

CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes
Monday, July 28, 2014
Delancey Hall

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

Member Absent: Janine Selendy

Also Present: Cynthia Curtis, Planning Board
 Gloria Stein, North Salem Open Land Foundation
 Kate Sann, Westchester Land Trust
 Janice Will, Secretary

Lori Tripoli opened the meeting and thanked the guests for attending.

The minutes of the June 16 meeting were unanimously approved.

Best Management Practices for removal of invasive species, esp. in wetlands

Ms. Tripoli stated that Cynthia Curtis had been asked to attend the meeting to discuss development of Best Management Practices re removal of invasive species from wetlands and also the CAC's role with regard to the Town's tree ordinance.

Ms. Curtis said updating some ordinances, including the tree and wetland ordinances, came up during meetings of the Comprehensive Plan Committee several years ago. Several people knew that while the Bridle Trails Association and/or the Open Land Foundation were creating trails, they were working in wetlands. It was known that a wetland permit was called for, but no one wanted the permit process to be onerous. Ms. Curtis suggested development of a best management practice for trail maintenance in wetlands. The Bridle Trails Association put a BMP together; as long as they updated the Building Inspector once a year about where they were working, and followed the BMP, they would be exempt from wetland permit regulations as a 501C3. Ms. Curtis said the Open Land Foundation would also probably benefit if they were cutting new trails in wetlands.

Gloria Stein said she had been unaware of this, but she has also always contacted the Building Inspector if the OLF wanted to remove a tree, etc. and also when they worked on a bridge on the Durant Trail.

Ms. Curtis said the issue has also come up with regard to farming, which is customarily exempt from the Town's land-disturbance Ordinances which are Chapters 89 (fill/excavation), 107 (freshwater wetlands), 189 (trees), and 193 (storm-water).

Alan Towers asked if farms are exempt from wetland laws.

Ms. Curtis said that generally, they are exempt from wetland regulations. They must meet the definition of farming activities, and she read the definition to the group. (*paraphrased- parcel of more than 4 acres used for raising of crops and/or livestock, poultry, dairy-products, etc., keeping of horses and boarding stables and fur-bearing animals.*) Ms. Curtis noted that riding academies and dog kennels are mostly not exempt. She said that the exemptions for farming caused the CPC to think that perhaps it could be made a little easier for residents to comply with the land-disturbance ordinances; now there is a minor category, which includes removal of invasive species. Normal maintenance is usually exempt from the regulations. Ms. Curtis noted that invasive species have become such a problem that their removal can cause significant disturbance; as a general rule, one may still get an exemption if following the rules and using only hand tools. She said how large an area will be disturbed should also be considered; to be exempt, a proposed job should be manageable, including restoration of the disturbed area.

Nancy Welo described the exemption for a 501C3 organization as being like an on-going permit.

Ms. Stein agreed, saying that when she applied for a permit for OLF signs, it was agreed that she would just let the Building Inspector know any time she would be putting up more signs.

Ms. Curtis said this also meant the OLF did not need to deal with the Planning Board every time they wanted to put up signs.

Ms. Curtis read the Exemption section of the wetland ordinance.

Ms. Tripoli asked if someone living on Peach Lake who wants to remove weeds would be an example of a best management practices case.

Ms. Curtis said it would. She further stated that when applying for a Building permit the area defined by the Building Permit is exempt, because it is assumed that the Building Inspector is overseeing erosion control, etc.

Mr. Towers asked what could happen if someone was doing small-scale invasive-removal work in a wetland area and did everything wrong.

Ms. Curtis said if an area was disturbed and not replanted, heavy rain would cause run-off/mud could run into a stream.

Ms. Welo said if the area is not replanted, the invasive species will grow right back.

Ms. Curtis said either mulch or planting is needed. She added that Joe Bridges provided a list of suitable plants and grasses for wetland areas.

Ms. Stein said there was a problem with knotweed in Bloomerside near a vernal pool; it has been cut by hand and stacked and herbicide put into the roots, but she does not know if that will be enough. She added that she has heard of an area where there were phragmites that were cut every year for 12 years, and they still come back.

Ms. Pooley read a note from Bruce Thompson (Building Inspector), stating that cutting phragmites in September and dripping herbicide into the cut will draw the chemical down into the stem/roots to help kill the plant.

Ms. Curtis stated that if one is working near any New York City-regulated wetland, the DEP may not allow use of an herbicide.

Ms. Pooley pointed out that there is nothing in the Ordinance stating that herbicides may be used at all.

Ms. Curtis said they may not be used on any municipal property, and there are many City- and State-regulated wetlands in Town which might preclude their use/it would be useful to find out what those agencies will allow.

Noting that the current regulation exempts only 501C3's, Ms. Curtis said the CAC's development of BMP's/exemptions may include 501C3's and home-owners also, and she asked why they wouldn't also include businesses in the interest of fairness.

Mr. Towers commented that invasive species-removal sounds expensive.

Ms. Curtis said a home-owner wouldn't normally take on a big job, and providing guidelines can help them avoid an expensive permit process.

Ms. Pooley described a 7000 sq. ft. area where she has phragmites removed for a client to keep them from overwhelming a pond. The problem was discussed with the Building Inspector who agreed that they could be cut down by hand and with a weed-whacker in June and September without a wetland permit. Ms. Pooley said that although the plants do grow back, this practice controls them. She described an additional step than can be taken by putting down black paper and planting appropriate species in holes in the paper which she said works very well. She asked Kate Sann if there isn't a group working on invasive species locally.

Kate Sann said the New York/New Jersey Trails Conference is the point organization for the Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM). New York State has been broken up into 8 pieces, and the North Salem area would be in the Lower-Hudson group, which is convened by the NY/NJ Trails Conference. Others involved are the Westchester Land Trust, Pound Ridge and Teatown/Mianus. Ms. Sann said about 40 partners meet quarterly to discuss what methodologies are being used and what has been observed. The NY/NJTC has a strike force of citizen scientists who use GPS to track the spread of invasives and go out and pull them. Ms. Sann stated that these people are not aiming at areas already overrun but are targeting areas that can be managed.

Ms. Welo asked if when they work on trails, if they also plant trees.

Ms. Sann replied that they plant trees and other plants.

Mss. Welo said trees are good because phragmites don't like shade.

Mr. Towers was interested to hear this, remarking that a stream that runs through his property is shaded, and there are no invasives.

Ms. Sann said replacing what is pulled out is a good practice.

Ms. Tripoli asked if a list of commonly-found invasives in North Salem is needed, and Ms. Curtis answered that lists exist.

Ms. Pooley said it sounded more like the CAC should consider what a homeowner can take on/how to avoid a permit.

Ms. Curtis said sometimes a permit will be necessary; a list of certain invasives eligible for exemption would be helpful.

Mr. Towers asked what a wetland permit costs.

The secretary explained that the permit is \$100, and another \$1000 is put into escrow to pay the Town wetland consultant, Joe Bridges.

Mr. Towers asked why someone would want a permit.

Ms. Curtis explained that a homeowner must first get wetland boundaries/100-ft. buffer areas delineated/surveyed, which is expensive; then there is Town oversight of the work. Under the proposed exemption, this would not be necessary; it would be assumed that work is to be conducted in a controlled area and permitted if guidelines are followed.

Mr. Towers thought some people would not want to go to the expense and effort if they were unbothered by invasive species in their wetlands area.

Ms. Curtis said those people would probably not want to do it while others would want to keep their pond nice and open. She cited some examples of ponds that no longer exist due to overgrowth of invasives.

Ms. Tripoli asked if there is a time-frame, remarking that having one might help the CAC decide what/how much they want to try and do re best management practices.

Ms. Curtis said there is no deadline; if the CAC has ideas about removal of invasive species, that will be helpful. She remarked that some people just go ahead and do things; education on the subject will be valuable, and it can also be explained that a permit may not be necessary.

Returning to Mr. Towers' question about why anyone would want to get a permit for removal of invasives, Ms. Stein said the OLF offered a free management plan to people and got a big response. Jim Nordgren with the WLT went out to several properties in Town, and people were excited to learn about invasive species and what they could do to try and start managing them. Unfortunately, then the Watershed Agricultural Council cut off the funding for small projects. Ms. Stein said the NSOLF and other Open Land groups in the area are

trying to get WAC to reconsider, adding that WAC is funded by the DEP and there are funds available.

Ms. Sann commented that WAC is distancing itself from the eastern Hudson/are more interested in areas upstate.

Ms. Stein said the money was intended for a forester to create plans for people; there was so much enthusiasm that residents started working based on what they had learned from the one visit, without a written plan.

Ms. Curtis said putting together a helpful way not only to remove invasives but to stop re-growth would be very helpful to people.

Ms. Stein said the only way to stop re-growth is treatment with herbicides.

Ms. Sann remarked that plants don't observe boundaries; success will be in organizing on a block-to-block basis; perhaps the OLF can get residents motivated to participate. She said a good example is TIP PR (The Invasives Project, Pound Ridge), a group of master gardeners who deliver fliers alerting people that they will be coming to a neighborhood and inviting them to come out and be shown what local invasives look like. Ms. Sann said it was good for people to see their neighbors taking an interest along with them and to feel like a group effort would accomplish more than what they could do alone.

Ms. Curtis said the Improvement Society currently handles roadside litter cleanup, and there is a get-together at the Library before-hand to talk to volunteers. If someone could be at that meeting to tell people about invasive species, this group might be quite interested.

Ms. Stein commented that there is a group working along the Saw Mill River Parkway to remove invasive vines.

Ms. Tripoli asked if the CAC wanted to decide something or table the subject for their next meeting.

Ms. Welo thought they could put something on the Facebook page to alert people that this is the right time of year to remove invasives.

Ms. Stein said there are right times and wrong times to remove different invasive species. She stated that the Open Land Foundation is working on management plans for all their properties, and she would be happy to share information.

Ms. Curtis suggested contacting the DEP about what herbicides may be used in their watershed areas and cautioned the CAC about putting information on their Facebook page before having it confirmed.

Ms. Pooley thought the CAC should discuss the issue again before they do anything further.

Ms. Sann offered to provide contact information for people in other groups working on invasive species removal.

The CAC agreed to discuss education re invasive species removal again in August.

North Salem Tree Ordinance/CAC's Role

Ms. Tripoli said the CAC wants to discuss this topic, especially as they have never been contacted to consult on a tree-removal permit.

Ms. Curtis said there have not been many such permits requested/issued; the last one was for a residential property on Hardscrabble Road and was issued before the CAC was fully-organized.

Mr. Towers said it was his understanding that a property-owner on Hardscrabble Road had already slashed many trees (some on his neighbor's property) before the Town found out about it, and then he was issued a permit.

Ms. Curtis said Mr. Towers was correct; the Town found out too late to stop the work, and 2 Violations were issued (work without a permit and unauthorized disturbance of wetlands). She explained that the property-owner wanted to finish what he'd started so he could level some of his land and put in rock walls, and it was important to capture the remaining work under some kind of regulations and oversight. The size of the area also triggered the need for a SWPPP (Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan) and also a wetland permit (property-owner was putting materials in a wetlands), as well as a tree permit.

Mr. Towers asked if the property-owner would have been granted a permit for what he wanted to do ahead of time.

Ms. Curtis said a permit would have been granted for at least some of what the property-owner wanted to do. She remarked that the purpose of the tree ordinance is not to stop people; it aims to work with people/make sure they work responsibly to achieve what they want and do not impact streams or their neighbors.

Mr. Towers asked if the Hardscrabble Road property-owner would have been eligible for a construction exemption from the tree ordinance or because of the size of the trees he wanted to remove.

Ms. Curtis said he was not eligible. She explained that if someone is going to build a house, they are permitted to clear for the driveway, foundation, septic field, etc. She thought re-grading the front yard would have been permitted, but perhaps not the work on the side of the property; the property-owner was also not permitted to remove all the stumps from the property. Ms. Curtis further explained that the Planning Board wanted the property-owner to do a substantial amount of re-planting, but he said he could not afford to do it.

Mr. Towers commented that the possible penalties are severe, including even imprisonment.

Ms. Curtis said the monetary penalty is not severe.

Mr. Towers said he thought what the Hardscrabble Road property-owner did was egregious, yet the end result was issuance of a permit and no punishment.

Ms. Curtis said the property-owner did have to provide some remediation in the most sensitive areas and finish the work properly.

Ms. Pooley said the CAC wanted to know what they should be doing.

Ms. Curtis said the Planning Board will look to the CAC for recommendations in instances of land-disturbance. She said the aim is not to stop work, but to help people do the work right. As an example, when people are working on conservation easements and trails, they are told to work with the land. She explained that this means there is leeway in the establishment of a 6 ft.-wide trail or path to allow trees to be spared. With regard to recommendations from the CAC, Ms. Curtis said they may know more about kinds of trees than the Planning Board does and can suggest alternative paths for driveways, etc. to avoid clearing good or special trees.

Ms. Pooley said the CAC will look forward to being involved and going on site inspections with the Planning Board.

Ms. Tripoli thanked Ms. Curtis for attending the meeting.

Meetings attended

Westchester Land Trust - Ms. Tripoli stated that she and Ms. Pooley met with Westchester Land Trust representatives and learned about initiatives the WLT is involved in.

Ms. Pooley said the Hudson to Housatonic initiative was of particular interest.

Ms. Sann said it incorporates Northern Westchester and Fairfield, CT. The Nature Conservancy produced a data set a few years ago using GIS to pick up on topographical attributes that are particularly resilient to climate change. The data set is offered to help groups like WLT decide where to preserve land next so texture can be maintained. Ms. Sann also supports disrupting/ignoring map lines for conservation. She said that in September, a 2-year project will be announced to promote very local stewardships/ambassadors to get neighbors to work together. She added that there are no really large parcels left to conserve, so this project will seek to credit people for the work they do in their own yards.

Ms. Curtis remarked that what Ms. Sann described sounded like the Biotic Corridor, and Ms. Sann said it is.

Ms. Pooley said one of the resilient areas sited comes through North Salem from Ridgefield. She added that there will be training at Yale for people interested in speaking to land-owners of these parcels.

Ms. Curtis said the Eastern Westchester Corridor in North Salem has 3 layers now but is not complete because other Towns lost interest.

Ms. Pooley thanked Ms. Sann for sharing useful information.

Education/Outreach: Stormwater/Garbage

Ms. Welo said she spoke to Supervisor Lucas to ask what he wants the CAC to do, and he told her they may choose what they want to do. Ms. Welo thought single-stream recycling would be difficult to take on, as people have been separating garbage for years.

Ms. Curtis remarked that she thought the recycling items would be all together but separate from wet garbage.

Ms. Welo said wet garbage is to be kept separate, adding that the decision has been made because the cost of collecting trash is going up.

Ms. Curtis said the Town wanted to reach a level of 25% recycling which has never been achieved.

It was noted that some businesses selling take-out food and parks/playing fields don't provide separate receptacles for recycling of garbage.

Ms. Welo thought North Salem should go with the Bedford 20-20 plan, as they will eventually have to do so any way.

Mr. Towers remarked that if people are not separating plastic bottles from their garbage now, he could not imagine that they would separate out wet/food garbage from the rest of their trash.

Ms. Curtis said single-stream only applies to recyclable materials – cardboard, paper, plastic, etc. It is hoped that people will cooperate because they won't be asked to separate the recyclable items, flatten cardboard, etc.

Mr. Towers asked if people would still have to separate meat, etc. from the rest of the regular garbage, but Ms. Curtis said the regular/non-recyclable garbage will all be taken together.

Ms. Welo commented that food garbage should be composted. She said only a very small group of items would be put out separately under the single-stream plan. She added that it looks as though North Salem will lose town-wide garbage pick-up, because it is just too expensive and commercial properties are part of the same pick-up plan. In the future people will contract/pay individually for garbage pick-up. Ms. Welo added that unless people work together under this kind of arrangement, there will be garbage trucks circulating all over Town every day.

Ms. Curtis commented that people in areas that do not have town-wide garbage pick-up actually drive their trash to other towns and dump it in those bins/dumpsters.

Mr. Towers asked if failure of single-stream pick-up will result in individual pick-up contracts.

Ms. Curtis replied that the Town re-considers the trash pick-up contract every year, and it is always more expensive.

Mr. Towers said the incentive to be green isn't getting through to people.

Ms. Curtis added that there are no penalties for not recycling. She suggested to the Town in the past that the garbage collection company be advised that if they see mixed trash in someone's garbage pail, they should leave it there/not take it away and also leave a notice about the recycling requirement.

Mr. Towers agreed that a deterrent is needed.

Ms. Pooley said the CAC should discuss the issue further in August.

Regarding storm-water, Ms. Welo said the Storm-Water II regulations aim to make people aware of their responsibility for water running from their property; water going down the drain eventually runs into the NYC water supply. She thought the CAC could get help from the DEP/they have materials.

Ms. Curtis said she has a box-full of DEP educational materials already; help is needed to get it out to the public. She mentioned the CAC's Facebook page as a good place to mention it.

Ms. Welo said they could distribute information at the Library also.

Ms. Curtis said some materials were distributed at the Town's summer day camp, and also through the Tax Receiver and Building Departments. She thought the hardest people to reach are home-owners who aren't coming to the Town offices.

The group discussed whether people are unaware of the potential consequences or merely don't care.

Mr. Towers asked what people are supposed to do with uneaten food if not scrape it into the drain of the kitchen sink.

Ms. Welo said it should be composted.

Ms. Pooley said the town of Bridgewater is providing little buckets to every household to use for meat-type trash, adding that she will look into getting more information.

Ms. Curtis stated that most styrofoam is now recyclable.

Ms. Welo said there are different types of Styrofoam with different rankings.

Ms. Pooley said they should look for ways to spread information in the community.

Regulation of Noise

Mr. Towers said he finished his report on this subject.

Ms. Pooley commented that Ms. Selendy was not present to vote to forward the report to the Planning Board.

For the purpose of including a summary in the meeting minutes, Ms. Tripoli stated that Mr. Towers has done a lot of work on the subject, and the CAC is considering proposal of a revision of the Ordinance with regard to construction noise but not grounds-keeping noise. It was decided to ask some realtors, contractors, tree companies, etc. for their opinions of the proposed changes. Generally, realtors did not object to the proposed changes/were in favor of a quiet day, but contractors/tree companies thought there would be negative economic impact.

It was noted that the current Ordinance permits construction noise from 8 am to sundown, 365 days a year.

Ms. Curtis said it should not be difficult to change the current Ordinance as part of the zoning amendments currently being considered by the Planning Board.

The recommendation would be to change the hours to 7 am to 6 pm/8 am to 5 pm on Saturdays and prohibit construction noise altogether on Sundays.

Ms. Welo had to leave the meeting, but she stated for the record that she was in favor of moving forward with the recommendations/ Mr. Towers' report.

Ms. Tripoli stated that climate-change, economics, the recent severe winter all already limit construction activity which tends to be finite any way, and so she was not in favor of the recommendation.

Ms. Pooley said she felt unsure; she was somewhat concerned about how people would react to a recommendation from the CAC to change the Ordinance.

Ms. Curtis asked what motivated the CAC; if feedback from the Building Department indicates that there have been a lot of complaints, that should be mentioned in the report. She said once the Planning Board receives the CAC recommendation, they would probably forward it to the Town Board who will vet it via a public hearing process. Ms. Curtis commented that people would probably appreciate a peaceful evening or a quiet day on the weekend.

Ms. Tripoli countered that some people work on weekends/why couldn't a little noise be tolerated.

Ms. Curtis replied that perhaps an exception of a couple of hours could be made for people doing the work themselves.

Mr. Towers was concerned that this would not be enforceable. He suggested that some people might hire someone to work on their property on a Sunday and claim they were doing it themselves. He added that North Salem is the only Town in the County to allow construction noise 7 days a week.

Ms. Pooley thought the report should include that information and the Building Inspector's opinion as well as the mini-poll taken to provide a rationale for the recommendation.

It was agreed that emergency work would be exempt from any prohibition; the recommendation would apply only to all power-equipment.

Mr. Towers said he would fine-tune the wording in his report and include something about the mini-survey.

The vote on submitting the recommendation to change the noise ordinance to the Planning Board was:

Ms. Tripoli: No
Ms. Pooley: Yes
Ms. Welo: Yes
Mr. Towers: Yes
Ms. Selendy: Absent

Signage re Idling Vehicles

Ms. Curtis said the Town already has an idling vehicle law; vehicles may sit idling for only 3minutes.

Ms. Pooley commented that this is not observed.

Mr. Towers said the areas with the most idling cars are the Post Office, 121 Next Door and Kingsleys.

Ms. Tripoli said it certainly also occurs at the train stations.

Mr. Towers said these places are all private property, so he didn't think the Town would be permitted to put up "No Idling" signs.

Ms. Curtis said the Ordinance applies to all public streets; she will look into private property. The Chief of Police should be consulted because the issue is enforcement; if there are no signs, the Police may not be able to enforce the Ordinance. Ms. Curtis said she will see how the law is written/what it includes and also ask the Town Attorney about enforcement on private property.

Ms. Tripoli thought a volunteer effort could be helpful, but Ms. Curtis said people may not just put up signs/permits are required for signs.

Ms. Curtis will e-mail the CAC about her findings.

The CAC will look into how other towns manage idling cars.

Electric Car-Charging Stations

Ms. Pooley has an electric car and commented that it will charge quickly at home now that she has gotten a big charger.

Mr. Towers said there are 2 public charging stations in Ridgefield, CT. He has not seen anyone using them, but they are easy to use and free. He said there is an initial investment in these stations and added that Ridgefield is a significantly bigger town than North Salem.

Ms. Curtis suggested contacting the MTA about installation charging stations at the train stations in Town.

Mr. Towers said it takes a while for a car to charge and wondered where a person would go/what they would do while their car was charging.

Ms. Curtis thought it might be limited to 15 minutes.

Mr. Towers read that in Connecticut, the State put up about \$4000 toward each station; they cost approximately \$4500 in all. He said he did not know but assumed the towns paid the difference. The stations are not expected to use much power, which will be paid for by the towns.

Ms. Curtis suggested speaking to Supervisor Lucas about including car charging stations in his negotiations with the MTA about a project they want to do in Purdys.

Ms. Pooley will e-mail the Supervisor to say the CAC would be interested in seeing charging stations at the train stations and ask if he will consider bringing it up when talking to the MTA.

Specific Sites

Monomoy Farm and Bridleside– Ms. Pooley said she went on site inspections at Monomoy and Bridleside.

Ms. Curtis wondered why Ms. Pooley would go along on a post-construction inspection at Monomoy and asked if she had received permission from the property-owner.

Ms. Pooley said she went because she was invited to go by the Building Inspector. She added that she met the property-manager at Monomoy Farm and Steve Marino at Bridleside.

Ms. Curtis commented that if Ms. Pooley/the CAC have time to go on monitoring/post-construction inspections, they should inspect the conservation easements because that is more important.

Ms. Pooley was glad she went to Bridleside and Monomoy Farm, and she said she has not been invited to walk the conservation easements.

Ms. Tripoli thought it was helpful for Ms. Pooley to go along on the monitoring inspections and added that she also put together a report of her site visits.

Ms. Curtis stated that if CAC members want to go along property-owners should be informed that they might, because they are enforcement inspections once a permit has been issued. She commented that land-owners might not always be cooperative.

Ms. Tripoli said she went along on a site inspection at Finch Farm where she was introduced to the property-manager, and she found the site walk valuable and interesting. She said she will check the Code to see what it says about CAC members going on post-permit inspections.

Ms. Curtis will speak to the Town Attorney and the planning consultant.

Ms. Pooley said she likes to go on the inspections, and she always learns something.

7 Bloomer Road –It was noted that the wetlands buffer area will scarcely be encroached upon. Nancy Welo will report on this application.

Homeland Towers/Bloomerside Balloon Test – Ms. Curtis said the test has been conducted/results are in. She commented that the balloon was only seen from Salem Golf Club and added that there are other environmental issues with this project. A crane test will be conducted to test the signal.

Ms. Pooley said she thought she remembered some wetlands issues with this application. She will re-read the DEP memo and keep an eye on the Planning Board agendas.

Mr. Towers asked if there are other cell towers in Town, and Ms. Curtis explained where they are.

Hawley Woods – Nothing new re this application. Ms. Curtis said the Planning Board is trying to get defined areas of disturbance, and a riding trail is being considered. They are waiting for a re-submission.

Highgate/Woodlands – Ms. Curtis said the Planning Board is waiting for either a Final EIS or an alternative proposal.

The Commons at Purdys – Ms. Curtis said this application has been withdrawn, although she believes the applicant will be submitting something else.

Conservation Easements - Ms. Curtis said that back in the 1980's, there were several conservation easements that were held by the Town; they tried to get the Open Land Foundation or the Westchester Land Trust to take them over/be responsible for them. Nowadays, when the Planning Board has an application from a developer, there is often a conservation easement required; there are about a dozen in Town now. These easements are meant to be inspected once a year. A policy for maintenance of conservation easement was drawn up, but responsibility was not assigned to anyone. Several years ago, David Birney (naturalist) was hired to create a baseline report with GPS/photographs, but the land is still not being inspected annually.

Ms. Pooley said she would be interested in making these annual inspections if the CAC had more members.

Ms. Curtis suggested they might form a committee just for the conservation easements.

Mr. Towers asked why people agree to conservation easements.

Ms. Curtis explained that there is a Federal tax incentive not to develop land (sometimes including giving up mining rights, etc.). Inspections are to make sure trees have not been cut down, fences put up, etc. She suggested the CAC talk to Gloria Stein, because she oversees the OLF parcels. She said the easements in Town vary in size from one acre to 40+ acres.

Ms. Pooley will get the conservation easement notebooks from the Town offices to be looked over at the next meeting.

Ms. Curtis said something would need to be put into the administrative Code about responsibility for annual inspections if the CAC decides to take it on.

Ms. Tripoli asked for a vote to offer to take on annual inspection of the Town's conversation easements.

Ms. Pooley: Aye
Mr. Towers: Aye
Ms. Tripoli: Aye
Ms. Welo: Absent
Ms. Selendy: Absent

Ms. Tripoli said she might not be available on August 18 (next scheduled CAC meeting date). CAC members will check availability and schedule their meeting for another date or consider skipping their August meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Janice Will, Recording Secretary