

CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes
Monday, June 16, 2014
Delancey Hall

Members Present: **Lori Tripoli, Co-Chair**
 Pam Pooley, Co-Chair
 Janine Selendy
 Nancy Welo
 Alan Towers

Also Present: **Janice Will, Secretary**

Lori Tripoli opened the meeting and welcomed Janine Selendy to the CAC, inviting her to tell the group about herself.

Ms. Selendy described her work for the Yale School of Public Health and as founder and president of Horizon International; the company finds and advocates successful solutions.

Pam Pooley asked how long she has lived in North Salem, and Ms. Selendy replied that she and her partner have been in Town for 16 years.

Ms. Pooley explained that the CAC began holding regular meetings in April of 2013. She said she has lived in North Salem since 1995 and works as a landscape designer.

Nancy Welo said she has lived in Town since 2000, and lived in Somers before that. She said she was active with the Conservation Advisory Board in Somers and explained that a board has somewhat more power than a council.

Ms. Selendy asked what the North Salem CAC is able to do, and Alan Towers explained that they may make recommendations but they are purely advisory.

Ms. Welo stated that she did a lot of work relating to wetlands and steep slope issues when she was in Somers.

Alan Towers said he used his North Salem home on weekends for 20 years when he lived in New York City where he had his business. Having sold the company 8 years ago, he and his wife came to live in North Salem full time. He said he and Ms. Pooley were both on the Comprehensive Plan Committee in the past. Mr. Towers stated that he was drawn to the beauty and rural character of the Town and wants to keep it that way.

Lori Tripoli said she is a department chair for an on-line university and works from home, adding that she is a lawyer by training although she does not practice in New York State.

Ms. Selendy said she recently took an on-line course and she thought it was very good.

Ms. Tripoli said the CAC has received numerous requests lately/it seems they are getting recognition. She said that if the others receive questions/suggestions, they may forward them to her to be included on agendas.

Meeting with Joe Bridges

Ms. Tripoli said the CAC has received approval for funding for 2 hours' worth of Dr. Bridges' time, probably best used for a one-hour face-to-face meeting and an hour follow-up/conference call. She said they should try to find out when he will be coming to North Salem any way.

Best Management Practice/invasives in wetlands

Ms. Tripoli noted that the CAC plans to meet with Cynthia Curtis about Best Management Practices and the tree ordinance/they should probably see her before they meet with Dr. Bridges.

Mr. Towers said he didn't think there was anything for them to do about the tree ordinance, at least until after they've spoken with Ms. Curtis.

Ms. Tripoli asked if everyone agreed they should meet with Ms. Curtis before Dr. Bridges, and everyone did.

Review of tree ordinance

Ms. Pooley commented that the tree ordinance states that the CAC is a referral agency, but they have never been called about a tree permit.

Mr. Towers said that in light of recent incidents, he was not sure how the ordinance is enforced. He made reference to one incident wherein a property-owner took out 150 trees including some trees on a neighbor's property; the issue is now in litigation. Mr. Towers mentioned another property, adding that he does not know how the ordinance works.

The CAC will try to get Cynthia Curtis to attend their next meeting.

Request from Town supervisor

Ms. Tripoli said the Supervisor has asked the CAC to look into doing something re outreach and education about storm-water regulation and single-stream recycling. Given the number of requests received recently, Ms. Tripoli suggested the CAC consider which ones they are actually interested in.

Someone will forward the Supervisor's e-mail to Ms. Selendy.

Storm-water

Mr. Towers explained that the e-mail included a form that the Town submits to the State detailing educational procedures required/carried out which seemed to indicate that a great many people have already been reached with information about storm-water.

Ms. Welo noted that education about storm-water and Storm-water Pollution Prevention Plans are now required/people are responsible for run-off/where water goes. North Salem has another issue, because it is in the DEP watershed. Ms. Welo said she would like to see

more help with storm-water regulations provided by New York City, whose water it is. She explained that farm-owners must now collect horse manure in dumpsters and have it taken away/no composting is permitted within the vicinity of the reservoir.

Ms. Welo said she will speak to Mr. Lucas directly to see what he would like the CAC to do.

Ms. Pooley suggested that Ms. Selendy may already have ideas on the subject, and Ms. Selendy said she would be delighted to work on storm-water.

Ms. Welo reiterated her interest in getting help from the DEP, adding that funds have been earmarked for reservoir protection, and North Salem has not seen any of it so far.

Ms. Pooley suggested Ms. Welo ask the Supervisor if the CAC is to be given any sort of budget for storm-water education.

Re-cycling

Ms. Pooley said she would like to be updated on re-cycling in Town. She added that the Improvement Society has always been involved in re-cycling, and they used to send around newsletters with a lot of information. Ms. Pooley thought she'd like to see what the Improvement Society has to say on the subject before the CAC makes plans to do anything.

Ms. Welo asked when North Salem moved to single-stream re-cycling, which she described as picking up unsorted trash and then separating it afterward. She thought this process would be expensive.

Mr. Towers described paper-separation as part of his at-home re-cycling, but Ms. Welo said he doesn't need to do it anymore.

Ms. Tripoli said waste-management companies state that they do a better job of re-cycling than homeowners do and work more efficiently.

Ms. Selendy said how good the job is depends on where garbage is re-cycled, and she does not know where North Salem's garbage is being taken.

Ms. Pooley reiterated the importance of checking with the Improvement Society first/they have always worked on re-cycling.

Mr. Towers did not see what outreach was lacking, noting that people know about re-cycling.

Ms. Pooley that, like Mr. Towers, people don't all know about the changeover to the single-stream process/don't realize they don't need to separate their trash any more.

Ms. Tripoli thought the CAC could do something about composting.

Ms. Pooley said there are composting starter-kits available, and she has been trying to get more information about that.

Mr. Towers asked Ms. Welo to find out just what the Supervisor has in mind/wants.

Ms. Selendy stated that Supervisor Lucas hadn't mentioned the single-stream re-cycling when she met with him recently, although he did talk about how most people separate about 20% of their trash. She said education about cutting back on consumption/use of plastics is helpful with regard to re-cycling.

Mr. Towers remarked that Ms. Selendy's point was philosophical and not ecological, and he said he didn't think it would be successful in North Salem.

The group talked about the popularity of large SUV's, some wondering how people bear the expense of putting gas in them.

Ms. Selendy said some garages in Manhattan charge a premium to allow parking of vehicles over a certain height.

Ms. Tripoli said the car industry has supposedly suffered as a result of the economic downturn; people aren't driving as much annually as they used to.

Mr. Towers said this was a particular problem for manufacturers like General Motors who started building very large cars years ago; when the market turned, they had nothing to fit it.

Ms. Pooley said she is getting a very small electric car.

Mr. Towers said he would like to see a charging station in Town.

It was noted that Ridgefield, CT has these stations.

Ms. Selendy said Ridgefield recently had a show about electric cars. She asked if there is a facility nearby where one may dispose of light bulbs with mercury and batteries.

Ms. Welo said the Highway Department will take those items, and Mr. Towers added that the County has drop-spots also.

Ms. Selendy commented that pharmaceuticals are a problem too, because they get into the water supply.

Mr. Towers said he thought people would drive electric cars if they knew they could charge them right in Town, and he added that the Town could make money selling the power.

Electric cars/charging stations to be discussed further.

ELLA and CAC Facebook page

Ms. Pooley said she has not forwarded North Salem CAC information to ELLA yet, but she will do so, she has simply been busy. She added that she has photos of multiflora rose waiting to be posted on the Facebook page also.

Ms. Tripoli said that for Pollinator Week she posted a link to sites about native plants that attract pollinators.

Ms. Selendy suggested posting a link to the NS Open Land Foundation site about protecting bobolinks. She explained that people are putting off mowing their fields until mid-July to keep the birds safe.

Ms. Welo said you may cut the grass on hillsides without disturbing the birds, but Ms. Selendy said she saw them on the hills.

Meetings attended

Ms. Tripoli attended a recent Planning Board meeting, where a zero-impact lot-line change on Brookside Lane was discussed/approved.

No one knew whether or not the cell tower balloon test has taken place yet.

Specific sites

There was nothing active and of interest to the CAC to discuss.

Future activities

It was agreed that the CAC is already working on a number of things already.

Regulation of Noise

Ms. Tripoli thanked Mr. Towers for his draft recommendation about changing the noise ordinance and said the CAC needed to decide what to do next.

Mr. Towers said the core of his write-up was what the group agreed to. He said he tried to be objective about why the Town Board should consider changing the ordinance, adding that a rationale for the recommendation/ the ability to demonstrate that the CAC worked hard and tried to be fair were necessary for the proposed changes to have any chance of being approved.

Ms. Tripoli remarked that Mr. Towers did a good job of making the case for the changes. She did suggest that the proposal would be stronger if they had some input from people who might be affected by the changes and might perhaps oppose them. Ms. Tripoli suggested builders and realtors would be appropriate people to talk to.

Ms. Selendy said low-noise and energy-efficient tools are helpful. She pointed out that people doing landscaping work wear earphones, but other people and even animals are affected by loud noise.

Mr. Towers said it will be hard to do anything, because there is already opposition.

Ms. Selendy stated that numerous studies have been done regarding noise impact on humans, but there was a study in the 1970's that demonstrated that deer were starving in the winter because they could not approach areas where there was snow mobile noise.

Mr. Towers said he was familiar with these issues, but the CAC's mandate is narrow (protecting natural resources/not human health). He explained that the Comprehensive Plan Committee tried to get more stringent limits on noise, but their recommendations were not

taken up. He thought trying to require quieter machines would only hurt the CAC's credibility, although quiet is a natural resource.

Ms. Selendy thought the CAC could encourage better methods/tools through education.

Ms. Pooley said the CAC is being asked to do a lot of educational outreach lately, so maybe it is time to put together some kind of a brochure and include them all.

Mr. Towers told Ms. Selendy about his findings after looking into the laws of 5 other towns. He said the towns do have a decibel-level maximum, but grounds-keeping and construction equipment is exempt. Some towns have cut-off times, shorter hours on Saturday and/or no work on Sundays.

Ms. Tripoli said the CAC had input from the Building Inspector and the Chief of Police but, procedurally, it would be good if they could say they have considered multiple viewpoints.

Ms. Welo remarked that someone might suggest that it is a safety issue to use heavy equipment for more than 8 hours a day.

Ms. Pooley suggested that each CAC member call someone, and Ms. Welo offered to ask Linda Gracie (realtor).

Mr. Towers said he would like to hear from a contractor.

Ms. Pooley said she will speak to one. She asked if they should have some questions prepared in advance.

The group discussed various questions, and it was suggested that everyone talk to one realtor and one contractor. Speaking to people in person was thought to be best.

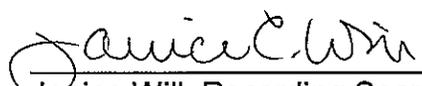
Ms. Pooley provided the following in an e-mail after the meeting:

We are conducting "quality of life" research and would like their thoughts on the following:

1. Do crews work on Sunday?
2. Would there be an economic impact if construction hours changed to 7a to 6p weekdays and 8-5 Saturdays with no work permitted on Sundays? Explain
3. What do you see as benefits of such a regulation?
4. What are adverse effects?
5. Please comment on how noise affects quality of life in your view.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Janice Will, Recording Secretary