

Town of New Paltz
Environmental Conservation Board
June 13, 2018
Community Center
7:30pm

Participants: Ingrid Haeckel, Noel Russ, Joe Bergstein, Rose Rudnitski , Janelle Peotter, Ted Nitza, Susan Wile, Kenji Tierney, and Amanda Gotto.

Meeting called to order at 7:42pm

Ingrid makes motion to approve May minutes. 3 approve, 2 abstain.

Ingrid makes motion to support the minutes taken by Lynn Bowdery from the joint Solar meeting with CWOSP and the NYSERDA reps. 3 approve, 2 abstain.

There are no Planning Bd. projects currently, but approval has lapsed for a subdivision called, "Vacarro Birches" off N. Putt between Shivertown and Rocky Hill Rd. Norbert Quinzer, still acting as wetlands inspector identified additional wetlands not on the original site plan. A formal delineation of wetlands is necessary to proceed. The Planning Bd. attorney advises town wetlands law should apply.

RECAP OF SOLAR ZONING MEETING with NYSERDA REPS.:

Per Ingrid, the NYSERDA reps presented the solar energy law model and the customizable areas in the law. Ingrid presented a suitability analysis where larger projects of 1 megawatt or greater could be sited in New Paltz based on preserving conservation areas. Given the network of distribution lines, capacity and zoning in New Paltz, there are restricted areas for larger solar development. Next steps include the Town Bd. to develop a committee focused on confronting specific questions. Planning bd. member Lyle Nolan volunteered for the committee and Ted volunteers to represent EnCB. Ingrid will notify the Town Bd. The law would be a Town law, not a Village law. EnCB approved draft recommendations at the last meeting, which Ted can advocate for. Ingrid volunteers to assist with GIS mapping support as needed.

JOE PRESENTS HIS LETTER TO LOWE'S

After a visit to Lowe's, Joe estimates 100 feet of shelf space dedicated to ROUNDUP and less than 1% to Ecologic, an environmentally friendly pesticide. Agway is in a similar situation. Lowe's has a sustainability effort in place and a sustainability officer. Joe will ask Neil Bettez to sign his letter. Joe suggests sharing his letter with Jim Littlefoot to present it to the Ulster County Environmental Bd. to encourage Ulster County to become less of a ROUNDUP zone. Joe will contact Chris Marx to find out whether New Paltz uses ROUNDUP before sending the letter to Neil. Noel will inquire what Central Hudson is using. Once we know, perhaps the letter should be sent to True Value and Agway as well. Separately, Joe is working on a subcommittee with Laura DeNey to draft a letter to Starbucks Corporate to eliminate plastic straws.

CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITY GRANT UPDATE:

Per Amanda – the town of New Paltz is the lead applicant for a \$50,000 grant from the NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program to develop a natural resource inventory. This is a Town and Village joint effort and EnCB's support is requested with matching in-kind hours. (The time converts to money.) This will be a useful tool and build on the open space plan to be used for decision making by all constituents (homeowners, landowners, developers), to assist the municipalities policy-making and in review of applications. Letters of support have been provided by the Village and Town Bds. There is a 15% matching (hours) requirement, but our target is 40%. New Paltz' participation includes GIS info, waterways, steep slopes, types of habitats, and photos of different resources, which are important to review to determine critical habitat and conservation measures. Amanda estimates 20 months for a total of 212 hours and includes community events and engagement. This translates to a little more than 10 hours per month for the Board. The Planning Bd. put out a RFP for a consultant (one who is task-oriented with a proven track record), and Amanda sent a sample letter, which EnCB needs to fill in and send to Neil. The two-year grant has a July 11 deadline with an award date in October.

- Ingrid abstains from involvement in the grant application due to possible conflict of interest.
- Per Joe – is there any way to get SUNY involved?
- Jannelle suggests that Climate Action has been mentoring students and is working with Central Hudson to tease out a baseline from their data.
- Rose reads Amanda's draft letter to Neil from EnCB
- Amanda will put a working plan together for Grant; i.e. what are we really doing, how will we accomplish it, and what are we doing every month?
- Ted moves that those who wish to sign letter on EnCB's behalf can sign. Noel is most tenured. The names will be typed in without the literal signatures and include, "the undersigned members of the Bd. listed below." 2 abstentions 6 approvals.

ROSE on BEE CITY USA:

Rose wants to piggyback on Joe's Lowe's initiative, but the Town Bd. must pass a resolution to ban the use of pesticides. She will contact Chris Marx to inquire what is used and feels it is premature to approach Neil. Ingrid will keep it on agenda.

TED UPDATE:

The EPB remains one member short, and is looking for an individual who should ideally live in the village, though it is not mandatory. EPB continues to work on the plastic bag issue. While the Village has a ban in place with the energy is now focused on watching the county effort.

JOE UPDATE ON PLASTIC BAG BAN:

According to Joe, the Ulster County Legislature has a hearing June 19th at 7pm during which Tracy Bartells will propose a law for single use plastic bags modeled on the California law. Tracy needs advocates for the proposed law. Joe has drafted a statement, and will add the Point of Purchase (POP),

bags. Joe has a marked up copy of the legislation from Jim Littlefoot. The proposed local law is #10 of 2018, which covers single use plastic bags less than 4 ml thick. It does not include a bag without handles. Garment bags or bags from pharmacy are also not included. We can suggest that it covers more plastic bags. Jannelle suggests making a case across the board, which Joe will add.

Ingrid motions to approve Joe's letter, Jannelle seconds and all approve. Joe supports the law and encourages it to be stricter. Jannelle will also go to hearing and will work with the Climate Action Coalition to draft a letter to read. According to Ted, the law is generally being followed, but there are issues. Retailers think biodegradable bags and reusable bags are okay to use, which is not technically accurate.

Ted asks about plastic straw ban letter. He got support by EPB to sign it but hasn't signed it yet. Ingrid reads it for a vote. Ted moves that Ingrid can sign it. Joe seconds and all approve. Joe will make a hard copy and share at the meeting next Tuesday.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Jim is not present and Ingrid hasn't heard anything more on the N. Putt traffic numbers.

Per Amanda – The Gateway Committee will present at the next Town Bd. meeting on June 21. There will also be a public hearing before the meeting at 6:45pm. The Town Bd. had a workshop with Trans-Hudson regarding their new proposal. CVS is out, replaced by a Mavis tires, along with 3 restaurants and an urgent care center. Their plan does not show a 30' setback, and ignores the gateway code. With no plans for drilling a well, they now intend to rely on village sewer and water.

Ingrid suggests that a letter would be helpful with the goal of keeping things consistent to scale, less automobile-centric, with more sidewalks, more bike racks, and maintaining a vegetative buffer. If Ingrid feels rezoning is a good thing, Amanda encourages her to say so, especially from an environmental standpoint.

WATERSHED PROTECTION:

Ingrid, Amanda and Jannelle attended a Land Use Leadership Training, which brought together watershed communities to discuss ways to protect watersheds. Case studies highlighted included Red Hook, which has updated its zoning, and is an excellent example of protecting agricultural business district that limit subdivisability. Storm-water management law was also discussed with the importance to update laws to conform to DEC laws. Per Jannelle, one of the training's keys is the importance of community engagement. Neil is interested in establishing Critical Environmental Areas. We need to identify areas and justify them, and lead public outreach. The NRI should be part of that. Can we work on this this year? We can begin brainstorming ideas with CWOSP to start.

Rebecca Minas provided a MS4 report at last town meeting. The vulnerable spots on the Wallkill are the outfalls, and generally how well the river is being monitored. Non-storm water is the big problem. Neil agrees in the importance of adopting a new model and updating the law.

Ingrid sent an email to John Shupe re SUNY parking lot, but he is out on leave. They said they would replant a buffer, but currently there is only a row of 10 spruce trees and some grass. The area is behind Howard Ave. in the Cherry Hill neighborhood. Ingrid will follow up with John.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- A new Hudson Valley Natural Resource Mapper was published and Ingrid will be leading a webinar on July 18th about it.
- Next Planning bd. meeting to be held on June 25, re Vaccarro Birches.
- Ingrid will attend July 9 Planning Board and Susan will substitute September 10th or 24th. Kenji will attend December 10 Planning Bd. meeting.
- Ingrid suggests a social gathering, potluck or picnic and will set up a doodle poll to find best dates for all. Location possibilities include the boat launch off Wallkill, Sojourner Truth park, The Pavilion at Field of Dreams. There is also a pavilion at DEC, which Ingrid will inquire about.
- Laura DeNey and Joe have come up with next steps for restaurants on the plastic straw ban. 22 of 35 establishments feel an ordinance is better because resolutions are more about “feel good” activities, particularly since it depends on who is working that day and how informed they are. Joe would like to send a social media message to diners to remind them.

Move to adjourn at 9:38pm