

Conservation Advisory Council, Town of New Lebanon

Minutes for monthly meeting held at Town Hall and live streamed, July 11, 2022

Present: CAC members David Farren, Tyler Fogg, Robert Gilson, Donald Lamonaca, Peg Munves, Bill O'Neill, Steve Powers; Town Board liaison Deb Gordon

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 P.M., delayed slightly waiting for the BEDC to conclude its meeting, and livestreamed. We approved the minutes for the monthly meeting on June 13, 2022, and they will be sent to the Town Clerk for posting.

ARPA Questionnaire: David Farren began by saying that the proposed wastewater treatment study did not rank highly on the questionnaire. Several members said that part of the problem were vague and unclear questions. Deb Gordon suggested that it would be strategic to use some of the ARPA money to fund applications for grants, including one for a feasibility study.

Shatford Park Improvement Plan: Several members had reviewed the proposal and found it ambitious and impressive. It's still in the early stages and much more expensive than anyone imagined. At the public forum in June, access to the stream and rehabilitating the stream banks was discussed. Peg Munves noted that very few people use the park and yet the proposal called for an 80-car parking lot. David recommended a subcommittee to assess the improvement plan from an environmental viewpoint. Peg moved to do so, Steve Powers seconded and the vote was unanimous. Tyler Fogg and Bill O'Neill volunteered to serve on the subcommittee and promised to deliver their assessment for discussion at our August meeting.

Trees for Tribs: Peg reported that the planted seedlings are doing amazingly well with some ready to have the tubes removed. To counter the relatively dry summer weather, more effort has gone into watering. Bill O'Neill has been pumping water from the stream with hoses that reach all the plantings. So far this spring and summer, 85 hours of volunteer labor have been devoted to Shatford Park. Peg suggested a meeting in mid-August to determine next steps. In addition, David spent the better part of 3 days maintaining the plantings on the Roseman property.

Realtor Brochure: David noted that the response to the brochure has been very positive. There has been an active effort to get the brochure into the hands of area realtors. At present, there are still brochures available from the initial printing.

Corkscrew Rail Trail: A generous donor made it possible for the Association to purchase a 1.1-acre parcel off Tilden Road that has the old rail depot and an adjoining garage. The property had been foreclosed and CRT is now responsible for the back taxes, which are considerable. Tistrya will propose to the County Board of Supervisors that late fees and penalties be forgiven.

Well Water Study: Steve Winkley's final plan is not yet available. He would like feedback on his latest draft plan. Retesting of the Jr./Sr. High School septic system yielded results that are below the minimum PFA standard. We believe a filtration system will be installed. Peg said that to date there are no new areas of concern. She suggested that it would be advisable to give a presentation on well testing to inform the public

Town Landfill: Steve reported that the considerable costs to remediate are not yet available. He hopes that Antonio Delgado will be helpful.

Water and Wastewater Study: Peg said that she presented a report to the BEDC with the results of the survey to determine if businesses along the "Miracle Mile" corridor would support a feasibility study to determine if New Lebanon can install a water and wastewater treatment system. She said of the 29 buildings along the strip, 19 business owners were interested in the idea, 2 said no, 2 abstained, and 6 residential property owners could not be reached for comment. The proposal to do the feasibility study will be presented to the town board at the July 12 meeting.

Critical Environmental Areas: David reported that the Town Board has now approved both Cool Ravines and the Warm Spring as CEAs, the second and third in all of Columbia County. Tistrya will see to registering them with NYSDEC. Peg suggested that the CAC should now work to encourage the Town Board to recognize aquifers as CEAs.

Planning Board: Bob Gilson reported that the PB approved Sassafras Farm's bid to become a "museum." He felt that consideration of Camp DD's proposal for storage sheds on the former Shed Man parcel was handled poorly. At the PB's May 17 meeting, Camp DD had been invited to a workshop with selected PB members to help determine how to make the project palatable. Camp DD refused the offer. At the June 17 meeting, they were told that 2 judgments were on the table, one to approve the project, the other to disapprove. Elizabeth Brutsch announced that the one absent Board member would vote in favor, as would she. Jim Carroll then went through a list of things he would need to see changed to approve the project. The lawyer went out to speak with his client. When he returned, he said they would make all the changes except for a fence to protect the Shaker Swamp. No mention was made about how Camp DD would maintain the landscaping. They will present again at the July meeting.

Zoning Rewrite Committee: Donald Lamonaca said that the ZRC did not cover anything in the last meeting pertaining to the CAC. They have been in touch with NYSERDA to do an overlay map of where 3 phase lines have been laid that would allow for solar farms. They are particularly concerned about where the lines and viewsheds coincide.

Climate Smart Community Task Force: A Climate Carnival is scheduled for July 16 at the County Fairgrounds in Chatham and the CSC will have a booth. Our bike repair program and free store will have spaces. Rae Gilson will be doing an art project for kids called Skyscapes and New Lebanon will be a significant force in the Repair Café.

The next CAC Meeting will be at Town Hall on August 8, 2022, at the usual starting time of 6:30 P.M. The meeting adjourned at 8:27 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Robert Gilson