

Conservation Advisory Council Town of Hillsdale, NY

David Lewis, Chair
Amy Davidsen
Ed Frederick
Mary King
Gretchen Stevens

MINUTES CAC MEETING, 10 AUGUST 2026

The meeting was convened at 7:05pm at the Hillsdale Town Hall. David, Amy, Ed, and Gretchen were present. Mary was absent. Jamie Carano Nordenstrom (Town Board liaison) was also absent.

Approval of Minutes

The July minutes were approved with edits from Amy.

Old Business

Culverts

Gretchen reported that the Town was unable to apply for a WQIP grant for the Mitchell Street or other culverts because the applications require detailed engineer's drawings and alternative plans which would be too costly to prepare. We may be able to apply for a grant from the Hudson River Estuary Program, but the RFA will not be issued until sometime in September or October.

Instead, Gretchen worked with Robina to prepare and submit a WQIP application for building a salt shed at the highway garage. We applied for the maximum grant amount (\$600,000) and the Town has an additional \$150,000 reserved for this project, but the actual cost is expected to be considerably higher.

Sponsor *The Extraordinary Caterpillar* Film

Amy will prepare an event plan for the 14 November film screening at the Roe Jan Library, and will find out if the Town needs to provide insurance. Amy reported that the Library will advertise the event in its October newsletter. Amy[?] will prepare a "save the date" flyer with materials from Homegrown National Park. Amy has received a list of gardeners' email addresses from Lynda Brenner, and Gretchen will obtain such a list from Tim Kennelty, and we should all plan to send personal invitations to people we know who would be interested. Gretchen will select other CAC materials for viewing or handing out at the event, and we can use CAC funds to cover printing.

Hillsdale Town Newsletter

For the October newsletter, we should prepare a notice about the November screening of *The Extraordinary Caterpillar*. Material is due to Emily Stalker by 20 September.

Planning Board

Gretchen reported that the only case before the Planning Board at their 17 August meeting was a lot line adjustment to accommodate a parcel in Harlemville being donated to the Harlem Valley Association.

Comprehensive Plan

Gretchen reported that the first meeting of the Preliminary Comprehensive Plan Committee, whose mission is just to search for consultants and make a recommendation to the Town Board, has been delayed until September because one of the members is recovering from surgery.

Farm Inventory

Amy shared a draft of the Farm Inventory - updating the 2020 NRI with 2026 farm information. Once finalized, we will treat it as an addendum to the NRI and post it on the CAC's webpage.

Garbage Receptacle Law

Amy sent the draft garbage receptacle law to Jamie for her comments and guidance on next steps.

Open Space Plan

Gretchen has sent the current draft of the Plan to the CAC for review. We will aim to make our recommendations for Open Space Committee members to the Town Board by 1 September so that candidates can be considered and possibly appointed at the Board's 8 September meeting.

We agreed that we should be sure to reference the Hillsdale Natural Resources Inventory in the Open Space Plan.

Storage of Flammable and Toxic Materials

Amy learned from Nico Hernandez that the Hillsdale Fire Company has no policy on reporting storage of flammable and toxic materials by Hillsdale landowners. Amy will explore further DEC's notification requirements; state or county sample legislation requiring notification about storage of hazardous materials to fire companies and first responders; and if the Town of Ghent established a local law after the 2012 transformer recycling fire.

Herbicide Applications

David reported that Cara Boyle said the EMC did not ask towns to endorse a ban on herbicide applications along state roads. David volunteered to gather information and prepare a memo from the CAC.

Project Initiation Procedure

In their August meeting, the Town Board adopted a law governing how development and subdivision projects are initiated with the town. The first stop for all applicants is to be the Code Enforcement Officer who will direct them to the appropriate agency—e.g., the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, or the Code Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector.

New Business

Hotel/Resort Development at Roe Jan School

The CAC will decide later on whether the CAC should weigh in on the project. We ordinarily do not comment on projects outside of Hillsdale, but this one is so close to the Hillsdale town line and promises to have a huge environmental/social/cultural impact on Hillsdale and the region. The next public meeting will be on 27 August, 6:30pm, and there will be future such meetings for the public to learn about and comment on the project.

CAC Roundtable

Amy raised the idea of a gathering of Columbia County CACs, to meet each other and to share information and ideas. A regular “CAC Roundtable” meeting used to be organized by the CLC, back when they had a staff position dedicated to working with municipalities on conservation matters.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:16pm.

Action Items

David:

- Draft a roadside herbicide memo.

Amy:

- (carried over) Look into town insurance for screening of *The Extraordinary Caterpillar*, and nail down a date and time for the screening.
- Create a “save the date” flyer for the screening and draft a notice for the October town newsletter.
- See if Ghent has a hazardous materials law.
- (carried over) Send the draft Receptacle law and resolution to Jamie for review.
- (carried over) Draft an updated Farm Inventory narrative, to compare to the 2020 NRI, for review.

Gretchen:

- Select and print materials for The Extraordinary Caterpillar event.
- Obtain contact info for gardeners.

All:

- Think of new members that the CAC might recommend for the Open Space Committee.