

**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

July 25, 2022 - 7PM

East Greenbush Town Hall

DRAFT Meeting minutes

Attendees:

Members: Jennifer Dean (JD), Chair; Fred Henson (FH); Jennifer Hixon (JH), Victoria Manieri (VM)

Recorder: Jennifer Hixon

Also present: Jack Conway (JC), Town Supervisor; Anna Feltham (AF), Director of Planning; Dan Fiacco (DF), Commissioner of Public Works; members of the public (David Terpening)

Meeting agenda:

- Call to order - 7:02
- Review and approval of meeting minutes (June 20, 2022) - tabled until August because only two members present had been at June meeting.
- Business item updates -
 - Planning Board (VM)
 - Mabey's storage wants to put in another building but they haven't complied with previous stormwater management requirements.
 - (AF) We haven't received plan for Phase II yet.
 - Town Board (JD) -
 - No significant SEQRA findings for solar law and battery laws
 - Immanuel church - new site plans, public hearing to be held Aug 10
 - JC notes that the Town passed the solar law and ended the solar development moratorium on time, as promised. CAC's recommendations were invaluable.
 - ZBA (JH) - Variances requested for shed and porch setbacks from property lines. Nothing for CAC to comment on.
 - Zoning Update Committee (AF) - Next meeting August 8. Adam Tobey can continue to represent CAC.
- Discussion: Resolution Authorizing the Conservation Advisory Council to Review and Make Recommendations to the Town Board on the Issue of Restoring Hampton Lake to Good Health (158-2022), adopted June 14, 2022 - discussion with Jack Conway and Dan Fiacco
 - JC - Hampton Lake important natural, recreational, and scenic resource to Town and Hampton Manor residents (including JC and VM). It is close to Onderdonk Park and the Albany Hudson Electric Trail. It is a person-made lake challenged by sediment, fertilizer, and salt runoff. The Town permitted a house to be built on

the spillway some years ago, which further challenged water quality. Town had a machine for manual removal of aquatic plants, but sold it in 2013-14. Treated lake with chemicals for several years - this was harmful to the lake but made it look gorgeous.

- Hampton Lake goals before JC's supervisor term ends:
 - Make Lake Shore Drive one way with lane reserved for pedestrians.
 - In park on eastern side, add pickleball court, resurface tennis and basketball courts, make basketball hoops regulation height.
 - Adopt and begin to implement CAC recommendations for improving and maintaining health of lake.
- VM - Lake was dredged in 1977 - DEC said it wasn't helpful. FH - no point in dredging without making substantial progress on sediments and nutrients going in. Must remove nutrients first. Start with what goes into lake - reduce amount of phosphorus, particulate sediment. Defining "health" of lake will be among our first tasks. It is an urban lake. It won't look like something in the Adirondacks no matter what we do. If we could reduce what goes in by 50%, might be worth dredging, might make noticeable difference. Now a lot of impervious surface on surrounding hills, so groundwater is not being recharged.
- JD - we can take a stab at crafting lake management plan, and have short, medium, long term interventions. VM gave JD and JH a tour Friday - some of the outfall areas on the shore of the lake are completely filled with sediment.
 - Short term - excavate sediment basins around lake
 - Medium term - increase shoreline vegetation
 - Long term - reduce impervious surface runoff directly into lake
- JC likes the lake management plan idea. Would like to reverse damage he's seen since he moved in 34 years ago. Previous Director of Planning Adam Yagelski, as MS4 manager, distributed watershed protection brochures in water and tax bills, displayed in Town Hall.. AF - Just printed another 4000 to go out with water bills.
- Trying to manage Canada geese. Much better than it was in 2015, when JC ran for office. Strobe lights didn't work. Eric Johnson Wild Goose Chase - border collies that chase away Canada geese - helped. VM - limiting the amount of large green space (lawns) also discourages Canada geese. JD - Planting shrubs discourages geese and also serves as biological trap for runoff.
- FH - Weed machines such as Town had cost a fortune to maintain. Would not recommend buying one. DF - companies will come in and clear out weeds for you. JD - Mechanical harvesting will make Eurasian milfoil worse - every fragment will germinate. FH - some advances in chemical treatment - if applied at right dosage can be specific for milfoil. This approach is in the news for Lake George. VM - this is the time of year the milfoil is really starting to grow, although it has seemed to be decreasing recently. Less than half of the vegetation is milfoil. There are two main beds, and they've been shrinking. Is the milfoil life span 30 years? Lots of what we are seeing is native coontail, duckweed, etc. JD - It would be great to get baseline data. Next summer, implement measures and

see if it helps. Could use different apps to do baseline measurements. Divide lake into polygons, sample vegetation with rakes. JC - next month, Town will start 2023 budget. What do you need?

- VM - heard that they tried grass carp. DEC decided to fish them all out. FH - Grass carp are not a magic bullet. They eat milfoil last, native plants first. Tend not to be permanent solution. Must demonstrate you have outlet barrier. In theory, they are sterile - triploid. But there are quality control issues - have found a number of diploid grass carp in Hudson. JD - is the barrier sufficient? FH - don't know, haven't looked at it in awhile.
- JD - do all houses in Hampton Manor go to sewage system? DF - 4-5 homes on Eastern Ave have septic tanks, which drain toward Route 151.
- JD - we could encourage residents to reduce use of lawn fertilizers, and explore use of floating islands (floating treatment wetlands) for improved water quality. JC - no real pattern or trend to fertilizing lawns. People don't see the cause and effect. FH - people walking around lake all the time. Maybe signage would be a good communication strategy. Messaging specific to the lake. Minneapolis MN has been dealing with these issues for a long time. Could contact his old colleagues to see if he can make good connections for EG staff to talk to - there may be newer things. If it's been made, the people in MN have tried it. DF - always trying to think what to do. FH - some measures may be easier to maintain, which will be key. Will look into connections.
- VM - is there any schedule for cleaning out outfalls installed in 2013? Since VM moved in, they've become filled with sediment, and runoff shoots right into lake instead of percolating through soil. DF - we will make a schedule. There are at least 20.
- JC - when we finish the zoning update, we'll update GEIS document. We're an MS4 area. When developers propose project, they have to pay mitigation fees. We've learned how expensive stormwater infrastructure is. Municipalities have acted like there's water/sewer and that's it. Developers must be charged generic fees for stormwater management. It's \$100,000 just to maintain status quo. But tens of millions of dollars to repair damaged infrastructure.
- VM - Hudson Ave West - is there a spring underneath the road leading to Lakeshore? It often has water running across it and heaves in the pavement. DF - clay boils bubbling up. Town hall parking lot runoff drains in that direction. We need to slow it down, redirect away from lake. There is a large infiltration/retainage pond, but not sufficient. State uses more salt on 9&20 than we do in the rest of the town. In 2018, we converted to Hampton Manor to general water. We stopped using 100,000 gallons from old Hampton Manor water system, so water table rose. Now we have to pump water out of well. FH - depending on what chemistry of well water, if total phosphorus is less than lake, would have a very beneficial effect to dilute lake water with well water. JC - They measured Hampton Manor water for primary and secondary contaminant levels across twelve variables. Everyone in Hampton Manor was at least at secondary level. Hence switch to general water. FH - Hampton Manor well water might be

better than lake water. JC - Will get CAC a copy of studies done as part of changing to general water. DF - where do we want to push the water? Thought about tying into storm drain, but it would have gone into lake and then right out outflow. JD - Section on strata of lake in Diet for a Small Lake handbook that might help. VM - water should be from same aquifer as original springs. JD - great to have this joint meeting - CAC alone would not have thought of well water as a resource. JC - I've learned more about Hampton Lake water in the last 40 minutes than in the last 30 years. Fun to listen to you - this was the point of NRI and CAC - you know how to think about these problems in ways that we don't. Your work has been exemplary. Important to me and Tina to make real the things we prioritize. You guys are an indispensable resource for the Town Board, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals. Thank you for the work you're doing - it's exactly what we hoped you'd do.

- VM - How old are the willow trees around Lakeshore Drive? We've lost several over last few years.
- JD - Resolution refers to "Hampton Lake." Is it that or "Hampton Manor Lake," as the DEC calls it? JC - [Bobbie Reno's YouTube documentary](#) clarifies that it is actually Hampton Lake although everyone calls it "Hampton Manor Lake." Maybe we can ask Bobbie Reno to contribute a brief history of the lake to the report. With one-way Lake Shore Drive and improvements to lake health, Hampton Lake will be a resource for the Town.
- 7:58 pm - JC and DF left the meeting.
- JD - DEC is starting to encourage more lake management plans - there might be templates out there that would offer a general framework. FH - happy to create outline to work on. Will look over some things that are good models. Draft by August 8. Sections: Need/scope/current state/desired states/objectives/strategies. JD - assign sections at next meeting. Internal deadline to complete: October - November. Diet for a Small Lake has a lot of great background information. Good model for presenting to public audience. AF - will check if budget requests are due at the end of August. Fiscal year is calendar year.
- VM - should we get readings this summer to compare to 2013 readings? Last couple of years, things seem to be better. Level of lake is lower. Has that limited plant growth? VM moved to Hampton Manor in 2015. 2015-2018 - lots of vegetation and algae blooms. Decline in last few years. Rainstorm today may bring algae bloom. Always decent amount of animals that live in and around the lake. Curious if catch basin projects were put in 2012 - did catch basins make a difference? FH - in terms of lake management plan, things I have in mind will be helpful no matter what. Might not be that important to take baseline readings, because they've probably not changed dramatically since 2013. It's more important to spend money on infrastructure improvement over 5 year period. Willing to live with 2013 data as current state. Not sure what it would cost - probably wouldn't be exorbitant. Just need to pay for sampling, not interpretation. JD - agree on chemical readings, but would want to do vegetation sampling. VM -

Some orgs do citizen scientist projects, like River Haggie, Sanctuary for Independent Media. We could use money on educational signage around Lake Shore Drive. FH - unknown how much is internal cycling vs. fresh runoff. Never recommend dredging unless we can reduce nutrients and sediments first. JD - Would it be worth having someone map bottom of lake with sonar? FH - don't we have a map of lake bottom? It's pretty shallow. Mean depth 5 feet, max depth 11 feet. Functionally all littoral zone. VM - the lake is visibly shallower from the shoreline than it used to be. JD - sonar might find the debris that is rumored to have blocked up the springs at lake bottom. Let's schedule a paddle.

- Ideas for better recreation access
 - Small dock or vegetative barrier to allow people to walk out for fishing
 - Kayak launching access
 - Benches along shore?
 - Aesthetics - control phragmites outside of the big patch
- JD created an iNaturalist project for Hampton Lake.
<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/hampton-lake>
- Projects for CAC review -
 - North Greenbush solar, utility lines in EG
 - AF - FYI Town adopted new solar law Wed, Thurs received application for solar array in N. Greenbush. NG is lead agency. Look on Planning Board website for details. Former agricultural open grassy. Minimal tree clearing. Access road, utility poles, stormwater area in EG. CAC - Utility poles - why not underground? AF - No landscaping proposed along access road. Stormwater area proposed with grass swale. (After meeting, AF sent information to CAC and JD responded with observations, which AF will pass along to PB.)
 - Second item on PB agenda - 360 Columbia Tpk - mixed use, including gas station. Near water body.
 - Immanuel Church revised site plan.
 - Immanuel church - site plans suggested some problematic species
 - JD - Japanese tree lilac - recommend using a different species. There are native alternatives with a similar growth form.
 - VM will suggest alternatives for spirea.
 - In response to question about pervious pavers, developer replied that they "are using infiltration practices to treat surface water. Pavers are an expensive option for large lots." AF - for developers the bottom line is usually most important. Easy to say something is cost prohibitive.
 - JD - Going forward, perhaps we should propose smaller solutions to offer to developers that would not be as big an impact but would make some impact. Is it possible to put gaps in curbs so water runs into vegetation. VM - See [Watervliet's green infrastructure project](#), including rain gardens. FH - downtown Cooperstown also has rain gardens. AF - add green infrastructure to Zoning update. Just getting to allowed usage next week.

- JD - CAC should submit a letter suggesting alternatives to Japanese tree lilac and spirea, reiterating the idea of marking trees for saving, and proposing replacing some of impervious paving with green infrastructure.
 - Tree planting guidance (best management practices) - draft is great start. Keep it short and to the point and package up with species list. Find link to pruning standards. JD - Ask for longer warranty from developers? FH - match tree species to site condition and whether you want the tree to go to its full maturity or if you plan to replace it if it outgrows available space. VF - graphics that illustrate how to plan where to plant trees of different heights and species. AF - Carver Ct was issued stop work order in March because DEC permitting wasn't complete. Still time to submit best management practices to them.
- Public Comment - David Terpening
 - Bobbie Reno has Powerpoint on Town's website with history of Hampton Manor and Hampton Lake.
 - How do they maintain similar size water bodies in Crossings in Colonie, Town of Valatie?
 - Has lake been tested for bacteria harmful to humans or dogs?
 - Does pond attract insects, like mosquitoes. FH - yes but it also has fish which eat insects. VM - And songbirds and bats.
 - Only 15% of Town lives around lake. Would money be better spent on Town Park water body? Closed to swimming by runoff from pig farm. Will that be considered?
 - If the issue of Hampton Lake water quality is remedied, it will need ongoing maintenance, which costs money. People paddling around with kayaks. What about boat washing, especially with increased use? Control milfoil, water chestnut.
 - This is an important project for Supervisor and residents - why aren't more people coming to meetings?
 - Development on upper Red Mill Road - came before Town 3-4 years ago. How would this affect remediation efforts? How much money is too much to put into project? Lake caught on fire in 2012 - VM - teenagers set fire to phragmites plants at water's edge..
 - Gas station proposed for 360 Columbia Turnpike very close to body of water. Look at the site plan. Catch basin goes right into that lake.
 - Road that goes to Columbia HS - neighborhood across the street - supposed to be senior housing project. Went ahead and chopped all trees down but project is on hold. Can't just clear the land and not do anything with it.
- Wrap-up/Review action items
 - Meeting adjourned at 8:50