Town of New Paltz Environmental Conservation Board Meets with Environmental Policy Bd. March 14, 2019

Village Hall

6:30pm

Participants: Ingrid Haeckel, Kenji Tierney, Rose Rudnitski (via telephone), Ted Nitza, Susan Wile, Jim Littlefoot, Jonathan (Yoni) Schwartz, Janelle Peotter, and Julie Seyfert Lillis (Town Bd.) and members of the EPB; Greg Huxton, Rachel Lagodka, Ariana Basco, Don Kerr (Liaison), Susan Stessin-Cohn, Daniel Lubitowski, Greg, Atabe – Piglets from High School.

Public Comments: None Meeting called to order at 6:40pm

February minutes approved by all members present (6) with 0 abstentions.

**MISCELLANEOUS EPB & EnCB:**

* April 10 and April 27 (earth day) – Public information session on CEA’s.
* Transhudson - no updates -- move to planning bd. projects.
* Amphibian migration volunteers needed - Old Kingston Rd., Dug Rd., Plutarch Rd., etc.
* Ingrid doing salamander story time on Saturday.
* Farm Fest April 26 – To promote Bee City USA, Rose will have a table with Rachel giving pollinator friendly seeds
* Plastic Bag in Village – two public hearings – thick ones used at Otter, In Good Taste, My Market
* EPB intern Jessie – working on two letters to editor
* Paint swap – per Greg every second Saturday from 9-11. Pick up any time. Need volunteers
* Methane to energy – got response from company. Intern did report. Salesman asserts payback in 3 years.
* Susan called compliance officer for visiting recycling center in Albany and will get 3 possible dates to see center with reporter from paper. Lisa Mitten from SUNY wants to go.
* Electric vehicle charging station costs $0.50/hour and Village makes money.
* Dan researched bikes and stations near rail trail and SUNY campus. SUNY cops told him bikes left by students cannot be used. Alan Stout is not interested. Don suggests talking to Recycling Center, talking to Lisa Mitten and contacting Dan Lipson, who heads Environmental task force. Julie suggests talking to Mayor and folks at Bike Depot. Perhaps collaborate with Repair café to foster community effort.
* No update on Saw Mill Brook water testing

**EnCB:**

**Critical Environmental Areas (Ingrid):**

* Ingrid has updated proposal and doesn’t think Trib 13 watershed should be included. CEAs must be justified based on unique or exceptional environmental qualities or sensitivity. Tributary 13 watershed includes many highly developed areas including the business district. We need to be selective in designating areas. There are better tools for watershed protection in already developed areas.
* Per Rachel, New Paltz’s 1995 master plan recommended designating the Trib 13 watershed as a CEA. What gives it value is that it exists in an urban area and contains a prime vernal pool for salamanders with a beaver impoundment.
* Ingrid believes Millbrook preserve warrants CEA designation, but not the entire watershed. The village would need to designate any area within the Village boundary. She removed Village areas from map. EnCB will move forward with proposing areas in the town.
* She met with a variety of people regarding public information sessions on April 10th & 27th. Cara Lee is willing to serve as facilitator. Jason West also interested but can’t do it on the 10th. Encb meeting will push to the 17th. Information session on the 10th will take place in community center from 7-8:30pm depending on size of group. Janelle might be available to help. Yoni and Kenji volunteer but need training as facilitators.
* Recommendation from Tiffany Zezula of Pace Land Use Law Center to have discussions take place in small groups with feedback noted in writing. EnCB will review feedback to be presented to Town Bd. Press release with map to New Paltz times would get word out. Main message is that CEA will not affect individual landowner, that it is more for subdivisions and larger development projects. The CEA highlights areas of concern, and significant resources that warrant a higher level of review.
* Ingrid suggests continuing discussion with EPB about designating the Millbrook Preserve and possibly adjacent properties. Areas can be designated CEA around preserve, but the Preserve is in the village, surrounded by the town. We cannot designate entire town. The village EPB should take the lead.

**PLASTIC BAGS (Yoni):**

The county law goes into effect, July 15, 2019. Yoni has had discussions to combine efforts with EPB and to have our own bag law, broken into 3 components:

A. Letter drafted to county legislators with 4 recommendations:

1. Per section 6(A) of law, we recommend WIC/SNAP recipients be exempted from the $0.05 charge required on any recyclable paper bag provided to customer
2. Per section 7(A) of law, we recommend that at the outset of the law’s implementation, an additional, one-time, two week period be added so that Covered Stores may provide their customers with reusable bags free of charge
3. Per section 9 of law, we recommend that the County Executive or “Director of designated Department(s)” provide local units of government the option to assume enforcement and proceeds from enforcement of this law
4. Per section 10(C) of law, we recommend that fines be adjusted annually in accordance with the cost of living index

B. Suggestions to come up with combined effort for village and town. Discussions haven’t advanced to propose anything at this time.

C. What can EPB and EnCB do to engage community? Begin with information sessions on earth day. Yoni spoke to Jim O’Doud who will provide table. Suggestion made to offer branded bags as give-aways to community members to get them excited about what we’re doing. Need volunteers. Also do it on SUNY campus? Campus bags might be branded with Bee City USA website to do double duty addressing bee issue. Connect with Amanda LaValle coordinator with Ulster County. They have a logo about bag ban and can piggy back onto her program.

The letter is what the committee is recommending to the county. Daily Freeman has noted SNAP & WIC recipients are exempt from $0.05 charge.

**BEE CITY USA (Rose):**

Rachel and Rose met and Grai Rice and Juliet Levy (intern) on planning:

* Table at earth day fair at Reformed Church
* Table at lawn and garden show at Wallkill View Farm (may not happen)
* Meeting garden club on April 15
* Sent emails with links to website
* College wants to be a bee campus, with application going in for town and village as one entity.
* There is a state initiative that property owners can be designated a bee sanctuary if there is no pesticide use, no raking and to allow clover and dandelion to bloom without mowing. Mowing only after they’ve bloomed.
* Will also bring initiative up at next Ulster County Bee Association

**Update on Solar Law (Janelle):**

Making steady progress, though there is not a lot of capacity to add large-scale solar farms. Developers cannot get permission, since New Paltz has no solar law yet.

**Climate Smart Communities (Janelle):**

* Continue to meet third Monday of the month with subcommittees, but need more people. Green business initiative is part of this. Decision made to join Chamber of Commerce as 501c3. New Paltz climate smart completed its greenhouse gas inventory, to be presented to Town Bd. next week. Jason West is writing the greenhouse gas inventory for the town, and hopes to present it at community potluck in May.

**Trib 13 Source Tracking:**

Riverkeeper has scheduled a meeting Wednesday, March 27 at Elting Library. Rachel suggests getting volunteers who live in the watershed to test their water systems. Nancy will come up with sample plan for this year and has students to help her. Ingrid met with building inspector who will provide list of properties in sewer district and connected to sewer. The town did not require everyone to join the sewer district, which means there are scattered homes with septic.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

* Transhudson – in early February, they claimed they were going to drill test well. Ingrid doesn’t think it’s happened yet and there is nothing before the Planning bd.
* A wetland permit application is before the Planning bd. Property is at end of Cragswood rd. at edge of Mohonk preserve. They want to install a pool and deck in yard. Homeowner’s inspector went out last September and did a wetland delineation. Our wetland inspector went out in September and indicated other wetland areas. Their inspector needs to add these to map. Homeowner will need a wetland permit for the pool. No decision can be made at this point. Under our law, we need to know how big is the jurisdictional wetlands are to determine the buffer. Applicant needs to explain whether/how they will drain it. Rose will draft a letter for the Planning Bd. Pools can be a wildlife hazard. We need to be reasonable, and to give homeowner recommendations and to keep the pool out of the wetland buffer as much as possible.

**Votes:**

CEA - Ingrid asks for motion to move our proposal for 5 CEAs to Town Bd. and 1 page fax sheet. All in favor (6), 0 abstentions.

PLASTIC – Motion to move letter forward with amendment and invite EPB to put their name on it. It is stronger with both boards support. All approved (6), 0 abstentions. Letter will be from Ingrid and Ted, submitted as hard copy.

**OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST (Rachel):**

* There is a beaver impoundment on SUNY campus that Rachel is trying to get SUNY folks to study. It is a new ecosystem on the southern tip of campus just past field Q. Perhaps the Environmental task force can get involved? She would like Tim and Neil to approach the president and the supervisor’s wife. The impoundment will clean the Saw Mill Brook

Meeting adjourned 9:12p