treatment for downtown New Lebanon in conjunction with the BEDC. They would like to apply for a grant of up to \$30,000 from the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation to do a feasibility study. The grant requires a 20% match – they may be able to use in-kind donations. CAC members suggested that local business owners be surveyed before applying for the grant. Monte noted that the town has lots of aging septic systems. If they fail, we could be sanctioned by the State. He said that a water treatment system might attract new businesses to the town, including a grocery store. Applications are due June 30.
- **Critical Environmental Areas:** Gretchen Stevens will attend tomorrow's Town Board meeting virtually and help present CEAs. Donald and Bruce have been speaking to abutting property owners about cool ravines. So far no one has objected to the idea of creating a protective buffer zone. We will need to stress avoiding development and lumbering on steep slopes.

- **Conservation Plan:** David asked how we could encourage Planning Board members to focus more on the NRCP in their decision making. Bill O'Neill suggested that members may view it as bulky and redundant if they have even read it. When reaching out to landowners, it would be good to specify tangible features on their properties.
- **Planning Board:** The PB is still waiting for a response from the RV storage facility. Carol Reichert and Jerry Shereda spoke more about creating a museum and an event space on the Second Family property, now called Sassafras Farm. They will present again next month.
- **Comprehensive Plan Update:** The Town Board approved the Comp Plan Update with the intent that the plan has a 3 to 5-year lifespan. The NRCP in its entirety is part of the plan and will include two updated maps to capture an expanded Hand Hollow State Forest.
- **Zoning Rewrite:** Steve and Donald Lamonaca volunteered to serve on the Zoning Rewrite Committee. The CAC unanimously approved their nominations.
- **Town Landfill:** Peg raised the unresolved issue of capping the abandoned Town Landfill and wondered how the CAC could become involved. The Town has \$650,000 from the County in escrow but costs are likely much higher. The landfill is on private property and is now heavily forested.

The next CAC Meeting will be on February 7, 2022, at 7:00 P.M. if the BEDC is willing to move its meeting on the same night to an earlier time. Peg is a BEDC member and vouched that a 6:15 P.M. start time should be fine.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Robert Gilson