

TOWN OF EAST GREENBUSH

LOCAL LAW NO. _____ OF THE YEAR 2020

A LOCAL LAW CREATING A CONSERVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF EAST GREENBUSH

BE IT ENACTED BY THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF EAST GREENBUSH AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1.

LEGISLATIVE INTENT

Preservation and improvement of the quality of the natural and built environment within the Town of East Greenbush in the face of population growth, urbanization and technological change with their accompanying demands on natural resources and open land, are found to be of increasing and vital importance to the health, welfare and economic well-being of human inhabitants and all other living creatures, requiring forthright action by the governing body of the Town of East Greenbush. It is recognized that the integrity of natural, historic and cultural resources on which people depend for survival, daily well-being and life's enjoyment rely upon stewardship, legal protections, and improvements enacted through East Greenbush citizen participation in cooperation with Town, regional and State officials as well as public and private institutions and partnerships. Establishment of a Conservation Advisory Council is a necessary step in fostering unified action for the protection of resources identified in the Town's Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) including but not limited to habitats, recreational areas, open spaces, wetlands, bodies of water, agricultural land and areas of historic significance. Establishment of a Conservation Advisory Council is also an essential step in: meeting the challenges of adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change; ensuring conservation and management of dwindling and rapidly diminishing resources; and, gathering vital information relative to technological advances in environmental sciences and resource conservation.

Section 2.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COUNCIL

The Town Board of the Town of East Greenbush hereby creates a conservation advisory council to be known as the East Greenbush Conservation Advisory Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council.

Section 3.

MEMBERSHIP

(1) The Council shall consist of no fewer than five and no more than seven members, appointed by the Town Board who shall serve for terms of two years. Persons residing within the Town of East Greenbush who are interested in or have specific skills and training relative to preservation of natural resources, open space conservation and the improvement of environmental quality shall be eligible for appointment as a member of the Council. At the inception of the Council, initial appointments shall be staggered, the first three being a term of one year and the remaining members for full two-year terms. Successors shall be appointed for terms of two years from and after the expiration of the terms of their predecessors in office.

(2) No more than seven members may be voting members.

(3) Vacancies on the Council shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment, except that a vacancy occurring other than by expiration of term of office shall be filled only for the remainder of the unexpired term. Members of the Town Zoning Board of Appeals and the Town Planning Board shall not be appointed to the Council.

Section 4.

OFFICERS, MEETINGS AND COMMITTEES

(1) The Town Board shall designate a member of the Council to act as Chairperson for the length of that member's two year term. Council members shall also designate from among themselves a Recording Secretary responsible for documenting regularly scheduled proceedings. Secretarial services may also be obtained from an outside provider who is not a member of the Council, the cost of which and the selection of which shall be subject to the approval of the town board.

(2) The Council shall adopt rules and procedures for the conduct of all business within its jurisdiction, and keep accurate records of all such activities, as set forth in Section 6.

(3) The Council shall meet at least once monthly and may agree to meet twice monthly in keeping with pending review and recommendation responsibilities. This does not preclude scheduling special meetings from time to time as deemed necessary in carrying out Council duties. The Open Meetings Law shall apply to Conservation Advisory Council meetings.

(4) The Council shall appoint individual members or committees from among its members to: attend regularly scheduled Planning, Zoning and Town Board meetings; review, recommend, research or comment on standing issues; and, periodically address matters of special concern.

Section 5.

POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL

Conservation and preservation of natural resources is an ongoing endeavor that tends to emerge from observation, research, discovery, and science. The powers and duties of the Council shall include but are not limited to the following:

- (1) Advise the Town Board on matters affecting the preservation, development and use of natural and human-made resources, features and conditions within the Town of East Greenbush insofar as environmental quality, biological integrity, natural beauty, and other conservation factors are concerned. In the case of human activities and developments, advise on any major threats posed to environmental quality, and in so doing enhance the short term or long range value of the environment to the people of the Town of East Greenbush.
- (2) Review and periodically up-date the Town's 2019 Natural Resources Inventory document.
- (3) Provide a formal group for natural resource-based planning and advice on environmental matters as well as raising local awareness and participation in regional planning and stewardship efforts.
- (4) Offer a library of objective science-based information on effective land management, protection, use and conservation, and recommend educational or stewardship projects.
- (5) Provide the Planning Board, developers, residents and businesses with a forum to obtain information about natural resources and potential environmental impacts to inform land-use decision-making.
- (6) In coordination with the Planning Board, provide research, review development proposals, and conduct site visits for matters pending before the Planning Board. It is the Council's responsibility to maintain an on-going formal relationship with the Planning Board that assures the Council an opportunity for review and comment on all matters deemed relevant to the purposes of this local law.
- (7) Create written checklists and best practice guidelines as planning tools for improvement projects and land development within the Town of East Greenbush.
- (8) Recommend to the Town Board special projects, plans, financing and programs related to natural resource management and environmental protection, and that encourage public/private investment strategies or advanced technological solutions to address these concerns. Further, when deemed necessary or desirable, recommend changes in existing laws that would provide greater protection of essential land, air and water resources that help sustain quality human existence and thriving wildlife habitats.
- (9) To carry out such other duties as may be assigned from time to time by the Town Board.

Section 6.

REPORTS

- (1) The Council shall keep accurate summary records or minutes of its meetings and activities, that may also be reported to the Town Board as requested. Such records, reports and recommendations as may be necessary to fulfill the purpose of this local law

shall be made available to the public in accordance with New York State Freedom of Information Law (Public Officers Law, Section 84 et seq.) and any related local laws and procedures.

(2) Members of the Council shall prepare an annual report for each calendar year to be submitted to the Town Board no later than March 31 of the following year, setting forth a summary of activities and accomplishments of the Council. The annual report will be written in measurable terms that present an itemized summary of Council actions, including but not limited to the number of: land development projects reviewed by the Council; reports and written recommendations presented to the Planning, Zoning and Town Boards; public hearings, community meetings and any Town of East Greenbush meetings attended by Council members; seminars, workshops and training programs attended by Council members; and, Council sponsored public education presentations and workshops conducted.

Section 7.

COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES

(1) Members of the Council shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties within appropriations made through the Town budget. (2) The Council shall prepare and submit an annual budget request for anticipated on-going general expenses in a manner prescribed by the Town Board. The budget request by the Council may include special project costs for designated purposes, or ask that Town personnel, equipment or material resources be assigned to perform such tasks for the Council.

Section 8.

INTERPRETATION

This local law shall be deemed an exercise of the powers of the Town of East Greenbush to preserve, improve and protect the quality of the natural and built environment on behalf of present and future inhabitants thereof, and is not intended and shall not be deemed to impair the powers of any other public corporation.

EFFECTIVE DATE This local law shall take effect immediately.