



Conservation Advisory Council

2021 Annual Report

The Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) was established by local law 2 of 2020, adopted by the East Greenbush Town Board on May 26th, 2020. In the spring of 2021, the Town Board appointed five members to the CAC for its first year:

Jennifer Dean, Chair
Fred Henson
Jennifer Hixon
Victoria Manieri
Adam Tobey

The CAC held its first public meeting on April 26, 2021. Meetings were generally held on the fourth Monday of the month, with eight regular meetings held in 2021. Two additional special meetings were held to conduct time-sensitive business. All meetings were subject to the open meetings law. [Agendas](#) were posted at least 24 hours prior to the meetings and approved [minutes](#) were posted to the Town website. The CAC section can be found at: www.eastgreenbush.org/board-committees/conservation-advisory-council

In this inaugural year, the CAC worked to establish procedures and goals to define its role of providing information and recommendations about preserving natural and cultural resources to town boards, residents, and developers. One of the main goals for the CAC is to review development proposals for potential impacts to these valued resources of the Town, and suggest options for minimizing negative impacts. To guide the review of development proposals in a standardized way, a Checklist for Site Resource Assessment was created, with sections keyed to the East Greenbush Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) maps.

The CAC monitored meetings of the Town Board, the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Project Review Team for items of significance to the Town's natural resources. The CAC also drew on guidance from the Town Planner regarding projects to review. Formal reviews of two land development proposals were completed: Best Road Solar (a community-scale solar farm) and Carver Court (a cluster subdivision). CAC's observations and recommendations were shared with the Town Board, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals. CAC representatives made a site visit to the Carver Court property, and advised the site engineer on measures to protect wetlands, streams, and mature trees, as well as on a plan for open space.



The Town Board requested that the CAC compose a Solar Assessment to inform discussions of large-scale solar development in the town. The assessment drew on information from NYSEDA, Scenic Hudson, the EPA, and other sources, and recommended that the Town encourage large-scale solar projects on degraded lands and developed sites, while protecting natural and cultural resources and environmentally sensitive areas from the deleterious effects of development. The [Town of East Greenbush Solar Assessment](#) is available on the CAC website. The Town Board plans to refer to the Solar Assessment as it updates the Town's Solar Energy Law.

The CAC applied for and was granted low-cost access to ArcGIS through the Esri Conservation Program (ECP). CAC plans to use the license to update NRI maps as needed and to build a tool to facilitate site review.

The CAC has begun work on a guide to native plantings for reference by the Town and developers.

The CAC was invited to participate in the East Greenbush Zoning Committee's work to update the zoning law in accordance with the 2021 Comprehensive Plan. Meetings begin in 2022.

CAC members attended the following webinars:

- May 12, 2021 - Wetlands: Mapping, Identification, and Field Verification (webinar) - put on by the HREP (JMD, AMT attended)
- July 3, 2021 - Wetlands delineation workshop (field workshop) - put on by the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance (JMD attended)
- August, 2021 - The Solar Mapping Tool: Supporting a Responsible Renewable Energy Future for the Hudson Valley (December 9, 2020, webinar recording) - presented by Scenic Hudson for HREP (JMD watched)
- December 2, 2021 - Online Resources for Mapping Stream (Nov 12 webinar recording) - presented by Nate Nardi-Cyrus of HREP (JMD watched)
- December 16, 2021 - Pre-Application Webinar on Monitoring Unassessed Stream Segments in the Hudson River Estuary - presented by Tom Niekrewicz of HREP (JJH attended)