

**Town of East Greenbush
Conservation Advisory Council**

TOWN HALL, 225 COLUMBIA TURNPIKE, RENSSELAER, NY 12144 (518)477-2005 FAX (518)477-2386

Conservation Advisory Council monthly meeting

October 25, 2021 - 7 PM

East Greenbush Town Hall

Community Room

Attendees

Members: Jennifer Dean (JD), Chair; Fred Henson (FH); Jennifer Hixon (JH); Adam Tobey (AT)
Also present: Jack Conway (JC), Adam Yagelski (AY), Matt Mastin (MM)

Call to order

JD called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm. The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved. AT is the meeting recorder.

Reports of Board agendas/minutes

- Project Review Team (PRT):
 - Small subdivision, Iroquois drive
 - Carwash on Troy road, developed lot
 - Water protections further down the road
 - Restaurant along Columbia Turnpike
- Town Board (TB):
 - 9/29 Dunn landfill hearing, license renewal in 2022
 - Household survey (44%) reported rumble/vibrations and diesel fumes and dust as bothersome.
 - Sparse efforts to mitigate, shown to contain harmful metals
 - Comments will be sent to DEC
 - On the 20th residents expressed gratitude for a hearing
 - Solar Moratorium passed
 - Dec 2nd - Panel on the Dunn Landfill at the Red Barn
- Planning Board (PB):
 - 7-8 year proposed subdivision
 - approval extended 8 times, developer struggling to get engineering. Voted to not extend the project.
 - 39 extra acres purchased on the day of the meeting
 - Phelps road - outstanding infrastructure presentation by builder Wyatt Circle, Witbeck Preserve
 - Quigly's restaurant building -> grocery/convenience store/restaurant
- Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA):
 - Two past meetings were cancelled, next meeting is 10/26
 - Illuminated signage
- Fred proposed removal of masks for meeting.
 - Proposal accepted

Discussion Items

- Carver Court
 - Site visit helped to brainstorm during the field visit led by Brett, the engineer from the developer team.
 - Held a special meeting to workshop the site plan with the developers on 10/21
 - Most issues concerned with wetlands and water management
 - Provided some simple solutions and agreements
 - Vegetation planting as a buffer between properties and wetlands
 - Forest had 100+ year old oaks and maples that should be maintained.
 - New tree plantings
 - Requested species recommendations on that
 - Culvert designs will be 42" with 1/3rd below grade.
 - FH was satisfied with the stream buffers that were put into the site plan.
 - AY notes that planning board can require trees over a certain size to be mapped.
 - Bring this concept to the forefront of the site plan review
 - The CAC may want to select sensitive sites or standing locations that require this sort of stipulation
 - Identifying areas
 - JD notes that we'll be sending the notes on recommendations to AY, Alison, and MM. Recommend that the water boundaries get overlaid with the site plan. JD requests comments by tomorrow evening this week.
 - AY noted that the developer included their own summary and it would be valuable to include.
 - AY make a motion to adopt the Carver Court report pending outstanding technical details, and to forward the report to the three boards. Unanimously voted yes.
- Best Road Solar
 - Useful for developing our process.
 - CAC has finished the checklist regarding natural resources at the site and has bulleted notes prepared; impacted natural resources, mitigation actions?
 - AY suggests circulating to all three boards, Planning Zoning, Town, and Jack through Alison.
 - JH asked if it is too early for a site visit.
 - JC, MM, and JC agree that it is a bit too early as the project won't likely move for another 6 months. MM suggests that we wait until the moratorium closes.
- "Outstanding Technical Details" is a useful tool!
- JH requests follow-up with the
 - AY: Amount of plantings, blue spruce as it is native to the area. The P/Z Dept. agreed to work out an approach with the application.
 - JD notes that blue spruce is not actually native to the Northeast, but is widely planted here: <https://conifersociety.org/conifers/articles/blue-spruce-diseases/>
- CAC Role in the Planning Board Processes

- JD requests that MM provides his expertise in determining where would be a valuable insertion
 - Involvement - when someone presents their sketch, (at least). Any site plan or major subdivision: landscaping requirements. Get the CAC sketch plans as they come to the Planning Board.
 - Field visit was eye-opening and useful, maybe above and beyond.
 - Continue following Agendas and Minutes.
 - Requests document with notes from that project sooner rather than later, then follow up again later as the projects progress.
- JC - Sketch plan comes in, checks interest, then the negotiation begins. Iterative process. JC suggests that it may be more valuable if performed fluidly.
 - MM notes that it is a negotiation process and JC notes that they can impress upon the importance of the CAC's opinion.
- Communication
 - JD wants to know how a good insertion point for the CAC would be communicated to the CAC. MM thinks that he will try, with Adam's assistance, to remember that the CAC is a resource.
 - JC notes that the Town Board will appoint a liaison.
 - AY suggests that formal resolutions from the boards would be useful, though JC doesn't know if that level of formalization is useful.
 - AY notes that it's worth discussing relationships with the developers and MM agrees. MM notes that having the developers coming to the CAC would be a valuable asset.
- Resources
 - JC suggests an assistant that can help with agendas, meeting minutes, notes. Could be someone on staff or not, someone with interest in what's going on.
- JC provides much appreciated praise for the CAC. And offers continued support.
 - Solar assessment was beautiful and exactly what JC envisioned from the CAC
- JH notes that the amount of work and special projects is going to mean that we're likely going to have to prioritize our efforts and even remind ourselves that we can't do everything.
- Zoning Map Update
 - JC amend the zoning map is coming up. These decisions are going to determine development focus and conservation.
 - Residential Buffer Zone -> Residential Transition Zone
 - Sits between development and non-development.
 - Virtually all projects proposed in one of these zones.
 - Committee has 5 members, Tina Tierney, Jack Conway, Matt Mastin, Jeff, Josh Wayneman (development)
 - JC has worked to create a sixth slot for the CAC to participate.
 - Meets once a month to start with, proposed to start ASAP.
 - JC wants to know how to connect the CAC with the Zoning Committee.

- The NRI and Comprehensive Plan are great building blocks.
- JD recommends that we can rotate people.
- AY thinks that the kickoff meeting will be happening within a month and half.
- JC offers his availability and assistance.

Business Item Updates

- Website
 - Meaghan is transitioning her role and Colleen Laurie will likely be moving into that position to help. AY suggests mentioning that she is switching roles and if she's already doing a training for other staff, AT could tag along.
 - JD asks AY if it's okay to post the solar assessment. It should be good to put onto the site, and would be valuable to add to the email with Meaghan.
 - JH notes that it's already on the site.
 - JD asks if our assessment for proposals would/should be going onto the website. AY was uncertain. It could be posted in multiple places on the site and we should discuss further.
 - Annual reports were noted.
- Esri
 - AT sent an email requesting that JD reach out to the Esri representative to ask additional questions.
- Budget
 - Coming soon
 - JD wants to email JC to include a secretary
 - JD suggests listing the things we want in the budget.
- Get notes tidied up in the next three weeks.
- Next Meeting is November 22nd.

New Business

- VM suggests the idea of a network where we reach out to schools, scout troops, maybe predominantly younger community members and give these groups the opportunity to dig up saplings.
- VM notes that when talking about HOA restrictions, we should discuss the planting and landscaping best practice requirements to be put into the HOA agreement.
- JH suggests a "last forage" and FH "Saratoga Tree Nursery" that often looks for seed sources.
 - JD notes that it would be useful to attempt to keep that free from any conflicts of interest and to wait until much further in the process when nearly everything has been finalized to ensure no perceptions of quid-pro-quo.
 - FH notes that the Saratoga Tree Nursery usually has a wishlist of notes.
 - VM suggests building a relationship with them.
 - AY offers to try and make a connection with them.

Assignments

	Minutes	Recorder	PRT	ZBA	PB	TB
October	Jennifer H	Adam T	Jennifer D	Adam T	Fred H	Jennifer H
November	Adam T	Fred H	Fred H	Jennifer H	Victoria M	Jennifer D
December	Fred H	Jennifer H	Jennifer H	Victoria M	Jennifer D	Adam T

Public Comment

- None

Action Items

- CAC to review the Carver Court notes by tomorrow, 10/26, in the evening.
 - JD to send recommendations to AY, Alison, and MM.
- JD to send the recommendation for Best Road Solar to Alison for distribution to all three board (Planning, Zoning, and Town).
- JD to email the Esri representative and cc AT

Adjournment

- Meeting was adjourned at 9:03 pm.